

report



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REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

REPORT FOR PERIOD MAY 2011- JUNE 2011

Local Improvement Schemes (LIS)

1. Travelling around the county I have seen an array of spring colour in many completed projects during May and this is demonstrated to perfection at schemes in Worksop and Ranby. The community garden at Abbey Grove Sheltered Housing Centre has long been overgrown and under-used. LIS provided funding so that the garden could be used by residents and visitors alike. The transformation of seating, improved access, raised flower beds and shrubbery has been greatly welcomed by all involved.
2. The village of Ranby has also had an injection of colour with raised flower beds and planters created with help from children from Ranby Church of England School and members of the Best Kept Village Group. A number of benches have also been installed.
3. Community pride is one of the central themes of LIS, and this is evident at projects in East Leake and Wiseton.
4. Meadow Park in East Leake has seen an arboretum of 28 different species of trees planted and with help from the Friends of Meadow Park a picnic area, improved access and a community noticeboard have all been added to the park.
5. An over grown area which had become an eyesore has been transformed in Wiseton into a tree and flower planted picnic area used regularly by dog walkers, ramblers and fishermen, who use the nearby canal. This project involved a number of agencies working closely together including Heritage and Conservation, tree experts, British Waterways, Bassetlaw District

6. I was delighted to be invited to see the latest work carried out at the Radcliffe on Trent Skate Park. Floodlights have been installed, improved access provided, tiered seating for spectators created and a picnic area for families revitalised. This award-winning park is run by volunteers and attracts skating and biking enthusiasts from around the Midlands. The Leader and I were impressed by the facilities on offer and the tremendous enjoyment it brings to so many children.
7. At Southwell Minster, a new Roll of Honour board was unveiled honouring 18 local men from Southwell and surrounding villages who have been killed in action since World War 2. This is an example of a relatively small amount of funding having a significant impact on the local community.
8. A small piece of medieval history was recreated in Tollerton with the village pinfold being restored at the junction of Tollerton Lane and Cotgrave Lane. The pinfold is created from reclaimed red brick, York stone and oak slatted seating. An interpretation board has also been installed detailing some of the village historical past.
9. I very much enjoyed viewing the newly created Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at the William Lee Memorial Park in Calverton with Mark Spencer MP, which has been warmly welcomed. The £75k project has seen a wonderful facility created where children will have access to a number of sports including football, netball, tennis, basketball.
10. King's Park in Retford has seen a tremendous increase in users in recent weeks following the completion of LIS improvements. Working closely with the Retford Civic Society, LIS has carried out work on new pathways and access, a variety of trees, shrubs and flower beds planted, seating, fencing and general landscape clearance.
11. Towards the end of June a number of projects will be completed including the Mansfield Heroes Memorial, a significant scheme which honours seven men from Mansfield who have been killed in action since World War 2 in conflicts in Korea, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Northern Ireland and The Falklands.

Rufford Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)

12. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has decided that the planning application by Veolia Environmental Services Nottinghamshire for the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at the Former Rufford Colliery, Rainworth should be refused.

13. The Secretary of State has decided that there are a number of factors weighing against the proposal. These include; that he cannot be satisfied that it would not harm the integrity of the area; that it would appear as an alien feature and intrude on the openness of the countryside; and that the site is due to be restored to woodland and heathland and is not allocated for development. Factors weighing in favour of the proposal include, that it would result in movement up the waste hierarchy, and would help to reduce carbon emissions. Overall the Secretary of State considers that the proposal conflicts with the development plan and national plan policies in a number of respects, and though there are material considerations in favour of the proposal, these are not sufficient to outweigh the identified conflict.
14. The Rufford ERF was proposed by Veolia as part of the Waste PFI Contract with the County Council and would have handled 180,000 tonnes of waste per annum. At Planning and Licensing Committee on 9th January 2009 it was resolved to grant planning permission subject to referral to the Government Office for the East Midlands as a departure from the development plan and the completion of a legal agreement to provide for various nature conservation matters.
15. The County Council was however informed that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government considered that the proposal may conflict with national policies and accordingly exercised 'call-in' powers for his determination rather than by the County Council. The public inquiry opened on 6 October 2009 and, following two adjournments, reconvened in September 2010 before finally closing on 26 October 2010.
16. This decision will prolong the County Council's reliance on landfill for the disposal of non recyclable waste; however, the Council will now be looking for alternative sustainable waste management solutions.

School Composting

17. During May the County Council's SWAC (School Waste Action Club) waste education programme worked with schools across Nottinghamshire to support Compost Awareness Week.
18. The SWAC education officers took up the role of compost 'doctors', equipped with lab coats and stethoscopes and gave school compost bins a 'check-up', diagnosing problems with poorly compost and issuing prescriptions to help the compost make a full recovery.
19. It was my pleasure to be involved in the session at Richard Bonnington School in Arnold on 16th May, where the school gardening club examined

The Waste Core Strategy

20. The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Waste Core Strategy was approved at the meeting of Cabinet on 8 June 2011 with similar approval being given by the City Council on 9 June 2011. This planning policy document sets out the Councils' proposed strategy for dealing with all of the waste produced in Nottinghamshire over the next 20 years and will be subject to period of public consultation ending 9 September. The next key stage will be the submission of draft Core Strategy to Government for examination which will require approval at meetings of both the County and City Councils

Energy Costs

21. On the 15 December 2010 Cabinet received an information report updating it on energy procurement matters and predicted savings for street lighting, schools and corporate property energy costs of around £6m for the 2011/12 financial year, following the switch to new contracts for electricity and gas supply in April 2011.
22. Now that the Council has entered into the new contract period, the costs for energy purchased in advance is known and the reference prices for flexible, variable supplies have been set, a more accurate prediction of eventual costs can be made. It is now estimated that the Council will potentially see a cost reduction of around £4m during 2011/12, compared to 2010/11, rather than £6m as previously anticipated.
23. Individual portfolio and service budgets for 2011/12 were set based on the predicted energy cost savings, however real costs are likely to be around £800k more than expected for schools, £200k more for the corporate estate, and around £1m more for street lighting. These are new budget pressures and appropriate mitigating measures will need to be identified within the individual portfolios concerned.
24. Energy prices are not as low as predicted as a result of a severely cold winter which impacted on forward energy prices, the rise in wholesale energy prices as a result of the turbulent situation in the Middle East and North Africa, and the associated rise in oil prices. Further detail will be reported to Cabinet in July.

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