

# report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011

agenda item number **11a vii.**

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **REPORT FOR PERIOD APRIL 2011- MAY 2011**

#### **Local Improvement Schemes**

1. A flurry of completions and scheme opening events brought Year 7 to a closure in April, a year which has been both successful and rewarding for all involved with the Local Improvement Scheme programme. We have delivered over 500 schemes this year, double the amount of any other year of the programme and attracted £1.4m of external match funding.
2. The last few months has seen a number of notable projects completed and I'm delighted to report that the feedback from local communities has been appreciative and grateful of the part played by LIS.
3. I was honoured to attend the dedication service for the aircrew that lost their lives when their Lancaster Bomber crashed near Halam in 1943. This event had a truly international feel to it. Relatives of the crew from Australia and Canada attended the service and memorial unveiling. LIS funded the memorial plaque, as well as clearance, fencing, a bench and interpretation board detailing the history of the crash.
4. Restoration work is now complete at St Swithun's Church, one of Retford's major historic listed buildings. LIS carried out urgent repair work to the church which included re-roofing the nave and south aisle, replacing roof beams, repairing stonework and replacing guttering and drainage.
5. Misson cemetery has undergone a much needed make-over. New footpaths have been created and a number of trees have been planted around the cemetery boundary.

6. A newly created habitat for crayfish, water voles and other wildlife has been created on the River Leen near Hucknall. The conservation and biodiversity work has attracted high praise from English Nature.
7. I had a very enjoyable afternoon at the opening of the community farm at Candleby Lane School in Cotgrave which attracted huge community support. It was wonderful to see the children caring for the ducks, guinea pigs, chickens, pigs and mountain goats. My thanks must go to Groundwork one of our third sector partners for their work on site and to the Head Teacher who did a fantastic job for us.

## **Project Updates**

8. Other projects completed at the end of the year include:
  - War Memorial restoration works at Trowell,
  - footway improvements on Brook Street, Sutton in Ashfield,
  - a shop front improvement scheme on Welbeck Road in Ordsall,
  - replacement lighting columns at Larch Farm Ravenshead
  - environmental improvement schemes for Norwood Gardens in Southwell,
  - Rose Lane/Eather Avenue Mansfield Woodhouse
  - Nottingham Road in Selston.
  - Papplewick has bespoke village signs depicting local life and
  - Shireoaks and Tollerton have 2 new seats.
9. A habitat creation has also been set up in King George V Park and Racecourse Park in Mansfield, where a number of bird and bat boxes have been installed and a reptile survey undertaken.
10. Meadow Park, East Leake has a large open space which has been turned into an arboretum with 28 different tree species planted by local schoolchildren and parish councillors.
11. A local artist has been hard at work installing a magnificent 7ft wooden sculpture at Arnot Hill Park and local school children have helped with planting shrubs and trees.
12. I was also delighted to attend the opening of Granby play area which saw a huge crowd turn out. The play equipment is a welcome addition to the village and the children gave it a massive thumbs up.
13. The end of the year has been extremely busy for LIS and I am looking forward to seeing the many wonderful and diverse projects in this year's programme (year 8) coming to fruition.

**Proposed Energy Recovery Facility at the Former Rufford Colliery, Rainworth**

14. I have been informed that the decision on the proposed Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at Rainworth will be issued by the Secretary of State on or before 31st May 2011.
15. The Rufford ERF is proposed by Veolia Environmental Services Nottinghamshire as part of the Council's Waste PFI Contract. The facility will handle up to 180,000 tonnes of waste per annum, minimising waste to landfill and generating enough electricity to power 15,000 homes (15Mwh per annum). The Public Inquiry into the Rufford ERF closed on 26th October 2010.

**Windrow composting facility on land at Inkersall Grange Farm, near Bilsthorpe**

16. A final planning decision has been reached in respect of proposals for an open windrow composting facility on land at Inkersall Grange Farm, near Bilsthorpe. The application, submitted by Veolia Environmental Services Ltd as part of the Waste PFI Contract, was refused planning permission by Planning and Licensing Committee and had been the subject of a planning appeal.
17. The appeal was considered through an informal hearing over three days with the County Council's case presented by the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning and Licensing Committee with Officer support from the Development Management Team.
18. Whilst recognising the sustainable benefits of the proposals, the Planning Inspector took the view that the scheme has the potential to risk human health and contaminate products at a nearby food processing and packaging plant and that the perception of risk could be harmful to the continuing success of that company, a significant local employer.
19. He therefore concluded that the precautionary principle should be applied and that the proposals should not be allowed to jeopardise an established business. The fact that the proposals represented a departure from the development plan could not be outweighed, he felt, such was the nature of the above planning objections. Veolia will be exploring alternative options through the waste contract.

## **Strategic Planning Observations: Land South of Newark**

20. Newark and Sherwood District Council consulted Nottinghamshire County Council on a planning application for a mixed use development on land south of Newark. The proposed development includes 3,150 dwellings, two local centres, mixed use commercial estate, multi use two primary schools and new accesses, including a Southern Link Road between the A46 and the A1.
21. The application site lies on an area of land identified as a Strategic Urban Extension in the Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy, adopted by Newark and Sherwood District Council on 29th March 2011.
22. Nottinghamshire County Council did not raise an objection to the allocation of the application site through the Core Strategy process, which included an Examination held during November and December 2010, which County Council officers attended.
23. I therefore asked Cabinet to agree that planning observations be submitted to Newark & Sherwood District Council indicating that no strategic planning objection was raised to the proposed development.
24. There were however, a number of issues which needed to be resolved in relation to highways, nature conservation, landscape and the historic environment and the Cabinet resolution was subject to those being resolved satisfactorily. Since Cabinet met, officers have continued to work with Newark & Sherwood and the applicants to address these matters.

## **And Finally....**

25. With Councillors Suthers and Cottey I visited the RSPB reserve at Langford Lowfields, near Newark. We met with the Regional Director of the RSPB to discuss the work of the RSPB and how it related to the County Council's activities.
26. As a treat, the marsh harriers and avocets on the reserve made a special appearance for us!

**COUNCILLOR RICHARD BUTLER**  
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY