



## This week's news from Ben Bradley MP



### Nottinghamshire County Council's Budget

This week Budget papers are published at Nottinghamshire County Council ahead of decisions at the end of February, with proposals for the 2024/5 financial year.

As I've discussed with residents a lot in recent weeks, all Councils are under pressure from the huge rise in costs for delivering care services, in particular. That's affecting everyone, but at Notts CC we've managed a programme of change over several years that means we've managed demand and improved value for money over time, so we're relatively in a far better place than the vast majority of Councils.

Whilst others are now having to cut services, Nottinghamshire is able to produce a budget that protects our services, and adds additional investment in roads, in 'prevention' services and recycling centres amongst other things, and a big capital programme for schools and other major projects. Whilst things are being slashed in the city, we're improving the support we offer here. Just shows that these things can be done, with a proper long term plan and good management.

We're making savings by improving processes, introducing technology, working better with partners and reducing the number of office buildings, for example, which means that we are not cutting any services.

I've been batting for more funding in Parliament in recent weeks

and residents may have seen that last week I successfully secured just over £7m extra for Nottinghamshire County Council (£500m nationally) to help support key care services. That's great, and has also given us flexibility elsewhere. We're now able to additionally announce a £4m extra investment in the roads, and to reduce the rise in Council Tax.

On tax, I recognise that this is a tricky balance. I'm the first to say I don't want to see tax rises, but Councils also have a legal duty to balance the books. If you don't, then you get in to a situation like the City where you're forced to just cut everything. Councils that are responsible for social care have a 2% social care levy whilst Council tax will rise by 2.8%. That amounts to just over £1 a week in total for most residents, with reliefs and support available for people who are struggling.

We've been able to limit those rises to that 2.8% rather than the 3% maximum that pretty much every other Council in Britain will do. And that might seem small, but significantly it's well over half a million quid that stays in residents pockets, so we were very keen to do that. The Council has never taken a maximum tax rise since I've been in charge, again whilst pretty much everywhere else has every year. When I took over we were the highest taxed County in England, and that's no longer the case because we've been gradually improving the value for money for our services.

We'll also be the only Council, I reckon, that has a balanced Budget for the next two years, not just one. We're planning long term, delivering managed change and therefore we're in a much stronger financial position than most. This means residents can be absolutely assured that their services are not going to disappear like they are in Nottingham, or elsewhere.

When you look around our County, we've obviously got Nottingham in a mess after Robin Hood Energy, we've got Labour-run Mansfield where they've just announced huge cuts after ignoring a number of issues for several years, you've got Ashfeld where they say everything is shiny but their debt is 10x the size of their annual budget which is a total ticking time bomb. These problems are locally created by poor decisions.

At Nottinghamshire County Council, Conservative-led, were under the same pressures as everyone else, but were finding solutions. We're not cutting services, we're not borrowing anything at all, we're avoiding maximum tax rises, we're investing in the services that support the most vulnerable. All Councils are under pressure, but I'm very confident in saying that Nottinghamshire is managing it better than most. That's good news for local residents.

[I talk more about this here](#)

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## Keep in touch!



[Join my constituents only Facebook group here!](#)

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## Roads survey!

I need your support to ensure that we deliver major new road investment with the £1.5bn Transport Fund that I've secured for our region.



This is really important.

Please share your views on the roads using the link below!

[Fill in the survey here](#)



## **It's fantastic to visit so many businesses!**

I've been out and about across Mansfield visiting residents and businesses, hearing views, challenges and about good stuff that's happening across our District.

For all the time pressures and stresses of the job, those days when I can get out and chat with residents across our community are still my favourite days!



## **More funding for local clubs!**

Small but nice news, that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is contributing £1000 towards new goalposts to support Berry Hill United and Woodhouse Colts JFC, through their 'Get Active Strategy' that aims to support grassroots sports.

Good stuff!

[Read more about recent funding for grassroots sports here!](#)



## **New men's mental health hospital opens!**

A pleasure to be at the new Cygnet Hospital near Rainworth this week to cut the ribbon and open a new men's mental health hospital, which will have three new wards including a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit.

The investment by Cygnet Group is most welcome, extending their existing base here with new wards and facilities and continuing to grow, employ people and help NHS patients from Mansfield and the surrounding areas.

As well as offering additional capacity, it should also help to reduce the number of people who have to go to far flung parts of the country to receive this treatment. Now they'll be able to stay close to home, and close to family and friends.

I've been one of the most vocal in Parliament on men's issues and men's mental health, and there aren't many folks in Mansfield who haven't been touched in some way by these issues, either themselves or dealing with supporting friends or family. We all have men in our lives who sometimes need help.

That's why I'm really grateful to have been invited along this morning to have a look around and open this new hospital, and to welcome this investment in our local services. I know it will make a huge difference to people, supporting local men through their darkest hours and back to good health.



## **Meeting with local arts, culture and learning disability organisations**

I've been at the Old Library on Leeming Street with a network of arts and culture, learning disability and education organisations hearing from Access All Areas about the amazing work they've done in London with learning disabled people.

They've created a theatre and acting based course supporting learning disabled people with professional training and qualifications, that's leading people in to jobs in the industry and rewarding independent lives. We saw some great examples of people progressing to be in stage and screen, or behind the scenes, in a whole range of ways.

Mansfield has a higher than average level of learning disability, and a lower than average level of engagement in the arts and culture. Led by the guys from Mansfield's OneConversation and OneFest, this network of local providers has been considering and working on ways to support that independence, employability and better outcomes for learning disabled people here.

Obviously Mansfield is not London, which brings its challenges, but fascinating to consider whether this kind of model could be delivered here, and to look at what would be needed to make that happen. It's a moral and social imperative really, as well as an economic one, to ensure that we're improving the opportunity and outcomes that are available for people.

## **More NHS testing appointments!**

"Sherwood Forest Hospitals extends blood test services with new Saturday clinics. Building on the success of the new Mansfield Community Diagnostic Centre, which has already delivered over 7,000 health checks, the Centre is offering hundreds more blood tests on Saturdays."

**Great news that our local hospital is building on the early success of the new Community Diagnostic**



Centre by extending further testing appointment out to residents, now including weekends. There's lots going on to try and tackle waiting lists and open up access to appointments.

[Find out more!](#)



## Another STEP forward for Nuclear Fusion!

Brilliant steps forward for our HUGE Fusion project in North Notts, with the first new offices opening on site at West Burton for the UK Atomic Energy Authority and STEP Fusion.

Since the announcement of the £20 billion investment in clean energy research and engineering here in Nottinghamshire, the UKAEA have now started to employ local people, and have been working extensively with local communities. Now having their first permanent office on site is a great step, towards a long term plan for thousands of jobs here developing a first commercial fusion power station.

North Nottinghamshire has kept Britain's lights on for decades, and it will continue to do so for many decades more. The site was officially opened this week by Rebecca (pictured) who is the third generation of her family to work on site at the existing coal fired power station. Now we're creating the jobs for the next generation here too.



## Levelling Up funds!

I've been at Mansfield District Council this lunchtime talking about progressing all of the various funds, projects and schemes we've got locally as part of our £72m Levelling Up set of investments. Important that partners are working together on these things across different politics and different organisations, so that we can get spades in the ground on things ASAP.



## Warsop Leisure Hub is almost ready!

Good news. Warsop Leisure and Health Hub is set to open in June. On track, with opening dates now in the diary. Good stuff for Warsop residents from the Towns Fund that we secured from Government a few years ago.

[Find out more!](#)

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## And finally... This week's column



**"The additional funding for social care I've secured will make**

Thank-you for reading my latest update, I hope you have a great weekend!

Warmest regards,

**Ben Bradley MP,**  
for Mansfield & Warsop



Keep up to date with my work



**Ben Bradley MP**

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