



meeting            **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date                **29 MARCH 2007**

agenda item number

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND PROPERTY**

### **SECTION A – FINANCE**

1. The Annual Budget for 2007/8 and the Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy were all approved by the County Council at its last meeting on 22 February 2007. This brings to a close the annual round of work on budget preparation and I would like to record my thanks to all Members who have had an input into the budget making process and in particular colleagues in the Finance Members Reference Group. In addition thanks are due to all of the finance and service staff who pulled together this complex process.
2. Having completed the Budget the main focus of attention for accountancy staff now turns to the annual closing of the Accounts and this work will progress during April and May. We are required to report on the Final Accounts to County Council before the end of June and the County Council meeting on 28 June will be the opportunity to achieve this statutory requirement.
3. Since my last report the Finance Members Reference Group has met and has received a number of reports including a review of several schemes within the Capital Programme together with proposals regarding the Ollerton/Newark Area Office scheme and the Northern Highways Depot. Members of the Finance Reference Group reviewed the scoring attributed to these schemes by the Officer Corporate Asset Management Group and were highly supportive of both schemes.
4. Through my regular Finance Portfolio meetings with the Strategic Director of Resources and his staff I have considered a report regarding vocational development at the Dukeries College and this will be brought forward for formal approval by Cabinet in due course. I have also reviewed the insurance arrangements for the Council which are due for renewal in May of this year and received information regarding the largest outstanding claims. I have also received reports on treasury management, Capital Programme variations and prudential indicators.

5. The process of integrating all resource functions is continuing and within the Finance & Trading area formal decisions have now been taken on the final structure for the division. The Service Director and his senior colleagues are working through the enabling processes and appointments to the new positions will commence in the next few weeks.
6. I recently attended the annual Investment Conference hosted by the National Association of Pension Funds in Edinburgh. I was accompanied by the Deputy Leader and two Officers and shall provide a full report on the Conference in due course.
7. Work on revising Financial Regulations is now complete and a report seeking approval to the revised Regulations is elsewhere on the agenda.

## **SECTION B - PROPERTY**

1. During the period 22 January to 13 March 2007 there were four Property Pre Agenda Meetings at which 38 separate reports were considered and these were taken on to the Property Portfolio Meetings for decisions.
2. The Service Director (Property) has now been elected to serve as the National President of COPROP (Association of Corporate Property Managers in Local Government). This organisation brings together the larger local authorities with large property portfolios, with a view to sharing knowledge and good practice, advising Government policy makers on sound asset management practice, and seeks to develop expertise in ensuring property resources make the most effective contribution to service outcomes.
3. Estate Management
  - Approval has been obtained to acquire an interest in accommodation at Sherwood Business Park to house Notts Connect. Heads of terms for the lease have been agreed and a draft lease has been produced.
  - A programme for the disposal of land at Top Wighay Farm is in the process of being developed which will result in up to 600 houses and 9 hectares of employment land being offered for sale.
  - The County Council has approved the principle of NET line 2 and 3 and subject to the City Council approval the proposal will be submitted to Central Government. Once submitted consideration can be given to the purchase of land and property affected by the proposals.

#### 4. Strategy & Development

- A submission for a bid of £1,000,000 grant to aid the sustainable fuels boiler programme to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions is being prepared.
- The tender for the fire risk assessment contract has been completed and consultants appointed to advise the County Council. The first phase is planned to commence in early April.
- The final account for the Leawood Manor Residential Home for Older Persons and Extra Care scheme is showing the scheme is coming in within predicted cost.
- Negotiations have commenced to purchase the site for the Northern Depot, subject to Council approval of the scheme.
- The option appraisal for the proposed Northern Area Office has been presented to CAMG and a preferred option is being presented to Council for a decision.

#### 5. Building Direct

- Following an incident in a South Wales CLASP school last August, when during a project which was managed by the school unacceptable levels of asbestos were liberated, the Health and Safety Executive convened the Asbestos in Schools Working Group. The County Council's Property Division has been invited to join the group as the largest CLASP property portfolio holder in the country – to advise on the issues of managing the maintenance of such system buildings – our expertise in this area is acknowledged.
- The outcome of this collaboration will be a guidance document for duty holders being issued to all Local Authorities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by the Health & Safety Executive.

#### 6. Design & Procurement

- **The Construction Framework:** Daventry District Council have signed our Framework Agreement and have put 3 projects through it with an estimated total cost of circa £4 million. Negotiations are well advanced with other public bodies within the East Midlands for use of this innovative framework arrangement.
- **The Construction Framework:** List of Supply Chain Contractors: A supply chain working group has recently completed its evaluation of the applications from sub-contractors to be on the Nottinghamshire Construction Framework Supply Chain and published a list of the successful sub-contractors. The trades are steelwork, curtain walling, catering supplies, lifts, fire protection, timber structures and mechanical and electrical. The successful development of this supply chain is seen as crucial to the delivery of projects to time, cost and quality.
- **Ashfield Area Offices:** This project is progressing well on site and is to cost and programme. The contractor is Interserve and the practical completion date is 24 September 2007. The structural frame is completed, the roof is being put on and the structural floors are being installed. The new space planning has been completed for the accommodation that is no longer being occupied by Notts Connect.

- **Holles Street (Workshop) and Dorket View (Arnold):** Interserve, one of our framework contractors, has now started work on site for these two projects for Adult Services.
- **Candelby Lane Primary School, Cotgrave:** Tomlinson, one of our framework contractors, is progressing well on site with this new School. Most of the structural frames are now completed. There have been significant drainage problems, but these have been overcome.
- **Sherwood – The Living Legend project** - continues to progress following the choice of “The Tree” by the competition panel on 12 January 2007. A Member/Officer project review meeting was held on 2 February and the Property Design & Procurement Group have a senior architect representative on the project team.
- **Retford Bus Station:** Marriotts, one of our framework contractors, is progressing well on site with this new Bus Station. The structural frame is completed and the roof is being put on. The project is on programme and to cost.
- **Mansfield Bus Station:** The project is now at detailed design stage and the planning process should hopefully be completed by the end of this year for project completion in 2010.
- **Church Drive Primary School, Arnold:** A planning application has been made for this circular plan school that is based on the successful Barnby Road School, Newark, and work continues on the detailed working drawings.
- **Dayncourt School, Radcliffe on Trent:** The provision of a new full size artificial sports pitch and associated changing rooms was completed on cost and to programme in February 2007. The majority of the finance was provided by the Football Foundation for this community facility. An official opening is planned for June/July.
- **Bowbridge Road School, Newark:** The outline design has been completed and the target cost is being negotiated with Marriotts who are one of our framework contractors.
- **Bishop Alexander Primary School, Newark:** The outline design has been completed and the target cost is being negotiated with Tomlinsons who are one of our framework contractors. We hope to be on site at the end of May 2007.
- **Mansfield Academy:** We have been appointed to commission the site surveys and develop an architectural concept design for this project on the existing Sherwood Hall School site. We have representation on the Design User Group that is chaired by a representative of The Samworth Group who are co-sponsors of this project.

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS BARON**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance & Property**