

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2023**  
**QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE**  
**CHAIRMEN**

**WRITTEN RESPONSES PROVIDED AFTER THE MEETING AS THE TIME LIMIT OF 60 MINUTES FOR QUESTIONS WAS REACHED**

**Question to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment Councillor Helen-Ann Smith**

On 26<sup>th</sup> June, Stagecoach wrote to Councillors Jason Zadrozny and I stating "...a willingness to Nottinghamshire County Council to extend Service 141; the authority has not suggested any changes to the current timetable." Can you confirm when you will be announcing the formal confirmation of tender extensions for next year so that residents in places like Stanton Hill, Hucknall, Linby, Ravenshead, Blidworth, Rainworth, Mansfield, Sutton, Skegby, the Healdswood Estate, Carsic and Sutton can be reassured that this crucial bus service will continue serving their communities?

**Response from Councillor Neil Clarke MBE Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

We are currently considering a range of options for the 141 service and intend to conclude that review very soon.

**Question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families from Councillor Michelle Welsh**

An action stated in this Council's 2022/23 Annual Delivery Plan was:

"Petition the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that the funding for children with SEND is the same in Nottinghamshire as the highest funded authorities."

When did this happen and what was the outcome?

**Response from Councillor Tracey Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

For the benefit of those who are less familiar with the issue of SEND/high needs funding, and to put my answer in context, I'll briefly explain how this funding works.

High needs funding is provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

The high needs funding system supports provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years through to age 25, enabling local authorities and other institutions to meet their statutory duties under the [Children and Families Act 2014](#).

High needs funding is also intended to support good quality alternative provision for children and young people who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools.

The High Needs Block can also fund high needs services delivered directly by the authority or under a separate funding agreement with institutions (including funding devolved to institutions) as permitted by regulations.

The 'historic spend' factor within the funding formula continues to heavily influence the total allocation. It accounts for 27% of the 2023/24 allocation and it is the historic spend which continues to reinforce the inequity of HLN funding across the country.

Regarding your specific question, Councillor Welsh, activity to ensure that the funding for children with SEND is the same in Nottinghamshire as the highest funded authorities has been ongoing over several years and continued throughout 2022/23.

At the Policy Committee in September 2021 (SEND Place Planning Strategy), in response to a request from Members, the Council Leader agreed to discuss the need for a fairer funding formula with relevant Members and write to Central Government to make the case.

As Cabinet Member for Children & Families, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Education to petition for fairer funding and received a response from Nadhim Zahawi in January 2022 confirming an increased settlement for schools and high needs in 2022 – 23, as well as a commitment to continue to review the funding formula under which local authorities' allocations of high needs funding are calculated.

I am pleased to confirm that we have seen a significant increase in High Needs funding over the last few years, from £89 million in 2021-22 to £109 million in 2023-24, a 23% increase.

Lobbying for increased funding continues across several spheres both at political and at senior officer level, including activity of the Director of Children's Services along with colleagues in the Association of Directors of Children's Services. Pressure continues through the Local Government Association, the County Councils Network, East Midlands Councils, and wider Nottinghamshire MPs. I hope that the outcome of these efforts will be further increases in high needs funding in the future.

### **Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Tom Hollis**

Influential Conservative website 'Conservative Home' which describes itself as "Britain's leading independent conservative news and analysis site" recently said, "You might wonder why the councillors in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire would go along with the deal if there are no tangible benefits. But there are benefits to the councillors. As noted above, they don't lose anything, while they will gain generous allowances for attending a few East Midlands Combined Authority committee meetings."

Now you have declared you are standing for a 3<sup>rd</sup> job, can you state whether you believe that the article is accurate and reaffirm your commitment to not levying an extra precept on Council Tax?

### **Response from Councillor Ben Bradley MP, Leader of the Council**

Thank you Cllr Hollis, to answer your question – No, I do not believe the article on the ‘Conservative Home’ website to be accurate. To be honest, I think the author Harry Phibbs completely missed the point of the EMCA altogether and would have benefited from a little more research or from a conversation with me to gain a better understanding before writing the piece.

In relation to the council tax levy, as I have said to you in previous full council meetings, I am dead against the Mayoral Precept and have ruled it out on several occasions. As I have explained in the past, most devolution deals that exist have the ability to raise a mayoral precept and out of all of those deals, nine deals, only two do, both Labour authorities I should say, Greater Manchester and Liverpool.

### **Question to the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee from Councillor Lee Waters**

NHS documents reveal the six ‘Cavell Centre’ health centre projects in the country, including in Hucknall, have been put on hold. This was a decision made in February but councillors have only been recently informed. This is devastating news for residents in Hucknall who are experiencing a health care crisis.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July, Lucy Dadge, the Director of Integration at NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board wrote to Councillors Dave Shaw, John Wilmott and I stating that “If the Chair of Nottinghamshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee would like a report to come to the Committee, then we would of course facilitate that.” Would the Statutory Health Scrutiny Committee take up the ICB on their offer and ensure that Nottinghamshire County Council use their influence to get this crucial protect back on track?

### **Response from Councillor Sue Saddington, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee**

It is for the Health Scrutiny Committee to decide what agenda items they accept onto their Work Programme for future meetings. Any member of that committee is welcome to raise this matter at the next meeting and a decision regarding the Work Programme would be made there.