

# report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 17 December 2009

agenda item number **7a viii**

## REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND PROPERTY

### FINANCE

- All Members of County Council will know that initial Budget Proposals were set out for consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009. These budget proposals are far reaching and reflect the need for growth in certain high priority service areas and the need to reprioritise expenditure within limited resources.
- The budget proposals were based on the assumption that the revenue support grant settlement for 2010/11 would be as previously announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review and this was confirmed by the Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Barbara Follet, on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009. This means that in 2010/11 Nottinghamshire County Council will receive grant of £176.1 million, an increase of £8.5 million (5.1%). Confirmation of grant funding has given a degree of additional certainty for our planning for 2010/11, however beyond that year the Government have yet to provide any indicative figures for Local Government.
- The budget proposals also include confirmation of the administration's proposal to freeze the Council Tax for 2010/11 and beyond and set out a range of reductions across Portfolio's to finance the growth in key service areas.
- The theme of this budget is very much one of reprioritisation with net growth in the Adults and Children's Portfolio's funded by reductions elsewhere.
- Together with Officers in my Portfolio meetings I have been reviewing budget monitoring for my own Portfolio as well as for the whole County Council and a report will be presented to Cabinet on December 21<sup>st</sup> setting out the latest position.

- I have also had discussions with Officers regarding some of the emerging Capital schemes which may be included in the Capital Programme for 2010/11 onwards and clarified a number of issues and concerns I had regarding these schemes. Detailed business cases are in preparation and will form the basis of future decision making regarding all Capital proposals.

## **PROPERTY**

During the period 9 November 2009 to 23 November 2009 there were 2 Property Pre-Agenda Meetings at which 17 reports were considered and these were taken on to the Property Portfolio Meetings for decisions.

- **Markham Moor A1 Highways Depot:** (Interserve). circa £1.1M. This project has been completed on programme and on budget ready for the winter highway maintenance period.
- **Bestwood Country Park – Former Pit Winding House Buildings Restoration:** (Tomlinson) Circa £2M. This project, which is to partly restore some of the former pit winding house buildings, was completed in early December.
- **Westfield Folk House Youth Centre, Mansfield.** (Tomlinsons). Circa £6.5M. This major project started on site in November for completion in the spring of 2011. The Government's Myplace fund is providing £5M of grant funding. Turf Cutting took place on 16 November to celebrate the start on site of this project, attended by Cllr Reg Adair, Cllr Lyn Sykes, Mayor of Mansfield DC Tony Egginton, along with NCC Staff, contractor, external architects, external funders from the Big Lottery and service users. An article on this event appeared in the Evening Post and Chad newspapers.
- **Bowbridge Primary School, Newark:** (Marriotts). Circa £3.1M. This award winning building has now received an "A" energy rating which is the highest possible for energy conservation.
- **Building Schools for the Future (BSF):** The Property Division continues to assist the BSF project team, and the Building Design & Procurement Group has now submitted applications for outline planning permissions and is also preparing detailed design briefs for all of the Tranche 1 Schools.
- **Property Strategy:** Work is progressing on the development of a new Property Strategy for the Council, which will be integrated with other key resource strategies for consideration by Members in the New Year.

## **ICT SERVICES**

- **Progress on “One County One Network (1C1N)”** The tender evaluation panel has now selected a preferred supplier for this project, and work will now commence on detailed planning for delivery.
- **Contract Savings** Recent renegotiation of voice telephony contracts has yielded a 36% reduction in call costs for many sites; an estimated overall saving of £90,000 per annum for the County Council.
- **Customer Satisfaction Survey Results** More than 700 people completed the recent customer satisfaction survey for ICT (a significant increase on the previous year) and the results were very positive.

The headline figures were as follows:

- 63% of respondents felt the service was good or very good (this figure was 54% in 2008)
- 89% felt the service was satisfactory or better (84% in 2008)
- 27% considered the service to have improved during the last 12 months (23% in 2008).

Many of the comments were very complimentary about specific service areas and individual members of staff. A particular theme was the friendliness and helpfulness of ICT Services staff across all parts of the service.

- **Data Centre Accommodation** Emergency building work was recently required to strengthen the floors in the County Hall Data Centre block following advice from Property Services’ structural engineers. As a result, the planned work to install new air conditioning plant has been halted and options for re-siting the Data Centre in its entirety are being examined. There are likely to be additional cost implications for moving to an alternative site.
- **Future funding arrangements for the ICT Service** In order to make the most effective use of available ICT budgets, Corporate Leadership Team has considered and agreed moving to a centralised funding model for the ICT Service from April 2010. This will entail the transfer of some budgets from service departments to the corporate ICT Service budget to cover core ICT service running costs. Detailed proposals are being worked on by Financial Services in consultation with each service department and ICT Services.

## **STRATEGIC SERVICES**

- County Supplies and Design and Print have both experienced a reduction in sales for the year to date, due to the financial constraints their customers are experiencing. However, rigorous control of costs and

efficiency improvements means that they are on track to meet their net trading targets for the year.

- The Corporate Procurement team has worked with service departments to deliver £1.06m per annum of savings in the year to date, against their annual target of £1m. The team will continue this work and is currently involved in procurements for banking services, fleet management, removals and a number of food supply contracts.

**CLLR REG ADAIR  
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND PROPERTY**