

MEDIUM TERM CORPORATE STRATEGY TO 2009
IMPROVING LIFE IN LEICESTERSHIRE
CONSULTATION DRAFT



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Leader of Leicestershire County Council

Introduction

This is the second full Medium Term Corporate Strategy for the County Council and covers our priorities for the four year period to May 2009. The priorities are set out within our 3 overall aims of improving quality of life for people, improving quality of life in communities and improving services so they are high quality and value for money. This focus on priorities is intended to help everyone be clear about what the Council wants to achieve.

The Council and its partners are in the process of negotiating and implementing a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with the Government from 2006. Some of the targets within this Strategy are therefore currently provisional, subject to the finalisation of that agreement. Progress against the targets will be monitored and published each year in the Council's Annual Plan.

We delivered on 57 of the 65 priorities set out in our previous strategy. In only 8 cases were we unable to achieve the targets we set. At the end of 2004 our performance overall was rated as 'Excellent' by the Audit Commission and is recognition of our high levels of services. However I am aware that more hard work will be necessary by the authority and its partners to maintain our excellent position. This has all been achieved despite low levels of funding from the Government. We have also brought down the level of Council Tax increases. Keeping Council Tax rises as low as possible will continue to remain a priority for the next four years. However our success in achieving this will largely be dependent on future Government funding decisions.

In delivering this Strategy we will continue to consult widely, for example through the Leicestershire citizens' panel and citizens' juries involving disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic communities. Consultations have already helped to inform the revision of the Leicestershire Community Strategy, this new Medium Term Corporate Strategy and our Corporate Equality Plan. I am always interested in what local people think of the County Council and the work it is doing, either directly or through our many partners. Comments on this document and any aspect of the Council's performance can be sent to me at:

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Our Vision – Improving Life in Leicestershire

“We will listen to the views of Leicestershire people and, by working with them and our partner agencies, ensure they enjoy the quality of life which they expect: to live in a County and region which is safe, healthy, attractive and prosperous.”

Aims – Improving Life in Leicestershire

To achieve our vision we aim to:-

- Improve quality of life for people
- Improve quality of life in communities
- Improve services so they are high quality and value for money

Delivering the Vision – Improving Life in Leicestershire

To deliver our vision we will:-

- Provide community leadership for the County.
- Focus on the needs of service users.
- Work to promote equality and reduce disadvantage.
- Work in partnership and identify and exploit new opportunities for joint working for the benefit of Leicestershire people.
- Value and support a highly motivated and well trained workforce.
- Protect and enhance the environment of Leicestershire and take account of the needs of future generations.

The Longer Term

This Strategy concentrates on County Council priorities over the next four years. We will continue to support the work of Leicestershire Together - the local strategic partnership for Leicestershire – to implement the Leicestershire Community Strategy and the longer term vision currently being developed for the County to 2025.

As a key member of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership we will also work towards the vision to 2012 to promote the economy of Leicester and Leicestershire. The local transport plans for Leicester and Leicestershire and the structure plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland also form key parts of our vision for the sub-region for the next five years or more.

We will continue to work with partners across the wider City and County area in services such as community safety, health, waste, road safety, culture and leisure. We will also work with other partners in the East Midlands region, nationally and even internationally to shape and deliver the longer term vision for Leicestershire, including playing an active role within the East Midlands Regional Assembly, Local Government Association, and 3 East Midlands Cities Planning Partnership.

Improving Life in Leicestershire – Quality Of Life for People

The sections below set out our commitments to improve the quality of life for all residents with specific sections on children and young people, older people and vulnerable adults and carers. We recognise that different groups in the community have different needs and will consult and involve people widely in the planning, development and delivery of services. We will also work to support people to remain independent and meet their own needs where possible.

We will work with our health service partners to improve Leicestershire people's health. We have already agreed with the Primary Care Trusts in Leicestershire to give priority to work on tobacco control, physical activity, food and health, accident prevention, sexual health and mental health and well being. Social services, education, economic development, and culture and leisure will also be important to the health and quality of life people enjoy. We will continue our excellent record with the NHS to make sure that people don't have to stay in hospital longer than they have to. We will give high priority to responding to the Government White Paper on improving community health and social care services.

We will work with Leicestershire Together to deliver the following (draft) LAA priorities to ensure healthier communities:-

- increase life expectancy and reduce serious illness and accidents;
- reduce cancer, coronary heart disease and strokes;
- improve the quality of life for people with long term conditions;
- focus on particular groups to make greater health improvements to narrow the health 'inequality gap';
- reduce use of tobacco, increase levels of physical activity, improve diet, reduce accidents, improve sexual health and improve mental health and well-being.

We particularly recognise the important role that good local transport plays in enabling people to access the services and facilities which give them a good quality of life. We aim to improve access to facilities including employment, education, health care and food shopping through implementation of the accessibility strategy in our Local Transport Plan.

Children and Young People

The Children Act 2004 has significant implications for the future organisation of services for children. We will ensure that the changes arising from the Act including a new Children and Young Peoples Plan, Children's Services Department, Leicestershire Children's Partnership/Trust and new Safeguarding Board clearly focus services on our priorities of excellent educational attainment and the protection and safeguarding of children. We will work with all our partners, particularly schools, to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the services provided.

Our aim is that by 2010 children and young people make better progress in our schools than in other parts of England. To do this we need to ensure that all our services are designed to maximise the contribution they can make to our children's education. For example continuing to provide homework clubs and develop improved resources for children in libraries and ensuring our museums and country parks have a well presented educational element such as the Fashion Gallery at Snibston and education centre at Bosworth Battlefield.

We will:-

- be in the top 25% of authorities for progress between school key stages and at least 20 of our schools will be in the top 5% of schools throughout the country for results at ages 7,11,14 and 16;
- increase support and challenge for underachieving schools and ensure that teaching and learning is always found to be imaginative, engaging and motivating and that all schools score level 3 or above for teaching and learning when OFSTED inspections take place;
- improve educational attainment of pupils with special needs and underachieving groups such as looked after children, boys, pupils excluded from school, and those in the lowest quartile of attainment;
- improve the supply and quality of child care places;
- safeguard children through effective strategies to protect them from deliberate harm and neglect, combat the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, reduce the levels of teenage pregnancy and levels of offending and re-offending;
- develop new area based special schools, reduce the number of SEN pupils in out of county placements and reduce the need for statutory assessment;
- promote strategies to improve school attendance, reduce exclusions and encourage good behaviour such as our successful yellow bus scheme and ensure rigorous anti-bullying measures;
- improve children's health through work on school sports, school travel plans, improvements in school meals and health awareness education;
- raise the quality of life of looked after children and care leavers through our Corporate Parenting Policy;
- deliver improved school accommodation and modernise learning facilities including new schools at Wigston, Coalville, Oadby, Shepshed, Enderby and Ravenstone;
- continue to roll out 4+ education across the County and implement the childcare strategy including twenty-four more Children's Centres in the County by 2008;
- develop a county-wide extended schools strategy and wrap around care and support extended school initiatives to encourage schools to increase opening hours and offer additional facilities such as child care, study support, health and social care and parenting support;
- develop our youth services to respond to legislation arising from the Government's Youth Green Paper;
- seek to increase the number of local foster placements for our looked after children.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
INCREASE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – PARTICULAR FOCUS ON KEY STAGES 2 AND 4 AND UNDERACHIEVING GROUPS	<p>TOP 10% OF AUTHORITIES AT KEY STAGE 3. TOP 25% OF AUTHORITIES AT KEY STAGES 2 AND 4 BY 2008, WITH FURTHER TARGETS TO REACH TOP 10% THEREAFTER.</p> <p>MINIMUM OF 20 SCHOOLS IN TOP 5% OF SCHOOLS FOR RESULTS AT AGES 7,11,14 AND 16</p> <p>ALL SCHOOLS TO SCORE LEVEL 3 OR ABOVE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN AN OFSTED CATEGORY.</p>

A NEW CHILDRENS SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND INTEGRATED CHILD CARE SERVICES	A NEW CHILDRENS SERVICES DEPARTMENT PLAN IN PLACE FROM 1 APRIL 2006. MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE AND RESPOND TO THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. 24 CHILDRENS CENTRES BY 2008
RESPOND TO CHILDRENS TRUST REQUIREMENTS	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CHILDRENS TRUST ARRANGEMENTS BY 2008
GOOD QUALITY LOCAL PLACEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	REVERSE THE TREND OF YEAR ON YEAR NET LOSS OF FOSTER PLACEMENTS

Draft Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities

- Improve educational progress and attainment for all children, especially at Key Stage 4 (including looked after children).
- Improved school attendance (including looked after children).
- Increase the contribution of 'hard to reach' groups in consultation/ active involvement processes.
- Reduce number of permanent exclusions (including looked after children).
- Increase in the provision of support and housing where appropriate for vulnerable young people.
- Improved engagement of 14-19 year olds in education and training.
- Extended services developed in schools and in Children Centres.
- Sufficient quality child care places provided across the County.
- Reduce the level of childhood obesity.
- Improved sexual health services for young people, particularly boys and young men.
- Improved access to maternity services for young parents.
- Improved parenting support services
- Improved life chances and better opportunities for vulnerable young people.
- Improved personal and social development and enjoyment of recreation.

Older People

21% of our population is over the age of 60. We believe that older people should be valued as active contributors to society rather than as dependants. We will take a broad approach to improve the lives of older people and to recognise the vital role they play. This means developing a better understanding of the needs of older people including those with mental ill-health and learning disabilities in relation to a broad range of services as well as specialist care services. We will therefore improve arrangements to gain and use the views of older people in planning and delivering our services. For the 15% of older people who require care services our overall aim will continue to be to support them to live at home and avoid admission to long-term care and to increase individual choice and control over care services.

We will:-

- Continue to develop a range of services to support people at home including services out of hours and improved contracts with domiciliary care providers aimed at providing more efficient, high quality care across the County.
- Adopt a single assessment process across Health and Social Care.
- Develop a model for integrated services for older people between Health and Social Services including intermediate care services, services to people with long-term conditions and to older people with mental ill-health.
- Increase the take-up of Direct Payments for older people including people from ethnic minorities.
- Work with districts to develop supported housing options in each area including extra care schemes and services for people from ethnic minorities.
- Work to reduce the fear of crime felt by older people, including by working to tackle scams and door stop sales to prevent distraction burglary.
- Work to ensure the safety of consumer goods including electric blankets and work with the Fire and Rescue Service to promote safety in the home.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES	DEVELOP A STRATEGY WITH PRIMARY CARE TEAMS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH LONG TERM CONDITIONS TO LIVE AT HOME AND REDUCE HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS
IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH OLDER PEOPLE	ESTABLISH AN OLDER PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE NETWORK AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY
SUPPORT MORE OLDER PEOPLE TO LIVE AT HOME	INCREASE THE NUMBER OF OLDER PEOPLE RECEIVING DIRECT PAYMENTS TO 135 BY MARCH 2009. MEET THE NATIONAL TARGET TO SUPPORT 34% OF PEOPLE RECEIVING AN INTENSIVE CARE PACKAGE IN THEIR OWN HOME BY MARCH 2008.

Draft Local Area Agreement (LAA) Priorities

- To increase the range of supported housing options for older people through the supported accommodation project, developing additional extra care schemes, floating support.
- To develop a single 'gateway' so that when older people contact key agencies for the first time or for assistance there is awareness amongst officers to wider issues that might impact on an older person's well-being.
- Develop improved communication and co-ordinated response to falls across the agencies.
- Increase the number of older people who have access to low level support.
- Increase the range of volume of leisure and educational activities that older people participate in.
- Encourage more older people to volunteer themselves, to extend the use of direct payments for older people to arrange their own activities.
- Ensure that older people who are living at home have higher standards of housing and support which enables them to live better quality of lives.
- Develop Multi-Agency Teams for advice and take-up of benefits.
- To establish an older people's consultative network across Leicestershire.

Vulnerable Adults and Carers

We support giving people choice and control in respect of the adult social care services they require. We will place increased emphasis on prevention and promoting independence and enabling people with social care needs to access a range of co-ordinated services in flexible and imaginative ways. We will play a key strategic leadership role to work with a range of partners including the NHS and independent and voluntary sectors to provide planned and integrated services and ensure the effective use of resources.

We will:-

- continue to modernise day services and develop supported living accommodation for people with learning disabilities based on person-centred planning;
- implement full lead commissioning arrangements with the NHS and integrated health and social care services for people with learning disabilities;
- support the work of the Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership Board in promoting strategies for communication and involvement;
- support implementation of an action plan to respond to the Government Report on Mental Health and Social Exclusion;
- complete the integration of our adult mental health services with the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust by 2008;
- improve the take-up of direct payments;
- increase the number of disabled people accessing employment and volunteering opportunities;
- ensure that carers can access the services they need in their own right;
- pilot arrangements for disabled people to carry out self-assessments of their needs;
- complete a review of all Supporting People services and develop services in line with priorities in the five year Strategy;
- increase the take-up of services by people from ethnic minority communities;
- work to ensure that adults with learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments and mental health problems and their carers have access to educational opportunities in their own community.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
INCREASE TAKE UP OF DIRECT PAYMENTS	30% INCREASE PER YEAR OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL-HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITIES RECEIVING DIRECT PAYMENTS
EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE	INCREASE OF 50 DISABLED PEOPLE GAINING PAID WORK EACH YEAR AND AN ADDITIONAL 100 VOLUNTARY WORK PLACEMENTS PER YEAR
MODERNISATION OF DAY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAMME IN 2008
DEVELOPMENT OF LEAD COMMISSIONING AND INTEGRATION OF LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES HOSTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL FROM APRIL 2006

Improving life in Leicestershire – Quality of Life in Communities

We are committed to making Leicestershire a county to be proud of. Our key priorities for improving quality of life in communities relate to culture and leisure, transport, the environment and waste management and safer communities. We are also committed to ensuring that our rural communities are well served and will continue to work within the Leicestershire Rural Partnership to achieve this. We will also work with Leicestershire Together to deliver the following (draft) LAA priorities to ensure all our communities are stronger for the future:-

- Local people feel part of the decision making process and have a role in planning the future of their own community;
- Local people have a sense of community spirit and are supported in community activities to bring people together;
- Equality of access to services for everyone, including disabled people, BME groups, people who are vulnerable and people who live in deprived areas, so that everyone can have a voice and secure independent living;
- Vital and thriving market town and village centres which act as 'hubs' for surrounding communities.

We recognise the important role that schools and education services can play to support communities through for example extended school initiatives and related care such as child care, study support, health and social care and parenting support. Our commitment to this is set out in the children and young people section.

We will promote the economic well-being of the County by working with our partners to deliver a range of economic regeneration programmes to ensure that Leicestershire has a strong diverse economy where small, medium and large businesses can flourish. We will also work in partnership to ensure that our County has a positive image to attract visitors and investment. In our role in the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership we will seek to attract significant regional funding to support sustainable economic growth and work with our partners to deliver the following (draft) economic development priorities of the Local Area Agreement:-

- Raise the level of skills and knowledge in the local population in line with local business needs and opportunities.
- Increase the vitality and viability of centres in urban areas, market towns and villages.
- Increase the number of businesses starting up, expanding, and locating within the County.
- Increase the contribution of tourism to the local economy.
- Increase the number of people in employment.
- Work towards improving the provision of quality employment land and premises across the County.

To maintain our quality of life Leicestershire communities need to be well protected with effective plans to respond to emergency situations. We will take a lead role within the East Midlands Regional Resilience Forum to do this.

We see the diversity of local people in Leicestershire as one of the county's strengths and believe that local communities should play an important part in identifying the problems that affect them and in helping shape the solutions to those problems. We will give priority to building on our strong relationship with organisations and individuals in the voluntary and community sector and with faith communities. We will continue our joint work on the Compact and on the ChangeUp programme designed to increase the voluntary sectors' contribution to public service delivery.

Culture and Leisure

We recognise the benefits of culture and leisure to our economy, our physical health and well-being. We want to develop and promote the County's cultural heritage, with the help of national funding bodies, and through a partnership approach ensure the provision of a wide range of activities and maximise what Leicestershire has to offer.

We also recognise the valuable role of sport and will lead the fight for extra funding for the many and diverse sports clubs which exist in Leicestershire. We support the integration of County Council services into a new Sports Partnership for Leicestershire and Rutland in order to make sport more accessible and to promote participation.

We will:-

- progress the County Council Cultural Strategy Action Plan to 2008;
- continue to provide a range of services including museums, archives, libraries and country parks, plus support for the arts, which are integral to the successful implementation of the Strategy;
- encourage people to participate in a wide range of cultural, sporting and leisure pursuits;
- integrate the Council's sports services into a new County Sports Partnership;
- continue to implement our programme of library improvements including 20 new or substantially refurbished libraries, improved and extended opening hours and enhanced access to ICT facilities and public information services.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF LIBRARIES	COMPLY WITH 8 PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS BY 2008 20 NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED LIBRARIES INCREASED LIBRARY OPENING HOURS
ENHANCE THE COUNTY'S MUSEUMS AND COUNTRY PARKS	NEW FASHION AND INTERACTIVE GALLERY FOR SNIBSTON. COMPLETE HARBOROUGH MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL. COMPLETE PROGRAMME TO REVITALISE BOSWORTH BATTLEFIELD. SECURE FUNDING FOR NEXT PHASE OF THE ASHBY CANAL

Transport

Our aim is to create a better transport system for Leicestershire that delivers safe and efficient transport whilst at the same time safeguarding the environment. Building on previous progress we will implement a new 5 year plan for transport for the County which will:-

- *Reduce road accident casualties* using new investigation techniques and a mix of driver education and infrastructure measures
- *Reduce congestion and improve air quality by:*
 - working with Leicester City Council in a joint strategy to relieve traffic congestion in Central Leicestershire, including new park and ride sites in the Junction 21 area and at Birstall
 - working towards the completion of the Loughborough inner relief road
 - increasing bus usage and user satisfaction, in partnership with the bus companies, through investment in infrastructure and promotion
 - improving parking management through the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement in partnership with the District Councils
 - reducing car dependence through continued development of school and workplace travel plans
 - manage road works so as to reduce the delays they cause
- *Reduce the impact of traffic by:*
 - promoting bypasses for Earl Shilton, Kegworth and Melton Mowbray
 - investigating bypasses for other communities badly affected by HGVs
 - working in co-operation with the Highways Agency to reduce noise nuisance for communities around the M1
- *Improve access to facilities* for people in rural Leicestershire and for those countywide who do not have a car available
- *Improve the condition of our roads, pavements, bridges and street lights* with the help of a new Transport Asset Management Plan
- *Improve customer satisfaction with the highways service* by the initiatives above, by further developing and publicising our 'highway patrols', and by further improving access to the service and service information by telephone, internet or face to face contact

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
REDUCING ROAD CASUALTIES	A 25% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED ON COUNTY ROADS IN 2009 COMPARED WITH THE AVERAGE IN 2001-04*.*
REDUCING CONGESTION AND IMPROVING AIR QUALITY	AN INCREASE IN TOTAL BUS PATRONAGE OF 1% A YEAR* ON TRACK TO ELIMINATE ALL LOCAL TRAFFIC-RELATED BREACHES OF AIR POLLUTION LIMITS BY 2010
IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF OUR ROADS, PAVEMENTS, BRIDGES AND STREET LIGHTS	A REDUCTION IN THE % OF 'B' AND 'C' CLASSIFIED ROADS WITH STRUCTURAL DEFECTS FROM 29% IN 2004/05 TO 21% BY 2008/09*
IMPROVING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	<i>(Target to be set following satisfaction surveys in late 2005)</i>

Caveat - The targets marked with a star are provisional pending the finalisation of the Council's Local Transport Plan with the Government.

The Environment and Waste Management

We aim to improve the attractiveness of Leicestershire as a place in which to live and work, whilst taking account of the needs of future generations. We will work in partnership with ENABLE (the environmental partnership for Leicestershire) to provide advice on, co-ordinate and promote activity to improve Leicestershire's environment. We will also implement actions to improve our own environmental performance. Our transport strategy, covered in a separate section, will play a key part in improving Leicestershire's environment, for example through our approach to school and workforce travel plans.

In order to meet government targets we need to ensure that the volume of waste sent to landfill is substantially reduced in a manner which is both cost effective and minimises environmental impacts. In order to do this we are working with District Councils to review and implement a revised Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy and provide a more integrated waste management service in future. As part of the strategy we will need to take decisions during 2006 on the best technologies for treating and disposing of household waste in future, identify locations for new waste facilities and begin the procurement process for these facilities.

We will:-

- implement initiatives to encourage waste minimisation, recycling and composting including improved recycling and composting facilities;
- plan for and implement new and improved waste treatment and disposal facilities including consideration of alternative technologies and procurement options such as the Private Finance Initiative;
- improve our Recycling and Household Waste sites and introduce new arrangements to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction;
- prepare and implement a new planning framework for the location of waste management facilities and mineral sites which balances environment considerations with the demand for new facilities;
- campaign for 'designation' status at East Midlands Airport, to enable night flying to be controlled.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
REVIEW AND IMPLEMENT A REVISED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN 2006	MEET NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WASTE TARGETS
INCREASE RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING AND REDUCE WASTE GOING INTO LANDFILL SITES	DIVERT AN ADDITIONAL 30,000 TONNES OF WASTE FROM LANDFILL IN 2009/10 COMPARED WITH 2004/05
IMPROVE RECYCLING AND HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITES	MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS TO 3 SITES
IMPLEMENT THE COUNTY ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND IMPROVE THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	MEET THE 7 KEY OUTCOMES IN THE STRATEGY BY 2009. DELIVER THE ACTIONS AND TARGETS IN THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

Caveat - The waste targets are currently provisional pending the outcome of the review of the Leicestershire Waste Management Strategy and the emerging

Waste Development Framework. The Council will publish more detailed targets when these have been finalised.

Draft Local Area Agreement (LAA) Priorities

- Work with and through the Leicestershire Waste Management Partnership to develop a strategy to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and provide an infrastructure for recycling in the longer term.
- Improving the quality of the environment in town and village centres through improving response on the removal of graffiti, fly tipping and cleanliness.
- Combining to produce a common standard for the management of green space, and the achievement of Green Flag status for at least one park in each district.
- Improved co-ordination and promotion of walking and cycling events across the County, with links to GP referral schemes and 'Green Gyms'.
- Raising awareness of the issues of climate change and the actions individuals can take to reduce their own contribution, including leading by example in the public sector in the promotion of renewable energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Development and delivery of biodiversity action plans in order to protect the quality of the environmental and wildlife amenities in Leicestershire.

Safer Communities

Reducing crime is a high priority for us and our partner agencies. Particularly reducing violent crime, domestic violence and hate crime. We also want to reduce anti-social behaviour, reassure the public and tackle the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol misuse. We will play our part in delivering priorities identified in local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies. We also recognise that providing alternative facilities such as leisure, sports and transport for young people as well as diversionary activities through our multi-agency youth crime prevention strategy plays a part in preventing and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

We will:-

- work with the Police Authority to put extra community support officers on the beat in Leicestershire and to review and develop their effectiveness in tackling low-level crime and anti-social behaviour in communities;
- campaign at national level for the rights of those subject to criminal behaviour;
- support the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Community Safety Programme Board in implementing a strategy to target the relatively small number of prolific offenders responsible for the highest proportion of crimes;
- identify those children and young people most at risk of offending and ensure that individual plans are put in place to prevent it;
- intervene through our Youth Offending Service at an early point in the lives of children and young people who become involved in crime and provide rigorous supervision to reduce their offending;
- work to stamp out underage sales of alcohol, knives, fireworks, solvents and aerosol paint spray cans to help reduce anti-social behaviour;
- work with partners to prevent and reduce youth crime.

Draft Local Area Agreement (LAA) Priorities

- To reduce overall crime, particularly violent crime, domestic violence and hate crime.
- To reduce the level of offending by prolific offenders.
- To reduce the level of anti-social behaviour.
- To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol misuse both to communities, and to individuals and their families.
- To provide improved life chances and better opportunities for young people in order to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people, including the prevention of future prolific offenders.
- To reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and improve the confidence in the criminal justice system.
- To reduce vulnerability and assist people to feel safe within priority neighbourhoods.

Caveat – The LAA target setting process will firm up our high priority targets for safer communities, including those to prevent and reduce youth crime.

Improving Life in Leicestershire – Improve services so they are high quality and value for money

In 2004 the County Council was rated an 'Excellent' Council by the Audit Commission based on the cost and quality of our services and the way we are run. It is our priority to continue to deliver high quality and value for money services and improve the way the Council operates. We will examine a mix of public, private and voluntary sector options and investigate innovative solutions including exploiting the benefits of information technology to do this. We will also enter into a strategic partnership and put in place a programme of organisational change to deliver service improvements and efficiencies.

Budgets, Council Tax and Efficiency

We are one of the lowest funded councils in England. We receive the lowest funding per pupil of any local education authority in England and the second lowest funding per person for Social Services. The outcome of the current government review of local government finance is not known but it appears likely that our relative funding from Government will deteriorate in the medium term. Despite continuing pressures on many of our services council tax increases have been brought down over the last four years and it will continue to be our priority to minimise future increases. Whether we are able to continue to achieve this will largely depend on future Government funding decisions.

In order to minimise council tax increases and continue to invest in priority services we will:-

- continue to campaign for fairer local taxes and better funding for Leicestershire;
- achieve the Government target for efficiency savings of £20.47 million by 2008 including through better procurement, examining closely how the Council delivers services and re-engineering our business processes and assisting schools in achieving their efficiency targets;
- put in place a programme of organisational change and strengthen our programme and project management arrangements through a strategic partnership with external consultants;
- produce a new medium term financial strategy when the Government's funding decision is known;
- improve the cost-effectiveness of highway works by introducing a new procurement strategy;
- improve the cost-effectiveness of County Council passenger transport management.

Quality, Customers and Diversity

We aim to provide the level of service people expect, at the time and in the manner they expect. We will:-

- use new consultation standards to consult and involve people widely in the planning and delivery of services, ensure that all relevant sections of the community are heard and that consultation is accessible and tell people how the results of consultation have been used;
- implement a programme of improvements to customer access to our services including standards for better customer care;
- develop a new Leicestershire based contact centre from 2006;
- provide more and better service shops and help points around the County using the 'Connect' brand;

- improve our website and make greater use of technology to provide more services, electronic transactions and better access to information;
- improve management of our customer and service information and records.

We are committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination in services and employment. We expect our partners and service providers to share this commitment. We will implement our Corporate Equality Plan and Race Equality Scheme objectives and targets on equality and diversity and publish and consult on a Disability Equality Scheme. We also plan to give priority to our work to promote equality in terms of gender, age, sexuality and religion or belief.

We will involve our partners and local people in monitoring our performance and make public reports on our progress. As we progress through the Levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government we will review and update our targets and objectives in response to feedback from staff, partners and local communities.

We recognise the importance of equipping our employees with the skills to deliver high quality services. As part of our Human Resources Strategy we will:-

- introduce a new Management Development programme;
- develop a new employee attendance management policy;
- improve equalities monitoring and opportunities for women, disabled people and black and minority ethnic people to progress in the organisation;
- introduce a new approach to succession planning; and
- develop a statement of values to promote high standards of working in the Council and in our relationship with partners and service providers.

HIGH PRIORITIES	WE WILL ACHIEVE
IMPLEMENT THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY	INVESTOR IN PEOPLE STATUS FOR ALL SERVICES 10% REDUCTION IN SICKNESS ABSENCE
DELIVER IMPROVEMENTS IN THE EFFICIENCY OF COUNCIL SERVICES	7.5% EFFICIENCY GAIN BY 2008
DELIVER OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITIES ISSUES	INCREASE % OF BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKFORCE TO 5.5% AND DISABLED EMPLOYEES TO 3.8% SET AND MEET EQUALITY TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES FOR ALL RELEVANT SERVICE AREAS.
IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES INCLUDING A NEW CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE	NEW CONTACT CENTRE IN PLACE DURING 2006 – 80% QUERIES RESOLVED AT FIRST POINT OF CONTACT, 80% USERS SATISFIED WITH SERVICE, 25% INCREASE IN HOURS THE COUNCIL CAN BE CONTACTED. TOP QUARTILE PUBLIC SATISFACTION WITH THE COUNCIL.

Contacts

Mr D.R. Parsons	Leader of the Council, Community Leadership, County/District Relations, Structure and Strategic Planning, Regional Matters
Mr I. Ould	Children's Services, Deputy Leader
Dr R.K.A Feltham	Resources including finance, ICT, Council property, Central Departments, human resources, efficiency savings including procurement, performance management
Mr A.M. Kershaw	Access to services, communications and consultation.
Mrs L.A.S. Pendleton	Rural affairs, Tourism and Equal Opportunities.
Prof. M.E. Preston	Waste Management
Mr J.B. Rhodes	Community Safety
Mr N.J. Rushton	Highways and Transportation
Mr D.A. Sprason	Adult Care Services and Support to the Leader on Regional Matters
Mr E.F. White	Community Services (including Libraries, Museums, the Environment)