

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011

agenda item number **7a vii.**

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

### **Natural Environment White Paper**

1. Land use change, including as a result of development, is one of the main impacts on the natural environment. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting, whereby the developer secures habitat creation and restoration elsewhere and delivers biodiversity benefits in a measurable way. A proposed voluntary approach to Biodiversity Offsetting is included in the Government's Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature), published in June. Offsetting would be managed locally, taking as simple and straightforward an approach as possible, with the benefit of allowing offsets to be pooled together to allow significant habitat creation and restoration.
2. The new voluntary approach to offsetting will be tested in a number of pilot areas, and the Government has called for local authorities to express an interest in taking part in the testing. With my colleague Councillor John Cottee, I am pleased to report that the County Council is working with the District and Borough Councils on a bid for Nottinghamshire to become a pilot area.

### **Waste Core Strategy**

3. The consultation period for the 'Preferred Approach' for the Waste Core Strategy has now ended and officers are analysing all the comments we have received. Exhibitions were held in all the main libraries and one or two of the smaller ones. We had considerable media coverage, including an article from me in Nottinghamshire Life and Countryside Magazine on the topic

## **Love Food Hate Waste**

4. Food waste accounts for nearly a third of the food we buy and costs the average family £480 a year, increasing to £680 a year for families with children (or around £50 a month).
5. 'Love Food Hate Waste' is a national campaign, which is being used in Nottinghamshire to show people how to save money, whilst also helping the environment. This summer, the County Council along with the district councils and Nottingham City Council have been supporting the Love Food Hate Waste campaign at roadshows and events throughout Nottinghamshire.
6. Events have included the Ashfield Show, the Gedling Show, Lark in the Park in Rushcliffe, the Moorgreen Show in Broxtowe, Newark Food and Drink festival and the Riverside Festival in Nottingham. The events were very well received by local residents and involved celebrity chef, Richard Fox, who hosted cookery demonstrations using left over ingredients to create tasty meals and certainly gave "food for thought"
7. Smaller events will be continuing throughout the year and a competition is being arranged where residents will have the opportunity to create a dish using leftover ingredients. The winning recipe will be cooked by Richard Fox at an event in March 2012.

## **Working Better Together**

8. Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the Environment Agency have developed a "Working Better Together" Agreement.
9. The Agreement will set out protocols for how the statutory and regulatory partners involved in the management of waste across the whole county of Nottinghamshire (including the City) can and should work together to ensure their activities are complementary.
10. The main areas that this partnership will focus on are:
  - Joint Working: to establish a liaison group to oversee and direct Agency/Local Authority interaction.
  - Planning: working together to look at Local Development Plans, Strategies and Development Management.
  - Regulated Waste Management Activities: working together on co-ordinating common site visits.
  - Waste Crime: Share data, intelligence, campaign ideas and promote joint working on enforcement cases.

11. The agreement does not change how the County Council as both Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) and Waste Planning Authority (WPA) carries out its statutory obligations.

### **Local Improvement Scheme (LIS)**

12. In June we held our annual awards which honoured ten outstanding individuals and groups for work carried out in their local communities. This event never fails to uncover year after year people whose commitment and dedication is quite simply beyond measure. A thriving community needs such individuals and I'm delighted to say the Local Improvement Scheme is an ideal vehicle for their efforts.
13. Among the many projects that have been completed during the summer the refurbishment of Misterton Social Club reflects LIS in its best light. A derelict, rundown social club has been turned into a vibrant meeting hub for the whole village and surrounding area. As well as the club, the gardens have been tended to and new parking bays created.
14. A plot at Kinoulton allotments has been turned into a community allotment to help ease the demand from enthusiastic local gardeners. Rushcliffe has one the longest waiting lists in the county for allotments and this new plot has been well received from people in Kinoulton, Hickling and Owthorpe as was evident at the Allotment Open Day in late June.
15. Sculptures reflecting and celebrating the heritage of the mining industry were unveiled in Freckland Wood near Newstead. A local artist worked closely with children from Newstead and Annesley primary school and the local Women's Institute on the finished sculptures and it is hoped that they become part of an impressive sculpture trail around the area.
16. The latest work in Newgate Lane in Mansfield has seen an overhaul of what is a major anti-social neighbourhood. A sweep of the area uncovered more than 350 needles and LIS also funded better lighting, the cutting of overgrown trees and new fencing and gates. The work has been welcomed by neighbours and the local school.
17. A graveyard survey has been carried out at St Peter's Church in Awsworth, the latest church to be mapped. A number of volunteers helped the council's archaeology officers record all the findings with records being archived.
18. LIS work at small, independent museums is now up and running with the first recipient the Newark Heritage Barge. I was delighted to see first hand the floating barge – The Leicester Trader – has installed new presentation equipment and will hopefully become the base of a River Heritage Centre with a mooring at the Newark Town Wharf. The barge attracts hundreds of visitors every year interested in the history and heritage of the River Trent.

Work is due to be completed at North Leverton Windmill and the Mansfield Fire Station Museum in the coming weeks.

19. Earlier this month I attended the official opening of the Japanese Gardens in Bestwood Country Park. The gardens have been restored to their former glory following 18 months of painstaking work by our conservation and archaeology officers. Two interpretation boards and a map of the park have also been installed.
20. The village of Oxton has also had a new play area opened. LIS jointly funded the scheme here with contributions from WREN, the Parish and District Council after a request from families who asked for something to replace the worn out 1980s equipment which was falling apart. The village has also seen a 30% increase in the number of children in the last ten years.
21. As the deadline for applications for next year's programme draws to a close at the end of September, I am delighted to be able to report that the LIS scheme has continued to draw in funding from external sources and so far this year has secured over half a million pounds of external investment, bringing the total figure invested in the County from third party funders since the inception of the scheme eight years ago to £13.5m.

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