



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

date **Thursday 28th June 2007**

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the People and Performance portfolio since my last report to Council.

2. PERSONNEL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATED MATTERS

2.1 Management Development

In 2006 the Personnel Committee agreed the Learning and Development Strategy which focused upon management development. The focus was felt necessary following anecdotal research that managers at the County Council needed to improve their skills base so as to meet the new challenges flowing from the Local Government White Paper and restructuring. As a result a programme of actions entitled Building Effective Leadership was developed. The programme was commenced by Service Directors in 2005/6 and has now been rolled out to Service Heads. There are approximately 70 Service Heads going through the programme in two cohorts.

As part of the management development programme we have introduced a 360 degree feedback process. Service Directors have been through this and are developing their personal action plans. We are now about to roll out the process for Service Heads for completion in the Autumn.

2.2 Other issues

Progress is being made on issues such as a flexible retirement policy and a streamlined capability policy (in conjunction with the trade unions) and I hope to report further on these shortly.

3. BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE

3.1 Annual Performance Plan

Members will have received the Annual Performance Plan for 2007-08. This reports of the achievements of the Council for last year and spells out the proposals for 2007-08. The Council has again demonstrated it is a top four star authority that is improving well.

3.2 Peer Review

Though the Government is introducing a new system of managing its relationship with local councils, we will still be having a Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review of Children's services next May. In preparation for this

the Council has invited the IDeA to arrange a corporate peer review to assess how well we measure up to the standards that will be applied. The Review will take place during the week of 15 October and the Review Team will include a County Chief Executive and Council Leader from other authorities.

4.1 Procurement Conformance

The Procurement Board met recently and received a report confirming that the Select Committee have accepted the feedback provided by me as Cabinet Member regarding the process to combat non-conformance to corporate contracts. I have written to the trade union side explaining our intention to tighten up on compliance with corporate purchasing.

The CPU are tasked with raising the awareness of the new '3 strike' process for non-conformance. In Contact and Team Briefings were mentioned as a potential source of publicity. To aid communication the Board is also considering the development of a new Web-Site for Procurement, featuring all contracts / Category Managers / Guidance and a buying tool kit for devolved purchasing.

4. TRADING SERVICES

4.1 Design Publications and Print

The financial performance of DP&P showed a deficit of £26,000 for 2006/07. Against that, the current year shows a monthly income figure of £39,284.50 for April 2007/08 against £38,434.13 for April 2006/07 and £181,117.92 for May 2007/08 against £136,464.00 for May 2006/07. The net figure for period 2 is £1,188.

Currently the Authority operates a mixed economy for Print related services; this includes its own in-house operations together with a number of external Suppliers. Customers of Print have generally made their own decisions regarding the supplier they wish to engage, and this has led to significant monies being spent with external print organisations. Meanwhile the County Councils assets (>£1m) are under utilised within the in-house provision.

In keeping with the recent Scrutiny report and supported by the Procurement Board, we are to enforce those aspects of the Financial Regulations which relate to in-house service providers. In practice, all print related services will be offered to the in-house service provider, who will endeavour to deliver the service using their own equipment (hence increasing utilisation). A small number of external providers of print services will be engaged to support the in-house function for overflow/specialist work. It is estimated the new arrangements will create savings in excess of £200k cashable per annum.

4.2 Communities Department – Catering, Cleaning & Landscape Services - End of year outcomes

Operational restructuring of this group has been completed and benefits of the merger are already being seen by closer working, cooperation and shared customer intelligence. The group now is also benefiting from shared support in health & safety, marketing, purchasing and most importantly training.

The trading services performed satisfactorily and in accordance with budget predictions. However it should be noted that for schools catering, that this was only achieved by the current government financial support this year of £441k. This was received as a part of the national transforming school food programme

aimed at introducing new compulsory nutritional standards. Whilst funding is expected to continue for a further three years 2008 – 2011 it is still not known exactly how this money will be allocated. Work continues with the Children & Young Peoples Department and the PCT in promoting the importance of healthy eating in local schools

The robust effort in the marketing of this service has assisted in changing customers perceptions and the meal numbers served are slowly beginning to increase on previous year levels. The percentage of locally sourced food particularly the use of fresh meat and greengrocery continues to increase, however the meal price will go up by 10 pence per meal to £1.85 in September.

Buy-back levels for both building cleaning and landscape services continues to meet operational targets and a significant part of income is being secured as part of additional projects such as landscape design & non schools work. Of particular significance has been the mobilisation of contracts for the Bassetlaw PFI where the group is providing all soft services under a sub-contract agreement.

There are clearly a number of challenges for the services ahead in meeting increased customer expectations and the introduction of National Job Evaluation, but with the combined support of the Authority and Trade Unions I am sure these will be met.

As always both the Service Director of Strategic & Environmental Services and the Head of Service would welcome the opportunity to meet with Members on a local basis if they have any specific issues or wish to know more about the service provision.

5. ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 Consultation on the Draft Climate Change Bill

I took a report to Cabinet on 6 June outlining the Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Climate Change Bill. The Bill introduces a framework for the UK to achieve its goals of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and ensure steps are taken to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Key elements of the Bill include a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions from 1990 levels by 2050, establishing a Committee on Climate Change to manage the transition to a low carbon economy and introducing new domestic emissions trading schemes.

The County Council supports the targets for reducing CO₂ emissions but the scale and rate of reductions needs to be constantly reviewed and it may be that the targets are not demanding enough. From our experience in preparing a carbon management plan and as a Beacon Council for sustainable energy, it is clear that many councils are willing to support ambitious targets but need more help, resources and a supportive national context to do so. The County Council also supports the establishment of the Committee on Climate Change but would urge the Government to consider how the experience of local government can be represented on this body. Similarly, the County Council would prefer any new emissions trading to be developed in partnership with local councils and be given consideration by the newly established Local Government Climate Change Commission.

5.2 Members will recall that in my report to Council in January I advised on a number of key initiatives that the Council was involved in. This report updates you on progress of these and new initiatives since this time.

5.3 Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy

I am pleased to report that the County Council has been selected as a UK finalist for Renewable Energy. The award recognises our achievements in the development and implementation of Woodheat in Nottinghamshire. The awards are being presented to both the UK and International finalist by Ex-US Vice President Al Gore on the 21st June.

As part of the award we also receive a DVD version of the film we made with Ashden. I am hoping to show this to members as a follow on from the Al Gore film 'An Inconvenient Truth' that we showed at our Climate Change event on the 11th January.

The Council has made a commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions and the Woodheat programme forms an important part in achieving this objective. The award of Beacon status and this recent award is recognition of the Council's achievements in sustainable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

5.4 Woodheat Programme

The County Council was the first Local Authority in the UK to be involved a Public Service Agreement to reduce CO₂ emissions and this provided funding to deliver the first phase of the Woodheat programme. I understand this is already by far the largest cluster of Woodheat installations in the UK.

Having also secured the maximum £0.5 million Bio Energy Capital grant from defra we are on target to deliver phase 2 of the programme. Once completed, next year, we will have converted over 40 schools to Woodheat and reduced CO₂ emissions by 5,000 tonnes.

To complete the programme we have submitted a further funding bid for £1 million and should know the outcome by August. This programme would enable all our existing coal fired boilers and new build primary schools to benefit from the installation of Woodheat. On completion of the programme by 2012 we will have 70 Woodheat installations and have reduced annual CO₂ emissions by 9,500 tonnes.

Cllr John Stocks
Cabinet Member for Resources