

## Queniborough Annual Report

2024

The last 12 months have been another very challenging year financially for Leicestershire County Council. The issue continues to be low central government funding, high service demand and inflation outstripping the County Council's ability to raise money through Council Tax. Added to that an increase in the National Living Wage announced before Christmas and essentially Leicestershire is left requiring to do more with less resources available. For that reason the fairer funding campaign has continued apace and the Council's Administration have met with a number of members of the Government, including a meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer at No.11 Downing Street to make the case for local government funding reform.

There has been some good news in government funding for Leicestershire however. In the past year Leicestershire has had committed:

- £1.78m in funding for buses
- £2.25m for road repairs and potholes
- £5m in additional funding (mainly to go towards social care)
- £238m in Network North money towards transport projects in the county (to be spent over a seven-year period from financial year 2025/26)

These are of course very welcome but until local government funding reform is introduced Leicestershire will continue to have the fundamental problem that demand exceeds the Council's ability to pay for it and that is obviously not a sustainable situation in the long term.

At County Hall I have continued to serve as a Scrutiny Commissioner, one of four Councillors who manages the scrutiny function at Leicestershire County Council. The Scrutiny Commission examines in detail both reports coming to Cabinet for decision as well as the work and performance of the Authority more generally. Scrutiny is a really important way policy is refined and decision making is improved, it is therefore one of the most important aspects of the democratic accountability of Leicestershire County Council.

I also serve as a member of the ESPO Management Committee. ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) is a Purchasing Organisation, owned by a number of Local Authorities (including Leicestershire) which supplies all manner of goods (but is best known for stationary and other such supplies) to schools, offices, government departments and a wide range of other organisations both across the UK and now internationally as well. It is a profitable enterprise and generates an income for Leicestershire County Council.

In the village I've worked on many things alongside the Parish Council, residents and others. These include:

- The school entrance safety project (to create a new, safer entrance for children going to school)
- Residents parking issues
- Flood prevention and drainage works on Queniborough Road
- Tree and hedge planting
- Speeding and other highway matters

I'd like to finish this year's report by thanking the Parish Council and Village Clerk Rachel Barlow-Skinner for all the work they do for the village. I work very closely with them and see the commitment they show to making Queniborough a great place to live. I'd also like to thank the Borough Councillors for the work they do for the village, as well as Edward Argar MP with whom I work closely for residents.

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