



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **Thursday, 6 April 2006**

agenda item number

from: **Cabinet Member for Environment and
Sustainability**

REPORT FOR PERIOD FEBRUARY/MARCH 2006

1. Building Better Communities

I am pleased to inform Members that we will be holding our 3rd Annual Building Better Communities Event on the 4th July 2006 at Thoresby Hall Gallery. The event will take place between 10.00am and 1.30pm and will be celebrating the achievements of the past two years with particular emphasis on schemes carried out during 2005/06.

Once again we will be recognising the efforts of local groups and organisations that have been instrumental in developing or delivering schemes through the BBC initiative. If any Member would like to nominate any such group for an award please advise the Project Manager, Neil Hodgson (0115 9774250).

The event represents an opportunity for Elected Members, Parish Councils and Community Groups to find out more about the Building Better Communities initiative. Last year's event was a successful well attended day and I look forward to welcoming you again this year.

2. Local Public Service Agreement

The Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) is part of a Government scheme to reward councils with extra funding if they meet 'stretch' performance targets across a range of services. Targets for this County Council were set in 2002 and this included three environmental targets to:

- Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic accidents to 599 by Dec 2005
- Increase the proportion of household waste recycled or composted to 27% by March 2006
- Reduce the CO₂ emissions from County Council and partner buildings by 27% by March 2006 (on a 1998 baseline)

I am delighted to be able to report that we have achieved all of these targets and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this work.

3. **Policy for the Management of Motorised Vehicle use on Public Rights of Way**

Under Section 130 of the Highways Act the Authority has a duty to ensure that the use and enjoyment of public rights of way is asserted and protected.

With the increased use over recent years of vehicles such as 4x4s and road and mini motorbikes in the countryside, a policy is needed to clarify the Authority's position in managing these rights. There is also growing public concern about noise, pollution, aggressive behaviour, security of property and the impact on the character of the countryside. A policy must deal positively with these concerns, but at the same time acknowledge the constraints of established legislation. It is an offence under the Road Traffic Act to drive a vehicle anywhere other than on a road, although some public rights of way do have vehicular rights.

Stakeholders, landholders and users have been consulted and the issue was discussed at the Rights of Way Conference held in November 2005. The draft policy has also been presented to the Environment and Sustainability Select Committee for their comments.

I have now approved the final Policy which states that the County Council will:

- Endeavour to resolve doubt over the status of routes
- Ensure that routes are signposted correctly
- Ensure that routes are maintained to a standard consistent with their use
- Work closely with the Police Authority
- Impose Traffic Regulation Orders only when other measures to resolve problems are inappropriate or have failed.

4. **Charges for Transportation Services 2006/7**

The County Council has powers under a variety of Acts to recover its costs in the preparation and publication of data, and to charge for a number of services associated with its duties as Highway Authority. These charges are reviewed annually and are benchmarked against other neighbouring authorities. In the main, the charges have been increased in line with inflation. I have approved the charges for the current financial year.

This year, in light of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a number of publications have been added to the County Council's Publication Schedule and charges for some data will continue to be made for commercial organisation only. This is a developing area of law and will

be reviewed periodically to ensure that our charges practices comply with interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act.

5. **Retford Bus Station**

I was pleased to see that initial work has started on Retford Bus Station. The new bus station is part of the County Council's strategy to improve the county's bus network and information facilities to encourage the greater use of public transport. Bus shelters have been relocated so that passengers will no longer need to cross the path of buses to reach their stops. A one-way system is being introduced to deter other drivers cutting through the station.

The new bus station will boast an enclosed building with seating, passenger information and toilets and baby changing facilities. CCTV and a staff presence will significantly enhance passenger safety and security and there will be improved pedestrian links to the town centre. Work should be completed by Autumn of next year.

Councillor Stella Smedley
Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability

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