

## **Establishing Leadership in a ‘Busy’ Governance Structure – Dr Martin Quinn, University of Leicester School of Business**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the introduction of an Elected Mayor to the City of Leicester in the East Midlands of England. The new position was introduced in 2011 without public consultation and placed into an existing established local government structure. The Leicester and Leicestershire economy already had a Unitary City Authority, parish, district and county councils in the wider County and a Local Enterprise Partnership alongside the surviving networks in both the public and private sectors across the East Midlands region. The new position was controversial, more than one candidate in the first election (including the Conservative candidate who came second) ran on a platform of abolishing the role if elected and the post caused rifts within the local Labour Party with the expected candidate, at the time the City Council Leader, being usurped by one of the local MPs.

Today the Mayor is the established leader of the City and, indeed, the wider local economy. He was re-elected in 2015 with a 59% turnout and a 70% share of the vote. No party stood on a platform of abolition and the position is fully embedded as the dominant voice in local government/governance with broad support across the private sector and varied communities of Leicester.

This paper will examine the programme of activities the Mayor and his team undertook in his initial period of office (dubbed ‘100 pledges in 100 days’) and the years since then. The paper uses a series of in depth interviews with 50 representatives from across the public, business, and community sectors to explore how the mayor came to hold such a dominant position within the local structures so quickly and asks what questions and issues the role faces if it is to remain so central after the current incumbent leaves office.