

## **County Councillor Annual Report 2009/10**

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2009/10.

Name of Councillor    Mr B Pain

### **Council Activities**

#### **Committees you serve on at County Hall**

The committees that I have served on during the year 2009 to 2010 are:

The Adult Social Care and Health Committee

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Joint Health and Overview Committee

The Corporate Governance Committee

The Budget and Performance Monitoring Panel

The Member Learning and Development Panel

In addition to the above, I have been available to engage fully with the overall scrutiny function of the Leicestershire County Council. I have also raised various questions to the leader and his cabinet, inside and outside the confines of the council chamber.

The most notable issues raised are in relation to our highways and verges within the Division; participatory budgeting and the need for this successfully procured money to be distributed as a matter of priority so as to allow various groups within the constituency to bid; school transportation and the supplementary documents that assesses the walking routes to school; an update regarding a commitment to freeze council taxes in Leicestershire; to address the issue of £7,000 per person being spent on local services like health, education and care for the elderly whilst only £350 of this cost is controlled by directly elected representatives that the public elect. This information has arisen from the excellent work that the County Council has undertaken with regards to its involvement in the 'Total Place' agenda. Leicestershire County Council was chosen by the government as a pilot authority to evaluate and evolve a new way of efficient governance.

## Adult Social Care and Health Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

We have reviewed and scrutinised the council's performance in relation to social care provision. We've also scrutinised the activities of the NHS in Leicestershire County and Rutland. A major issue for this committee has been the supported accommodation policy in Leicestershire and the implications that arose from unsuccessfully transferring six elderly people's homes into third-party ownership due to the banking crisis in June 2009. We have been integral in the development of extra care housing in Leicestershire as this helps people stay independent for longer. The committee has looked at the process of the adult social care transport policy to ensure that different options of travel are taken into account before decisions are made regarding assisted transport. An overarching theme to the year has been the personalisation of adult social care that the committee has supported. I've also championed the concerns of many regarding the Harborough District's desire, as has been promised, for more modern medical facilities to accommodate the ever-growing populace of the district.

### Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Health Overview and Scrutiny committee

I've taken the opportunity to address primary care trust officials regarding the unclear position in relation to our medical facilities in Market Harborough. In addition, we have looked at regional developments in health care including new models for children and young people's cancer services, major trauma, and stroke and heart attack care. The committee has followed the progress and status of the East Midlands Ambulance Services and University Hospital Leicester's desire to become a Foundation Trust. Whilst the committee is largely supportive of this bid, I've voiced reservations in relation to the capability of these bodies to be accountable to the public under a status of a Foundation Trust.

### The Corporate Governance Committee

This committee is charged with overseeing such issues as Treasury Management, Risk Management and Audit of the Leicestershire County Council. Given the current economic times, this committee has had much work to do and often has had to respond at very short notice.

### The Budget and Performance Monitoring Committee

This is a new scrutiny body, which has been established during 2009 as part of the new scrutiny arrangements that have been put into place at Leicestershire County Council. The panel has two main functions: to

consider the quarterly performance and budget reports and to consider the county council's medium-term financial strategy (the Budget). The panel has noted the difficult work that all the departments have had in increasing efficiency savings and reducing budgets. It is notable that at the year-end, a slight budget under-spend has been identified for the financial year. The panel was also pleased to see a Performance Reward grant of just over £4 million in relation to the council achieving many of its outcomes in relation to their Local Area Agreements. The panel met prior to the adoption of the budget for an intensive day to consider the overall budget of three departmental budgets and to question five lead members on their budget proposals. During the coming year, we will be concentrating on the council's underperforming Local Area Agreement national performance indicators and to further scrutinise, in ever more detail, the council's overall budget in order to monitor how well it is achieving its efficiency and spending reduction targets.

### **Local committees – Highway Forums and Community Forums etc**

The local committees that I have sat on throughout the last year are:

The Market Harborough Highways Forum  
The Market Harborough Community Forum  
The Rural West Community Forum

#### **The Market Harborough Highways Forum**

This is made up of elected Leicestershire County Council and Harborough District Council representatives. It is an opportunity to formally record matters of significance in relation to highway issues and also for elected members to be kept informed of forthcoming issues and previous issues that relate to all of us. During the past year we have been updated on the maintenance and improvement programmes; we have looked at a policy pertaining to parish funded 'Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs'; we have reviewed data relating to road safety in Leicestershire as well as discussing community speed watch and its ongoing development; we have had discussions in relation to train station parking in the town whilst continually trying to drive upwards our highways department customer service standards. We have looked at school travel plans and reviewed our winter maintenance programmes amongst many other items of business.

Most notably, I am driving home the issue of our ever-increased congestion, especially during peak points of the day, within and around the town of Market Harborough. Any further development needs to address this ongoing issue through the Local Transport Plan update.

## The Market Harborough and Rural West Community Forums

Both forums are essentially run by the public for the public and are an opportunity for elected members to listen to the concerns from members of the public and share their thoughts. Over the last year, these forums have been revitalised to make the agenda more relevant to ongoing issues and to provide the public with responses from senior officers from all of the public service bodies, not just the local authorities.

Leicestershire County Council, by virtue of their nationally recognised competence, were successful in their bid to administer a government scheme known as participatory budgeting. This has meant that £100,000 has been made available to the community forums in the District in order for them to suggest and recommend ways by which this money can be used for the benefit of the local community. During the last year, participants have attended these forums and have been made aware of the criteria by which they can access funding. As of the middle of June 2010, 3 worthwhile projects within the Market Harborough forum have already been identified as approved beneficiaries of these funds.

One other most notable occurrence regarding our community forums was the review that has been undertaken by the Harborough District Council, which resulted in changes to the number, frequency, location and agenda relevance of these meetings following consultation with the public. The title of these meetings has also been changed from the 'Have Your Say' meetings to simply, 'The Community Forum.'

## Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc

Other bodies that I have been engaged with during the past year are as follows:

The Carlton Hayes Memorial Trust  
The Foxton Locks Partnership  
The Robert Monk Trust

## **Electoral Division activities**

### **Main Activities during the past year**

Developing my experience as a champion of people's interests and further my knowledge in becoming a community leader, to provide me with the skills needed to becoming a 21<sup>st</sup> Century councillor.

### **Priorities for the immediate future are:**

My main priorities for the immediate future and the coming year are to successfully mitigate the effects of the removal of the subsidized special bus service that has traditionally taken schoolchildren from the villages outside of Market Harborough to the main schools within. Another priority is to continue to drive and push forward the public's desire, and indeed my own, to realise a more up-to-date and modern infrastructure for our medical services. A third priority is to do all I can to ensure that the ongoing expenditure threats are considered sensitively whilst being conscious of other ways in which services may be provided.

### **Learning and development:**

I have been privileged and fortunate to have been put forward as a member of the 'Next Generation' programme- a course provided by Warwick University in conjunction with the LGA and IDeA, intended to make local councillors more aware of the roles they have and how better we can serve the people who elect us. This has enabled me to understand and enhance my ability to represent the public that I serve to a degree that will enable me to more effectively deliver results for all our communities. The course has been invaluable in my understanding of the systems of governance, the big issues that we are facing and possible ways by which we can address these issues. In addition, I have been actively present and involved in many of the training and briefing seminars that have been organised and presented by Leicestershire County Council.

**Other Matters:**

Doing more with fewer resources; developing the County's links with neighbouring authorities; securing our children's future through supporting our local schools; promoting Market Harborough as a great place to live, own a business and bring up a family.

**Signed by Councillor:**

**Date:**