

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**REPORT TITLE****LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME (LIS) PROGRAMME 2011/12 AND 2012/13****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides details on the current position of the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) programme, formerly named Building Better Communities (BBC). It outlines achievements of 2011/12 (Year 8) and provides details of the 2012/13 (Year 9) programme for approval.

Information and Advice

2. This report leads to a key decision as expenditure of more than £1million would be incurred and there would be a significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions in the County Council area. Notice of intention to make the decision was published in the County Council's Forward Plan on 8th December 2012.

2011/2012 Year 8 Overview

3. The LIS initiative was developed by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2004 to promote a wide range of environmental improvements across the County for the benefit of local communities. The initiative has been an unrivalled success with a significant number of high profile developments being delivered across the County. The programme has been widely recognised and has earned the County Council credit as well as many accolades and awards locally, regionally and nationally. The most recent being as a result of an LIS scheme which saw the installation of a unique community CCTV system in East Stoke, which is the first of it's kind and the first in the country to be given the Association of Police Officers "Secured by Design" award.
4. Year 8 has built on the success of previous years with schemes being delivered under three headings; Environmental Improvements, Heritage and Conservation community schemes

and Local Identity projects. Funding has been apportioned in accordance with the demand generated by the scheme suggestion process. Photographs and further details of the schemes delivered over the past year can be found on the County Council website at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/lis. Schemes featured include:

- Rural craftsmanship of hedge laying first hand at Edwinstowe Allotments where hedgerows have been installed for security reasons and to help attract wildlife. Craftsman Bob Martin is delighted that LIS is helping keep the craft alive as more than 300,000 miles has been lost in the last 50 years due to roads, development and modern farming practices.
 - A number of footpath improvements have been carried out across the county including Garwick Close in Forest Town, Kirklington Road in Southwell, Sibcy Lane in Balderton, Alfred Street in Sutton in Ashfield and Barker Street in Huthwaite.
 - A previous LIS award winning scheme which is now one of the county's emerging tourist attractions, the Hobbucks Nature Area in Arnold, has had a pond and wetland area created to attract a variety of wildlife. LIS funding has also installed a viewpoint panel from which you can see landmarks like Charnwood Forest (21 miles away), Wollaton Hall and East Midlands Airport.
5. During Year 9 around 200 schemes are expected to be delivered which will bring the total number of schemes completed since its inception in 2004 to almost 3000 by the close of 2012/13. The vast majority of these projects have been requested directly by local communities and in turn endorsed by County Electoral Division Members. The delivery of this number of schemes has been possible through a continued shared commitment to the programme from County Council Members and community groups who have given considerable support to the initiative.
6. During 2011/12 all of the 54 electoral divisions have benefited from one or more schemes being delivered or developed for implementation in 2012/13. The scheme delivery for 2011/12 and the proposed delivery for 2012/13 within each district is shown below. The reduced number of schemes for 2012/2013 reflects a reduced budget allocation and an increase in the value awarded to schemes proposed within the local identity programme.

2011/2012	Environmental Improvements	Conservation	Local Identity	TOTAL
Ashfield	17	6	5	28
Bassetlaw	8	15	35	58
Broxtowe	4	7	9	20
Gedling	5	13	15	33
Mansfield	11	7	3	21
Newark & Sherwood	13	22	26	61
Rushcliffe	17	18	6	41
Countywide	1	1	-	1
TOTALS	75	89	99	263

2012/2013 (proposed)	Environmental Improvements	Conservation	Local Identity	TOTAL
Ashfield	9	6	14	29
Bassetlaw	4	15	22	41
Broxtowe	3	6	15	24
Gedling	3	5	11	19
Mansfield	6	7	7	20
Newark & Sherwood	9	6	9	24
Rushcliffe	6	12	20	38
Countywide	-	1	2	3
TOTALS	40	58	100	198

7. Given the local impetus behind all projects, they have been and are being well received and make a real difference to local communities. Consequently a great deal of positive publicity is generated in the local media. Regular features and editorial have been secured in a number of publications including Nottinghamshire Today, The Nottingham Evening Post and weekly local press. Listed below are a number of examples of highlights from the 2011/12 programme
- Extensive coverage of war memorials and restoration efforts countywide.
 - Restoration of the 150 mature lime trees at Milton, near Tuxford.
 - Restoration work at Sibthorpe dovecote, one of the oldest in the country.
 - New pond and dipping platform at Brinsley Headstocks.
 - Improvements at the Hobbucks Nature Area in Arnold.
 - Community Mosaic in Mansfield Woodhouse.
 - Conservation works at John Eastwood Hospice in Sutton in Ashfield.
 - Multi Use Games Area and play areas across the county including Oxtun, Papplewick, Granby and Calverton.
 - Anti-social behaviour brought under control in Newgate Lane in Mansfield with the installation of better lighting and security fencing.
 - The Mansfield Fire Station Preservation Society received funding to help with restoring four oil paintings which are part of the Merryweather Collection housed at the station.
 - Benches, finger posts and notice boards installed in villages and towns across the county.

2011/2012 Year 8 Environmental Improvement Schemes

8. A range of local schemes worth approximately £1.5m have been delivered within this heading including small environmental improvements in key community areas such as

shopping parades or routes to local facilities, additional street lighting and the creation of car parking in dense residential areas. These projects have all been delivered by the County Council's Highways Operations and District Council partners. One of the landmarks of the years programme was LIS delivering its 2000th scheme. The scheme epitomised the very essence of LIS in that the residents had been campaigning for a play park for some 10 years. In this time the number of young families in the area had grown by 63% - so the need had become vital. Five mums spearheaded the campaign and it was LIS funding that eventually turned their pipedream into reality.

9. New areas of work that have been developed during Year 8 that will be prevalent in next year's programme including:
 - Nottinghamshire's Famous Sons and Daughters, a web based interactive project showcasing hundreds of accomplished individuals who were born or lived in Nottinghamshire.
 - From the 'Trent to the Trenches' – a project in collaboration with Nottingham City Council in the run up to commemorating the start of the First World War in 2014.
 - Nottinghamshire's Roll of Honour – Working with an extensive network of trusted volunteers countywide to create a web based historical casualty record honouring all the county's war dead. Approximately 12,000 individuals have thought to have lost their lives from the towns and parishes of Nottinghamshire.
 - Skate and BMX parks.
 - Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee celebrations.
 - Olympic themed schemes.

2011/2012 Conservation Community Schemes

10. These projects are instigated by local communities and developed to delivery with their close involvement throughout. 4,800 hours of volunteer time on projects have been recorded so far, with some groups still to report. This year the LIS programme has successfully supported communities across the County in restoring and enhancing their natural and built heritage. Working closely with, and supported by, the County Council's conservation specialists, local people and groups have created allotments and ponds, restored hedgerows and planted trees. Memorials have been restored and created, graveyards surveyed and recorded and some of the County's important heritage assets, such as listed community buildings, have been restored.
11. Some of the projects have successfully attracted match funding from organisations such as English Heritage, WREN and the Heritage Lottery Fund and almost £350,000 has been secured this year. Projects to preserve Flintham Dovecote and the remains of St Helen's church in South Wheatley, for example, have attracted £105,000 of English Heritage funding for an investment of £43,000 through LIS. The heritage group in Beeston has also been supported through the LIS programme in undertaking initial works to the proposed Beeston Canalside Heritage Centre at Beeston Lock and in submitting a Stage 1 Bid for a £600,000 Heritage Lottery Fund project.

12. Some of the other highlights from 2011/12 include, restoring the County's dovecotes. Nottinghamshire once had around 300 dovecotes and LIS has helped to restore and improve access to the circular dovecote at Sibthorpe, a Grade I listed building and scheduled ancient monument which dates from the 13th or 14th century and is the tallest in the county, to re-thatch the medieval listed dovecote at Thoroton has been re-thatched and restore the unusual, free-standing mud dovecote at Flintham.
13. Other highlights include: supporting local people in uncovering the history of the Manor House at Kirkby Hardwick between Kirkby and Sutton in Ashfield. An excavation in October enabled volunteers of all ages to explore the different phases of building on the site and also to record the memories of people who lived in, or visited, the House prior to its demolition. Creating ponds in Langar, Arnold and Brinsley, community gardens in Worksop and West Stockwith and allotments in Newark and Time Team's visit to King John's Palace, King's Clipstone, which followed restoration work supported by LIS and English Heritage last year.

2011/2012 Local Identity Schemes

14. Around a hundred local identity schemes have been completed this year. These schemes are very low cost and have offered the opportunity to every Parish Council, Parish Meeting or Town Council within Nottinghamshire to submit a request for either a notice board or seat to be provided within the local community. This initiative proved to be extremely popular with seats and notice boards being supplied and installed. This work was undertaken by Malcolm Lane & Sons, a local firm having been successful in winning the tender process. In addition, a further strand to this programme has seen the successful scheme delivery and installation of 17 fingerposts and 18 village signs.

2012/2013 Year 9 programme

15. The development of the Year 9 programme commenced at the end of October following the scheme application closing date of the 29 September 2011. Applications were of a high quality and a good variety, reflecting the continuing popularity of the initiative. The year 9 programme will focus on schemes which are driven by local communities and strengthen local accountability. This is considered to be very much in step with the current localism agenda.
16. The proposed year 9 programme reflects the nature of requests received rather than following a prescribed split as recommended by the Members Reference Group, to take effect from the 10th April 2010.
17. The review of the initiative was marked by a change in focus. LIS now concentrates on smaller community projects which 'add value' to the local environment. The funding is not intended to supplement that of standard maintenance work, which will continue to be funded from existing designated budgets. The re-focussing of the programme to these new priority areas has led to the delivery of a significant number of smaller community projects.

18. The Members reference group agreed that the LIS programme will proceed on the following basis:
- a). The LIS initiative will continue as a countywide programme to improve the environment of Nottinghamshire through the development of local improvement schemes that have been promoted by the community and are endorsed by local Members
 - b). The LIS programme will retain its effective, flexible and unique formula and will continue to support a wide range of projects under the broad headings of,
 - i. Better neighbourhoods (landscaping, footway improvements, conservation of local distinctiveness, and general refurbishments),
 - ii. Better countryside (safeguard biodiversity and strengthen rural character),
 - iii. Better business (regeneration of local shops and businesses),
 - iv. Better leisure and tourism (promote the attractiveness and accessibility of places of interest)
 - v. Better awareness (promotion of local 'pride of place').
 - c). Project selection has been re-prioritised to focus on a number of areas considered to have been under-represented to date. The areas that will be promoted are;
 - i. Rural initiatives (e.g. village distinctiveness / village gateway projects),
 - ii. Market Town projects that improve the centre's attractiveness and economic viability.
 - iii. Projects that develop greater local pride and responsibility for the environment. (e.g. conservation projects, heritage projects and the development of pocket parks),
 - iv. Projects that support wider local community involvement and accessibility,
 - v. Projects that encourage economic and cultural regeneration and tourism.
19. In line with this direction the 2012/13 £3m programme (shown as appendix one), subject to scheme development and design will be split between the following headings:

Heritage and Conservation	33%
Local Identity projects	36%
Environmental Improvements	31%

External Funding

20. At the inception of the initiative a key target was to draw in third party funding that otherwise would not have been invested in the County. External investment has been secured this year from Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN), English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, SITA UK, Balfour Beatty Plc, District, Town and Parish Councils, Community Trusts and Private contributions. The external funding secured thus far is as detailed below.

Year	External Funding
2004/5	£1.1m
2005/6	£2.8m
2006/7	£0.75m

2007/8	£3.0m
2008/9	£2.7m
2009/10	£1.3m
2010/2011	£1.4m
2011/2012	£0.98m
TOTAL	£14.03

Every effort will continue to be made to draw in additional funding in the future. This will require the consideration of new funding sources such as accessing social funds as identified by private organisations.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and users. Where such implications are material they have been brought out in the text of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approves the 2012/13 programme set out in paragraph 19 and detailed in the attached appendices.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD BUTLER

Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability

Legal Services' Comments

Cabinet has the authority to approve the recommendation set out in this report. (NAB 1 March 2012)

Financial Comments (MA 01/03/12)

The costs associated with the LIS for 2012/13 will need to be contained within a revised capital programme of £3m, plus any external contributions.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All