



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

date **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

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**

#### **2.1 Budget & Restructuring**

Following the agreement of the budget by Council In late February, departments are assessing the impact upon service delivery and are clarifying the areas where staffing may need to be reduced. It has been agreed that a corporate approach be taken to formally notify the Trade Unions and therefore a corporate Section 188 notice (the formal notification of potential redundancies) was issued to the recognised trade unions on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Following the issue of the notice, it has been agreed that relevant trade unions and managers will meet on a more regular basis (every two weeks) for progress updates and to try to minimise redundancies as far as possible.

A draft enabling document (the process by which it is proposed that the new structure will be populated) has been drawn up and will be the subject of consultation over the next few weeks. Draft job descriptions and person specifications have been drawn up for the new first and second tier posts. Recruitment processes are under way for the posts of Director of Children Services and Director of Adult Social Services.

#### **2.2 Investors in People**

The County Council was due to be assessed as part of the first stage of the re-accreditation process in May 2006. However, following consideration of the budget and its implications, it has been agreed that, with other pressures upon our employees, the County Council is not able to devote sufficient time and energy at this stage to ensure a

successful re-accreditation. As a consequence, re-accreditation will need to be deferred. The principles of liP will continue to be pursued, and the possibility of re-accreditation to the liP standard will be considered further in the future.

## **2.2 Learning and Development**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> March Personnel Committee agreed, in principle, the draft Core Competencies for senior managers, and further work will be done to refine the competencies so that they can be easily measured and rolled out across other tiers. The Personnel Committee also agreed a draft Learning and Development strategy, subject to formal consultation. These will complement the Human Resources Strategy and will allow the limited resources we have to be targeted more effectively and support the development of employees to achieve our corporate aims and objectives.

The learning and development strategy proposes that a greater emphasis is placed upon supporting learning in the workplace which moves away from the formal training adopted in the past. This will allow for a more flexible approach to be taken and a much more efficient use of resources.

A draft management development programme has been developed as part of the learning and development strategy, linked to the Core Competencies work. The management development programme will support the new structures and give the managers, appointed into the new posts, support with delivering the requirements of the new roles.

## **3. BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE**

### **3.1 Performance Management of the Local Area Agreement**

The Local Area Agreement has now been signed with Government and work is now underway to establish performance management arrangements to allow the partnership to ensure it is moving toward the targets that have been agreed. With over a hundred targets drawing on information from a wide range of sources the measurement and management processes will be complex to establish. Use is being made of the County Council's performance management software which will make reporting to different parts of the partnership and individual partners much easier.

### **3.2 Audit Commission Data Quality Assurance Pilot**

The Audit Commission is introducing new procedures to evaluate how robust and reliable are the data gathering and reporting practices of Councils. These procedures will allow the Commission to judge the risk of a Council providing less reliable information and they will relate the amount of time they spend auditing a Council's performance information to this risk. The County Council has agreed to take part in a pilot exercise to test out the method prior to its introduction. The Audit

Commission have indicted that they think that our processes are basically sound but have suggested a number of recommendations. It is worth noting that the Commission did not qualify any of the Councils performance figures last year.

**4. TRADING SERVICES**

End of year accounts are currently being collated for all business units. A report on trading outcomes will be submitted to the Environment and Sustainability Select Committee once details are confirmed.

**5. ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY**

We continue to hold seminars and work with other authorities as part of our Beacon Council obligations. A successful woodheat seminar and tour was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March at Centre Parcs, with presentations from County Council officers, ReNU and the Forestry Commission. The focus of the seminar was on lessons learned in implementing a wood heat programme and developing the supply chain. A detailed update report on wood heat is planned for a meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Select Committee shortly.

Cllr John Stocks  
Cabinet Member for Resources