



meeting

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SELECT COMMITTEE

date

30 JANUARY 2006

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES (BBC) INITIATIVE 2005/06 & 2006/07 UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the schemes delivered during 2004/05 (Year 1) through the BBC initiative and to give an update on schemes delivered/programmed during 2005/06 (Year 2) of the programme.

Background

2. Members will be aware that the BBC initiative was launched during 2004/05 in response to surveys showing that the environment is high on the list of concerns for Nottinghamshire's residents. This is further illustrated by the fact that well over 90% of petitions sent to the County Council from local residents relate to environmental concerns.
3. Like most areas in the country, Nottinghamshire has its share of good and less attractive environments. Due to budgetary constraints over the last decade, programmes for renewing footways/pavements have been virtually non-existent. As a result the general outlook of many local roads and streets and the quality and appearance of some areas deteriorated quite significantly. Similar funding problems have meant that the programme of environmental improvements in town centres where the County Council once had a national reputation has had to be substantially curtailed in recent years. Furthermore, opportunities to attract high levels of regional and national funding to improve our landscape, biodiversity, heritage and recreation and tourism offers have been held back because of the lack of match funding available. Accordingly funds have been redirected elsewhere in the country.

BBC Programme - Criteria/Objectives

4. In this context the County Council approved the ground breaking 5 year BBC initiative of substantial investment to improve the local environment in the County in order to make Nottinghamshire a better place to live and work and also attract inward investment and promote tourism. This programme is primarily aimed at

improving and enhancing the quality of the local environment such as neglected areas within the highway or improvements schemes in need of a 'refresh'. It is important to stress that BBC is aimed at improving the quality of the physical environment. It is important to stress that the BBC programme is separate from planned repairs of the highway network revenue budget whose objective is to keep it in a good condition for the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians.

5. Much of the worst environmental deterioration has taken place in the County's more traditional industrial areas which have seen massive change over recent years. As many of these areas are in the top 25% of the County's deprived wards, a decision was made by the County Council to target significant levels of BBC funding into these areas.

BBC Schemes in 2004/05 and 2005/06 (Years 1 and 2)

6. During Year 1 (2004/05) of the initiative over 220 schemes were delivered across the County and around 85% of the budget was spent in the top 25% deprived wards (based upon year 2000 Indices of Multiple Deprivation).
7. Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of all schemes delivered during Year 1 (2004/05) on a County Council ward basis. Scheme designation by ward is determined on the County ward boundaries post May 2005.
8. Appendix 2 is a list of all schemes delivered (or programmed for delivery) during 2005/06. Should any of these schemes prove to be undeliverable during this year it is intended they will be carried forward for delivery in 2006/07. It should be noted that the County ward boundary changes and the potential move to using Super Output Areas to identify areas of deprivation make it difficult to compare wards in Years 1 and 2 on a consistent basis.

BBC Programme in 2006/07 to 2008/09 (Years 3 and 4)

9. At the Cabinet meeting of 14 September 2005 a spend profile for the annual BBC programme was agreed as:
 - 60% budget spend on Highways Community Schemes similar to those delivered during 2004/05.
 - 30% budget spend on Flagship Schemes. These generally require a BBC contribution of over £100,000 and draw in external funds.
 - 10% budget spend on Heritage/Conservation Community Schemes. These projects have been introduced during 2005/06 and are usually more rural in nature, including the creation of 'pocket parks', biodiversity projects and restoration of war memorials
10. During December 2005 all County Members received a letter detailing schemes delivered, programmed and approved for consideration in future BBC programmes.

11. Over 150 new applications for projects to be considered for inclusion in future years' programmes were received prior to the closing date of the end of September 2005. Once again the quality of applications and the range of schemes requested were impressive. The programme of works for 2006/07 (Year 3) will be prepared on the basis of the Cabinet decision mentioned above, in consultation with the relevant County Councillors as appropriate early in the New Year.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that the report be noted.

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Director of Environment

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