

Leaders Report 18th September 2023

The authority has taken the next step towards appointing a new CEO. The decision rightly rests with full council and will be decided by the vote of our members. The process presented some interesting information: 19 high quality applicants, ten of whom made it to the long list leading on to the four who made it to short list for interview. Thanks to the members who made it along to the buffet lunch to meet the candidates. Special thanks to Cllr Bateman and Councillor Woodiwiss for their hard work and input as members of the interview panel.

Harborough District Council recently hosted a health providers event, looking forward to the needs of the community in the years to come. The next stage moves to a public meeting and I have contacted the authorities looking to secure a date and repeating that we are happy to host the event in the Council Chamber. I also had the pleasure of meeting with health campaigners in Lutterworth.

Numerous events have taken place over recent weeks and continue to do so. From Arts Fresco to Comic Con and the major two day food festival on Welland Park. I attended the Tilton on The Hill Car Club Launch. The first scheme of this kind in the county of Leicestershire and one of just a handful of these type of schemes in the country. We really must congratulate all who have made it possible. I also had the opportunity to attend the Taste the Place Launch Event at the Cafe Ventoux in Tugby, an event also attended by Cllr Modha who I'm sure will agree that it was a great success.

I have as Leader had meetings with businesses/traders in the Chamber and visited many personally. There is in my opinion a need to improve the regular communications between the council and businesses across the district - our officers are looking at this in detail to provide options for consideration.

The date of the prison decision has been delayed yet again. This authorities planning committee debated this building proposal, considered this super prison proposal and unanimously voted to refuse it. These continuing delays beg many questions but I have suggested to the Secretary of State a very simple way to resolve all of this. He should accept the democratic decision of the planning committee, accept that this is not the place to build this super prison and instruct those responsible for this scheme to look elsewhere in the country.

More bank closures have seen one of the offices on the ground floor of the Symington Building opened as a pop-up facility. They can't handle cash, they aren't open every day but the banks wanted to keep a presence here in Market Harborough. It's not ideal and I think we all share concerns at the bank closures and loss of face-to-face facilities. Yes many residents bank on line but there are also those who need the face-to-face option. The services need to dovetail to meet all the customers needs. The Interim CEO and I have held meetings about the provision of bank hubs. Lutterworth looks to be imminent - for Market Harborough it's a watching brief. Should there be more closures we will have a limited amount of time to push forward and quickly.