

## COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2024

### 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 from Councillor David Martin**

At what point in this financial year, did Nottinghamshire County Council run out of money to fix our broken roads and pavements?

##### **Response from Councillor Richard Jackson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources on behalf of Councillor Neil Clarke MBE, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

At no point in the financial year did Nottinghamshire County Council “run out” of money to fix our roads and pavements.

##### **Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Steve Carr**

Can the Leader of the Council outline what support is available to councillors who suffer abuse in the course of their work for Nottinghamshire County Council?

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

We take any concerns regarding councillors’ personal safety very seriously.

A range of support, risk and security reduction measures are provided or signposted to by the County Council within the context of increasing focus on this area nationally.

County Councillors have been offered one to one and group support and access to a range of support mechanisms including:

- Individual or group **briefings on personal safety** from the Council’s Health and Safety Manager.
- Personal safety on-line training is also available for members.
- Individual or group **risk assessments** undertaken as appropriate by the Health and Safety Manager.
- A number of members have requested that their declaration of interests be treated as **sensitive**, given their concerns about their safety, and information removed from the public website.

##### **Counter Terrorism Policing support:**

The Monitoring Officer shared information with all members in February about a series of personal security briefings for members set up by Counter Terrorism Policing. Those briefings were to take place monthly during February March and April and will then move to a bi-monthly basis. Members were encouraged to take advantage of

those briefings to maintain awareness of the latest advice and information. Members were encouraged to raise any individual issues direct with the Monitoring Officer.

### **Police support:**

Information on how to access appropriate support has been shared. Councillors can report any emergency (where a crime is in progress or someone is in immediate danger) and non-emergencies (other non-emergency crime) by contacting the police directly.

In addition, councillors can also link in with their local neighbourhood Inspector to discuss any concerns they have. Counter Terrorism Policing have asked local policing leads to ensure local Inspectors make contact with Councillors so that they have their contact details readily accessible.

The Council has also followed up specific cases and police referrals on behalf of members at their request in some cases.

### **Lone Worker App:**

The Council has procured access to a "lone worker" App which is available for members to use. This provides certain additional personal safety and security features which can help to protect members when working away from their home or office base. If members wish to access the App, the IT drop in point in County Hall reception will assist. The Health and Safety Team can also provide briefings on use of the App for Members.

### **Reporting of incidents:**

Members are encouraged to report any incidents of abuse through the Council's corporate accident report system. Health and safety colleagues can assist members with this and will identify common themes and issues arising.

### **Signposting members to external advice and support**

The LGA guidance on personal safety provides practical advice for councillors to enhance online security and minimise the risk of online abuse. There is also a range of other useful resources already signposted within the information provided by the Monitoring Officer in February.

### **Counselling support**

Confidential, mental health and wellbeing and counselling support is available 24/7, free of charge to all members and can be accessed by contacting the HR team directly. Colleagues from our Health and Safety team and Democratic Services are also available to advise and support on specific issues.

### **Additional government funding**

In recognition of the need to safeguard the people, processes and institutions upon which our democracy relies, it has been reported that the Government has committed an additional £31 million of funding to protect democratic processes and enhance security measures for elected representatives.

It is understood that the investment will be used to enhance police capabilities, increase private sector security provisions for those facing a higher risk, and expand cyber security advice to locally elected representatives.

It will also ensure all elected representatives and candidates have a dedicated, named police contact to liaise with on security matters, significantly expanding the support provided under current policing arrangements.

No doubt the measures will need to be kept under review and adapted as appropriate, as the needs of elected representatives develop.