

# **APPENDIX A**

## **MEDIUM TERM CORPORATE STRATEGY**

### **EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETING ON 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2001**

The Commission considered the draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy for 2001-2005. A copy of the draft Strategy is attached to these minutes.

The Commission also considered the views of the following Scrutiny Committees on the Medium Term Strategy, copies of which are also filed with these minutes:

Education and Heritage	(marked 1)
Health and Social Care	(marked 2)
Planning and Environment	(marked 3)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting, Mr. H. Barber, CC, the Leader of the Council and Professor M.E. Preston CC, the Deputy Leader of the Council, who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting during the consideration of the draft strategy.

It was moved by Mr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Osborne:

‘That the Cabinet be advised that this Commission supports the draft Medium Term Strategy and considers it will be a comprehensive and useful guide for the County Council for the next four years.’

It was moved by Mr. Rushton and seconded:

“That the proposition under discussion be now put.”

The Chairman indicated that in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) he was of the view that the proposition to which Mr. Rushton sought to apply the closure had not been sufficiently discussed. Accordingly he declined to put the matter to the vote.

During the ensuing debate on the Strategy various points were made by individual members of the Commission to which the Leader and Deputy Leader responded. The details are summarised below:

#### **General**

- The Strategy was a statement of where the Administration hoped to be achieved within four years. The document did not contain detailed implementation proposals and targets as these would need to be developed, following the Council’s agreement to the Strategy. Specific proposals would be brought to the Cabinet/Council for approval.

- The Strategy did not set out in detail all the previous policies agreed by the Council, as it was assumed that these would continue to apply i.e. existing Council policies and strategies within the policy framework. The Strategy should be seen in this context, though it was recognised that there might have been some benefit in including in the draft specific references to existing commitments to Agenda 21 and equal opportunities.

#### Working Together to Deliver Quality Services

- The discussions with Leicester City Council, emda and other partners regarding the LeicesterShire Strategic Sub-Regional Partnership were progressing well and it was hoped that the details of the proposed Partnership Board could be announced soon. The concerns expressed by members of the Commission regarding the limited elected member representation on the Partnership were noted and endorsed.

#### Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning

- With regard to anti-bullying, the intention was to seek to ensure that the current policy was being implemented across the County. Following this, if it was considered necessary to amend the policy, a report would be made to the Cabinet and/or County Council;
- With regard to Youth and Community Education provision, the Cabinet would need to have regard to the policies adopted by the Learning and Skills Council and the impact of these on existing service provision so as to ensure that, at the very least, the current level of service was not reduced. The comments from members about the need to clarify and define the term 'Youth and Community' and the role of the Council in relation to such provision, was noted as was the suggestion that in the preamble, the word 'develop' rather than 'maintain' should be used;
- The concerns now expressed regarding comprehensive community education special educational needs and mobile classrooms, which mirrored the views of the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee were noted;
- Consideration would be given to the use of the word 'appropriate' in the preamble in relation to the role of libraries and museums in the achievement of lifelong learning;
- In the event that the Fair Funding campaign was successful and the County Council were to obtain additional resources, there would need to be a decision as to the distribution of these funds, having regard to budgetary pressures across the whole of the Council's services and Central Government requirements as to delegation;

- The Administration remained committed to the objective of introducing a common first time admissions policy, but, again this would be dependent upon the availability of resources and Government restrictions as to their use.

#### Meeting Health and Care Needs

- The reference to the Blaby Unit and the views expressed by the Cabinet Lead Members at the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee should be seen in the context of the general trend away from large residential care establishments to smaller units. The comments from members that there should be alternative provision in place prior to any proposal to close the Unit were noted;
- A review of residential care for older people was currently underway and it was hoped that a strategy would be put forward for consideration in the near future;
- The comments made by the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee concerning recognition of the role of the voluntary sector were noted.

#### Improving the Transport System

- The County Council was committed to and recognised the need for close working with District Councils. However, it was considered inappropriate to include reference to highway agency arrangements in the document at this stage given that a best value review was presently being undertaken into the management of the Highways Network as a whole.

#### Supporting Culture and Leisure

- The proposal to support the development of theatre and arts in the County's market towns might result in reduced level of funding for the Haymarket. The Haymarket Board had been advised by the previous Joint Administration of its concerns about the lack of theatre and arts provision in the county areas. The Board had indicated that it was developing outreach proposals but, as yet, no details had been provided. Any such outreach proposals would be taken into consideration in progressing this objective;
- The proposals for Bosworth Battlefield should be seen in the context of linking it to other attractions such as the Space Centre, Conkers and Snibston, and the joint marketing of these attractions.

### Improving Economic Well Being

- In response to a general comment that the objectives for economic well-being appeared to be over ambitious given the limited budget available to the County Council and the desire to limit the amount of development on new greenfield sites, it was pointed out that the Strategy emphasised that these objectives could only be realised by working with local and regional partners. The proposal to limit development of greenfield sites was in line with current Government thinking and the need to encourage regeneration in urban centres, including market towns.
- The concerns expressed by some members for strategies to focus on dealing with the impact of the decline in the textile and engineering sectors was noted. It was pointed out that in trying to achieve the fourth bullet point – “Work to help maintain the unemployment rate for the county significantly below the region’s average” it would be necessary to focus on industry/sectors experiencing difficulties. However, it was considered inappropriate to identify specific sectors in a medium term strategy given that changing demands were likely to present themselves over the period covered by the Strategy.

### Making Communities Safer

- The view was expressed by some members that this section of the Strategy needed strengthening and that it should contain some commitment that the Council would support and encourage initiatives and assist groups in accessing external funding to reduce crime and the fear of crime. It was suggested that this issue was best dealt through the local crime and disorder partnerships, although it was noted that there were concerns about the effectiveness of such partnerships.

### Managing Waste Effectively

- The difficulty of meeting Government targets in relation to recycling and reduction in landfill was recognised. District Councils would play a key role in helping to achieving these targets;
- The implementation of an integrated waste management strategy would require substantial capital investment which would necessitate the exploration of partnership funding possibly through a PFI.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Jones and seconded:

“That the following be added at the end of the motion:

- ‘(b) That the resolutions and notes of the discussions at the Education and Heritage, Health and Social Care and the Planning and Environment Committees be noted and forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.’ ”

The mover of the motion, with the concurrence of his seconder and the consent of the Commission, accepted the amendment.

A further amendment was moved by Mr. Jones and seconded:

“That the following be added at the end of the motion as amended:

- ‘(c) That the comments now made by individual members of the Commission and the note of the discussion be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.’ ”

The mover of the motion, with the concurrence of his seconder and the consent of the Commission, accepted the further amendment.

The motion as amended was put and carried as follows:

- (a) That the Cabinet be advised that this Commission supports the draft Medium Term Strategy and considers it will be a comprehensive and useful guide for the County Council for the next four years;
- (b) That the resolution and notes of the discussions at the Education and Heritage, Health and Social Care and the Planning and Environment Committees be noted and forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration;
- (c) That the comments now made by individual members of the Commission and the note of the discussion be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.

## EDUCATION AND HERITAGE – 3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER

### Achieving Excellence and Education and Learning

1. The Committee considered the part of the draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy entitled "Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning" and raised a number of issues with the Lead Member for Education. In the course of debate:-
  - (a) The Committee noted that the format of providing a text in bold type and then a series of bullet points enabled a vision for the aim of Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning to be set out, followed by a number of specific targets to be attained within the four year period. The Committee noted that the vision did not include a commitment to comprehensive community based education. The Lead Member expressed the view that it would be difficult or unrealistic to do so in the light of the pace of change relating to the provision of comprehensive education and local authority's role in the provision of education;
  - (b) It was acknowledged that it might be necessary to reassess the Council's policy on a number of issues in the light of changing legislation, for example, in relation to pupil exclusions;
  - (c) The Committee suggested and the Lead Member accepted that it might be helpful to provide some further explanation within the document of the purpose of the Fair Funding for Education campaign;
  - (d) In response to the question as to whether it would be appropriate to include a reference to development of partnerships in the area of educational provision, the Lead Member responded that he considered that it was premature to do so at this stage.
2. The Committee recommended that the Scrutiny Commission suggest to the Cabinet that:-
  - (a) The first sentence of the first paragraph in the italicised text be amended to give greater emphasis to the wide range of abilities to be catered for by the Education service;
  - (b) The bullet points should be amended to emphasise the County Council's continuing commitment to the agreed policy for provision for children with special educational needs, and in particular, the continuing provision of specialist schools for children with those needs;
  - (c) There should be a commitment in the document to a programme of continuing improvement of school buildings, including replacement of unsuitable buildings and mobile classrooms wherever possible;

- (d) There should be an expression of the Council's commitment actively to encourage schools to tackle problems with drugs and alcohol experienced by young people.

### **Supporting Culture and Leisure**

- 3. The Committee considered the part of the draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy entitled "supporting Culture and Leisure and raised issues with the Lead Member for Education in relation to Library Services. The Committee suggested and the Lead Member accepted that it might be helpful to provide a further explanation of the terms used in the first bullet point. In particular, the Committee recommended that the term "national standards" be clarified and that the reference to "integrated approach to service delivery" be clarified to ensure that reference was made to the provision of a wide range of services provided by the County Council, district councils and, if appropriate, other agencies.
- 4. In relation to those issues referred to under the heading "Supporting Culture and Leisure", other than those relating to the Library Service, the Committee recommended that the Scrutiny Commission consider the following comments, as an appropriate member of the Cabinet had been unable to attend the meeting to answer questions:-
  - (a) In view of the consequences of disaggregation of the Museums Service at Local Government Re-organisation, there should be some reference to co-operative working with other local authorities to safeguard the County's heritage.
  - (b) The third bullet point should be re-drafted (or further bullet point added) to ensure that greater emphasis was given to the development of country parks other than the Bosworth Battlefield, whilst recognising the importance of the Bosworth Battlefield as a major visitor attraction.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

The Committee considered the County Council's draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy for 2001-2005. A copy of the draft strategy is attached to these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. D.R. Parsons CC and Mr. R. Miller CC who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting during the consideration of the draft Strategy.

In reply to questions, Messrs. Parsons and Miller advised as follows:

- (i) the vital role of carers was already recognised and valued;
- (ii) the term 'independent sector' was meant to refer to both the private and voluntary sector. It was recognised that the voluntary sector was a key partner in service delivery;
- (iii) the commitment to work with other statutory partners included working with District Councils;
- (iv) a review of residential care for older people had commenced and it was hoped that a range of options would emerge covering both the refurbished and un-refurbished homes;
- (v) a Best Value Review of Learning Disability services was currently underway and this would inform the future provision of services. Similarly, it was hoped that a partnership scheme with the Health Authority to establish a joint service in respect of mental ill health would offer opportunities/ideas for service improvements;
- (vi) an officer review of the Children's Residential Service was underway. The future of the Blaby Unit would be considered within that context, although it was clear that the Unit could not continue to operate as it presently did;
- (vii) the concerns expressed by members about the lack of targets were noted. Such targets/action plans would emerge in due course and would be reported in the Best Value Performance Plan and service plans. The Committee would be kept informed of progress.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That this Committee notes the assurances given in relation to:-
  - (i) a continuing commitment to work with the voluntary sector and district councils in the delivery of services; and
  - (ii) the recognition of the vital role play by carers and the need for services to support carers;



- (b) That this Committee welcomes the commitment given by the Cabinet representatives to report on a regular basis on progress in delivering the objectives in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy;
- (c) That in the light of the above, this Committee endorses and welcomes the objectives and priorities in relation to Health and Care Needs set out in the draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy 2001-2005.

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2001**

Further to Minute 42 of the last meeting, the Committee considered a copy of the Council's draft Medium Term Strategy which had been approved by the Cabinet as a basis for consultation. A copy of the draft Medium Term Strategy is filed with these minutes.

Professor M.H. Preston, Mrs. L.A.S. Pendleton and Mr. P.G. Winkless, Cabinet Lead Members, attended the meeting to answer questions from the Committee on those elements of the draft Plan that fell within the Committee's terms of reference namely, Planning, Highways and Transportation, Country Parks and Waste Disposal.

In the course of the discussion which followed, a number of questions were addressed to the Cabinet Lead members and various issues were raised including those listed below:

- (a) The absence of statistical information and performance targets against which the Council's performance in achieving its objectives could be scrutinised was noted. These would be developed and included in the Best Value Performance Plan and other key plans.
- (b) The impact of national and regional policies would need to be taken into consideration in developing Council policies and in partnership working.
- (c) Although the document included no specific reference to Park and Ride Schemes these were covered by reference to the Local Transport Plans.
- (d) The use of other alternative forms of transport such as railways was dependent on having sufficient financial resources. Any expansion of the use of railways would largely depend on support from the Government or the Strategic Rail Authority.
- (e) The Council's ability to achieve its aim of providing 95% of people in the County with direct access to an hourly bus service or better was dependent upon the existing level of resources being available in future years. Subject to this, the aim was sustainable. Greater use of community buses, provided in partnership with local communities and parish councils would help to provide services to those areas not served by the hourly service i.e. 'the deep rural areas'.

- (f) The proposed road safety measures would include, amongst other things, the possible expansion of the use of speed cameras, 20 mph speed limits outside schools, expansion of home zones and quiet lanes schemes. The issue of the speed of traffic approaching villages was recognised as significant in planning future traffic control measures.
- (g) The Strategy did not include any reference to possible proposals relating to the widening of the M1 Motorway in Leicestershire as the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DLTR) had not yet come to a view. The County Council would have the opportunity to comment when the DLTR had developed its 'preferred strategy'.
- (h) The Strategy did not include specific reference to the problem of flooding on the basis that flood relief was primarily the responsibility of District Councils. However, the Committee was reminded that the County Council had financed improvements to tackle flooding caused by highways.
- (i) Although there was no specific reference in the Strategy to the Council's attitude towards the distribution of new housing development around the County, the Council would continue to make representations against the level of new housing recommended for central Leicestershire by the Panel following the Examination in Public of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan.
- (j) The Administration remained committed to safeguarding and promoting a sustainable environment, in accordance with Agenda 21 and FABLE.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) That the comments made by representatives of the Cabinet in response to questions raised be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Commission be advised that this Committee broadly supports the contents of the Strategy but that the Cabinet should be asked to consider the following comments:
  - (i) the first bullet point under "Improving Our Transport System" should be expanded to include some reference to the development of community transport as a means of improving public transport to those areas not served by the hourly bus service i.e. 'the deep rural areas';
  - (ii) under "Improving Our Transport System" a specific commitment should be made to promoting the use of the railways and other alternative forms of transport, as well as buses;

- (iii) under “Caring for our Environment” the preamble should be amended to reflect the Council’s commitment to promoting a sustainable environment;
- (iv) under “Managing Waste Effectively” a specific commitment should be made to exploring alternative forms of waste disposal, including incineration.