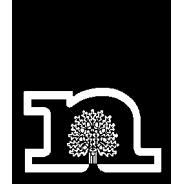


# report

Nottinghamshire  
County Council



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| meeting | <b>ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE</b> |                    |
| date    | <b>Monday, 18 October 2004</b>               | agenda item number |
| from:   | <b>Cabinet Member for Resources</b>          |                    |

## REPORT FOR PERIOD JULY 2004 – SEPTEMBER 2004

### 1. Environment Direct Services

I have received the results for the first quarter of the year and although turnover and cumulative profit is behind target, the majority of businesses are seeing an uplift in performance and anticipate achieving year end targets:

**Highways** is only slightly behind target with a significant increase in workload anticipated later in the year with the Building Better Communities programme.

**Building Cleaning** have experienced good progress and the business has secured a greater level of buy-back than anticipated.

**Landscape Services** has budgeted for a deficit this year in order to restrict price increases to customers and retain buy-back of the service. At present the service is behind target, but specialist construction project work is due to start later in the year and it is expected that the service will exceed its targeted income for this type of work.

**BuildingDIRECT** is only slightly behind target at this stage and this is indicative of the efforts that have been made in the last few months to improve performance. Turnover and profitability have both increased.

**Schools Catering** is just below target. Operationally a number of positive developments have occurred over the last few months: three new cashless systems have been introduced which will result in increased turnover and the contract for Minster School has been won back from the private sector.

This is a very solid start to the trading year and, as ever, I am encouraged by the commitment shown by everyone working in the direct services.

## **2. Partnership for the Provision of Building Maintenance**

Members will recall that Robert Woodhead Ltd was awarded a 4 year partnership contract for building maintenance in April 2003 with a provision to extend to 7 depending upon performance. The first review of performance took place after 12 months and I am pleased to report that the company has performed well and we have received some very complimentary letters from head teachers about the quality of the work and the attitude of staff.

Over the past year both Robert Woodhead Ltd and *buildingDIRECT* have needed to learn new ways of working and overcome localised problems, all of which has been undertaken in a spirit of trust and co-operation.

Experience with existing Partnerships (eg Babbie) and consultation with other local authorities has indicated that for partnerships to succeed and hence produce maximum benefits, an experienced manager is needed to drive them forward. A Partnership Manager has now been appointed and this role is being undertaken within the existing Programme Managers duties. Since the appointment the Partnership Manager has agreed many of the key drivers that will shape the future operation of the partnership.

## **3. Environment Department Services to Schools Awards**

Since the formation of Property Services in 2003 Catering has held an annual event to celebrate the success of individuals who achieved certificates through training and development initiatives. This year the event was widened to include a prize for the Catering and Cleaning Team of the Year and nominations were sought from head teachers.

There are tangible benefits, both to employees and customers in recognising the contributions of individuals and teams to the work of the Division. I am, therefore, supporting a recommendation to further develop this event into an Environment Department Services to Schools Awards evening. This will encompass catering, cleaning, landscape, design, repair and maintenance, school crossing patrols and any other service within the Department that schools may nominate. The expected benefits are:

- Closer departmental working on school issues
- Benefits to staff in recognition of achievements
- Positive use of performance management information to promote business excellence
- Demonstrable evidence to both the Education Department and the Authority of our commitment to improving service delivery

If the proposal is supported by the Cabinet Member for Environment, private sponsorship will be explored to fund the occasion and approval will be sought from Administration Committee.

#### **4. Beacon Council Bid for Sustainable Energy**

Sustainable Energy is one of the 10 themes which make up round 6 of the Beacon Council scheme. Government guidance emphasises the broad nature of this theme and the role that land use planning, transport and waste management policies can have in reducing energy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Authority has considerable achievements in these areas and it has been decided that we should submit a bid.

Beacon status brings significant recognition to successful authorities. They are expected to deliver a wide and varied programme of events to disseminate their good practice amongst other authorities. This is a substantial commitment, but Beacon Council status does bring in funding to help with this work.

The bid has now been submitted and the shortlisting takes place in November, with the final result being announced in April 2005.

#### **5. Proposed Refurbishment Of Trent Bridge House Cafeteria**

Trent Bridge House was built in the mid 1970s. Its cafeteria is used for preparing limited hot meals, but mainly cold snacks. The existing cooking equipment consists of a microwave oven. The area also doubles as a limited meeting room. After nearly 30 years of use the cafeteria has lost its appeal as an inviting meeting area and falls well below the standard of similar facilities at County Hall. The level of usage by staff is poor and the service is currently heavily subsidised.

A satisfaction survey indicated that staff would use the facility more if a variety of hot meals were on the menu and if there were extended opening hours. The cafeteria currently closes at 1.30 pm. In addition, the existing air extraction system just meets the standards required by legislation, but will need to be addressed in the long term.

Along with the Cabinet Members for Environment and Finance and Property, I have given my approval for the refurbishment to take place. The chosen option will provide a pleasant, high quality dining and meeting facility with a Cyber Café provision for staff, and an impressive area for use by internal and external visitors to the Environment Department. Work has been going on over the summer and is almost complete.

It is expected that these improvements, along with a wider choice of products will boost turnover and considerably reduce, if not eliminate, the current subsidy.

Cllr John Stocks  
Cabinet Member for Resources