



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **28th June 2007**

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FINANCE AND PROPERTY

A. FINANCE

1. Elsewhere on the agenda today is the final out turn report and the Statement of Accounts for 2006/07. These reports show that there has been some underspendings against budget, some of which have been allowed to be carried forward to deal with current year budget pressures and some of which have been held in balances and reserves for future problems. As a result, the position on County Fund Balances is healthier than in previous years but it must be recognised that balances only provide temporary solutions. The work on the final out turn and Statement of Accounts has been made more difficult this year as result of vacancies in certain key parts of the financial structure and also sickness absence and I wish to congratulate all of the members of the finance team that have contributed to the completion of this work on time and to good quality.
2. Since my last report I have provided comments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on their review of consultation arrangements in respect of the County Council budget. The comments from the Scrutiny have been particularly helpful and will inform the approach to be adopted towards budget consultations in the coming months. My comments were positively received.
3. I have been advised that as a result of a competitive tendering exercise under the European procurement rules the Council has now concluded revised insurance arrangements for its major insurance policies for the next 5 years. The overall level of premiums payable to external insurers has fallen from about £2.3m per annum to just over £2m and the scale of cover has been increased in a of number areas.
4. The Pensions Committee met in early June and approved a number of reports including a comprehensive range of Learning and Development activities for trustee subject to appropriate approvals from the

administration committee; approved the engagement of the proxy voting service offered by Pensions Investment Research Consultants (PIRC); reviewed the investment level in respect of the Standard Life Global real estate investment trust fund; and provided comments to the government on certain revisions to the Local Government pension scheme regulations.

5. Pension Committee also received a presentation on the pension fund website and forwarding comments from Members this will now move forward into production. The website will be a new feature of our communications strategy, but all the good work that has gone before in terms of the Scheme Booklet, various information leaflets and the popular Nest Egg publication will continue in the future.
6. The Members Finance Reference group met in late May and reviewed a number of aspects of the capital programme and progress on schemes. Members were also particularly interested in gaining a greater understanding of the mechanisms and criteria used to allocate capital sums to appropriate projects, and information on this will be gathered by officers for future consideration. The group also received a high level presentation from the Strategic Director of Resources on the early thinking in respect of the budget strategy for 2008/09.
7. Finally, I am pleased to join with other Cabinet Members in welcoming the submission of the Big Lottery bid for the Sherwood Forest - Living Legend scheme. A great deal of hard work has gone into the production of the bid and I am sure that Members from all parts of the chamber will welcome this exciting and innovative proposal. If the bid is successful this will commit the Council to funding its part of the scheme and this will need to be taken account of in budget preparation for the 2008/09 budget.

B. PROPERTY

During the period 14 May to 11 June 2007 there were 3 Property Pre Agenda Meetings at which 21 separate reports were considered and these were taken on to the Property Portfolio Meetings for decisions.

- At present there are 5,629 live projects on the system, 15 large projects were completed in May and the volume of work billed during the period is 20% higher than last year for the same period.
- The Children's Centre programme delivered by Woodheads and Building Direct has been short listed to the final 2 entries for the Best Private Sector Partner. The final will be held in London on the 26th June.
- The Division is part of a team nominated for an Ashden Award for sustainability.

- Marketing of Top Wighay Farm at Linby is due to commence shortly, with a view to identifying a preferred developer to deliver 600 dwellings and 9 hectares of employment land.
- The first properties which have been blighted by the proposed NET extension have now been purchased.
- Planning consultants have been approached to secure planning consents prior to marketing on surplus sites in Bassetlaw resulting from the school PFI schemes.
- **Lawn View House (Ashfield Area Offices):** (Interserve contractor). This project is progressing well on site and is to cost and programme, with a practical completion date of 24 September 2007. Plans now being made for an official opening in November 2007. The structural frame, roof, floors and external brickwork are completed and the mechanical and electrical work is well advanced. Confirmation of an “excellent energy efficiency rating” is expected from the independent assessor any day.
- **Candelby Lane Primary School, Cotgrave:** (Tomlinson contractor). This project is progressing well on site with a “topping out ceremony” arranged for 7 June 2007. It is to time and cost for a completion this November.
- **Sherwood – The Living Legend project** - “The Tree” design has been submitted for planning approval to the County Council and the Property Design & Procurement Group have a senior architect representative on the project team.
- **Retford Bus Station:** (Marriotts contractor), Progressing well on site to programme and cost and the official opening is on 26 July 2007.
- **Mansfield Bus Station:** The project is now at public consultation and detailed design stage. The planning process should hopefully be completed by the end of this year for a project completion in 2010.
- **Church Drive Primary School, Arnold:** (Marriotts contractor) A planning application has been made for this circular plan school that is based on the successful Barnby Road School, Newark and work is programmed to start on site in August this year.
- **Bishop Alexander Primary School, Newark:** (Tomlinsons contractor). The design and target cost have been agreed and the project starts on site on 18 July 2007.
- **The Samworth Church Academy, Mansfield:** The Design and Procurement Group has representation on the project team and has been appointed to commission the site surveys and develop an architectural concept design for this major project on the existing

Sherwood Hall School site. A key milestone is the production of the outline business case which is expected to be submitted to the DfES at the end of June 2007. Details of the project were set out in a report to the Cabinet in April 2007.

- **Rufford Country Park – Mill:** (Tomlinsons contractor). This project comprises a major refurbishment of the “listed” Mill building at Rufford Country Park. There was a turf cutting ceremony on 5 June and work starts on site on 29 May for a completion in October 2007.
- **Clarbrough Primary School:** (Interserve contractor) There are difficulties with the design of the foundations for this new School. A start on site is programmed for September 2007.
- **Ranby Primary School:** (Marriotts contractor). The complete demolition of this fire damaged school is now on site and the start of the new build is programmed for August 2007.
- **Notts Connect, Annesley Business Park:** (Marriotts contractor). Project has started on site and is on programme and budget.
- **Dukeries Youth Centre, Ollerton:** (Tomlinsons contractor). Turf cutting ceremony carried out on 30 May and start on site programmed for 11 June 2007.
- **Hawtonville Youth Centre, Newark:** (Tomlinsons contractor). Project ready to start on site when land transfer is completed.
- **Retford Youth Centre & Childrens Centre:** (Tomlinsons contractor). This project is ready to start on site when the land is acquired.
- **Dorkett View, Arnold:** (Interserve contractor). This new Day Centre is progressing well on site.
- **Holles Street, Worksop:** (Interserve contractor). This new respite unit is progressing well on site and is on programme and within budget.
- **Business Innovation Centre, Newark:** (Lindum contractor). Project completed and handed over on 7 June 2007.

**COUNCIL CHRIS BARON
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND PROPERTY**