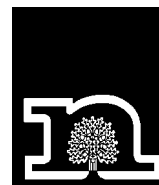


report

Nottinghamshire
County Council



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

date **Thursday 16th December 2003** agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the Resources portfolio since my last report to Council.

2. PERSONNEL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATED MATTERS

I have taken the project initiation document for Pay Strategy Phase 2 to the Personnel Committee for approval and to Cabinet for endorsement and funding approval. The project continues to be undertaken on a joint basis with the relevant trade unions. Following the earlier work, job evaluation scores will shortly be announced. The coming months will see a pay and rewards structure determined, taking into account NJE scores and outstanding issues from the Single Status agreement. This will be a major task, covering 15,000 employees and a pay bill of £200million.

3. BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE

- a) **CPA:** As predicted in my previous report, service performance scores were sufficient to trigger a visit by the CPA inspectors for a reassessment of the Authority. The "Proportionate Corporate Assessment" (PCA) they undertook forms part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the County Council for 2004. Their visit, during the week of the 15th November, included a number of site visits, interviews with a number of Members and key officers, and focus group meetings with front line workers, managers and partner organisations. The outcome is due to be announced on the date of the Council Meeting.
- b) **Performance Report:** We have recently produced the Authority's Autumn Performance Report. This encompasses the six-month performance report from April to September 2004 that I presented to Cabinet on 8th December. Cabinet agreed this be referred to Select Committee for scrutiny and to Council. The report forms an important part of the County Council's performance management framework, its findings will be used to drive forward improvements in those areas where there are weaknesses and celebrate the areas of excellence within the Council.

- c) **Performance Seminar:** It is intended to repeat the Authority's internal performance seminar in order to reinforce the message of continuous improvement and need for a performance culture within the Authority. As previously Members will be invited and colleagues may wish to reserve the morning of 3rd February in their diaries for this.

4. **TRADING SERVICES**

Trading performance of direct services continues to be monitored regularly. With the exception of School Catering, all services are expected to match or exceed their set budget targets. In School Catering margins are lower than expected due to a mixture of higher labour and food costs (healthy eating campaign), a slight reduction in income because of a drop in roll numbers and replacement and essential maintenance affecting kitchen equipment. Additionally this year sees a loss of trading days as two Easter periods fall within the financial year. A review is under way of the particular factors affecting School Catering with a view to addressing the situation and a more detailed report on trading activity will be taken to a future meeting of the Environment Select Committee.

5. **ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY**

- a) **Climate Change & Sustainable Energy:** Following recent local conferences on *Climate Change* (Notts Agenda 21) and *Sustainable Energy* (Notts & Derbys Local Authorities Energy Partnership) - the latter which saw the Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP, as a keynote speaker - I was interested to be invited to a pilot regional conference by DEFRA. This followed a similar theme, but served to demonstrate that the issue is emerging as an important challenge for governments. DEFRA's regional events are intended to explore the potential impacts of climate change and start to engage positively on opportunities at national, regional and local level for tackling it. The County Council is committed to promoting key messages and the production of a "*Sustainable Developer*" guide is a recent example of such an initiative.
- b) **Beacon Status bid:** I have reported previously that the Authority submitted a bid for Beacon Council Status for Sustainable Energy. Government guidance emphasised the broad nature of this theme and the role that land use planning, transport and waste management policies can have in reducing energy and CO₂ emissions. In recent years the County Council has made considerable inroads in these areas and, following confirmation that the Authority had been shortlisted, Beacon Council assessors visited us earlier this month. They were welcomed by the Director of Environment and myself and were able to meet representatives from a number of partner organisations as well as relevant officers of the Council. I am grateful to staff and pupils from Bowbridge Primary School who delivered part of their "E-Teams" performance and demonstrated how they were including aspects of sustainable energy within the school curriculum. The assessors were also able to visit Garribaldi School to see a wood heat boiler in operation.

Beacon status brings significant recognition to authorities who achieve it. They are expected to deliver a wide and varied programme of events to share their good practice amongst other authorities. This is a substantial commitment and Beacon Council status brings in funding to help with this work. The successful Beacons will be announced in April 2005.

Cllr John Stocks
Cabinet Member for Resources