

**Leicestershire County Council**

**Annual Plan 2007- 08**

**DRAFT**

## **About this document**

This document is Leicestershire County Council's Annual Plan. It sets out our broad objectives for the next year, based on the longer-term commitments laid out in 'Improving Life in Leicestershire', our Medium Term Corporate Strategy (MTCS). It also contains an overview of our achievements in the last year and how these have made a difference to the people of Leicestershire.

The Government requires us, by law, to produce a "Best Value Performance Plan" annually by 30 June, which sets out our performance against key national measures set for all local authorities and our targets for improvement. Our Annual Plan is intended to meet this requirement.

The Plan is in two parts. Part One will present an overview of what we intend to do in 2007-08 to continue to achieve our MTCS commitments. Part Two will present a more detailed analysis of our performance in 2006-07 against our detailed performance targets, including BVPIs, and MTCS commitments. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is monitored separately but will be referred to where there are key elements being delivered by the County Council.

## **Introduction**

This Annual Plan builds on the foundations of Improving Life in Leicestershire, the County Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy (MTCS), where we set out our commitments to 2009. In this Annual Plan we will describe what we want to do in 2007-08 to continue to build on the achievements of the past year. We will also reflect on our performance over the last 12 months.

Leicestershire County Council is a high-performing local authority. In 2004 we were rated as Excellent in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection, and since then we have achieved and maintained a Four Star rating. We deliver excellent services despite continuing to receive one of the lowest levels of funding per head for any local authority in England.

This last year has seen major reorganisation of our services for children and adults. We have successfully integrated Education and Children's Social Care services into our new Children and Young People's Service, and this service has been rated as Good to Excellent by Ofsted. These changes are beginning to translate the Government's Every Child Matters agenda into real differences for the children and young people of Leicestershire.

We are extremely proud that our Social Care services have been awarded a Three Star rating for the last five years, and we are the only county council to have maintained this rating since the inspection scheme was launched.

Our Highways, Transportation and Waste Department continues to deliver high quality services. We are continually looking to improve Leicestershire's transport system, with real improvements in reducing congestion, improving road safety, and safeguarding the environment. Our Culture and Leisure Services continue to explore imaginative ways of bringing to life the County's heritage.

We continue to provide community leadership through partnerships and the Leicestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA). We recognise the importance attached to the LAA and other related issues in the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'. Social inclusion and Equalities are key priorities, and we have worked hard to achieve reduced crime, safer communities, and to make sure that the needs of everyone in Leicestershire are considered.

Our corporate functions are undergoing a managed programme of service transformation in order to maximise efficiency and deliver better for less through improved services and better procurement. Our Change Programme is already delivering innovations in customer service and organisational efficiency, and our People and Performance programme is focused on recruiting, developing and retaining the best people to provide the best services.

In this Annual Plan we will set out what we plan to do in 2007-08. We will also consider some of our key achievements in the past year, which reflect the hard work and commitment of members and staff. We are committed to

improve continuously the services we provide, and will continue to look for new and different ways of doing so in the coming year.

### **Our Vision**

“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.”

The delivery of our vision will be underpinned by new and innovative ways of working. We will continue to provide community leadership for the county and work in partnerships to identify and exploit new opportunities for joint working; we will focus on the needs of service users, and work to promote equality and reduce disadvantage; we will value and support a highly motivated and well trained workforce; and we will protect and enhance the environment of Leicestershire and take account of the needs of future generations.

### **Our Priorities**

This plan is structured around the County Council’s corporate priorities, and will demonstrate how we are working to achieve these. Our priorities are:

- Improving quality of life for people
- Improving quality of life for communities
- Improving services to deliver high quality and value for money

## **1 Improved Quality of Life for People**

We are committed to improving the quality of life for people in Leicestershire. In particular, we recognise the needs of vulnerable groups in society – of children and young people, older people, and adults and their carers – and so have a particular focus on supporting their needs. We will continue to work to deliver the Government's Every Child Matters agenda in Leicestershire. We will develop our new approach to adult social care provision (Promoting Independence, Changing Lives) and will increasingly design our services around the choices and needs of those who use them.

### **Children and Young People**

#### **What we will do in 2007/08**

We have identified education attainment as a key priority, and in 2007-08 we will continue to focus on improving this, particularly at Key Stage 4, ages 14 – 16. We will maintain and develop our protection and safeguarding of children, and will further develop the involvement of children, young people, parents and carers in service planning. We will continue to work towards improved outcomes for children and young people with additional needs, for looked after children, and towards improved health for children in Leicestershire. We will further develop and strengthen leadership and management within the Children and Young People's Service. Through this work we aim to deliver services which will help all children and young people to flourish and to have all the support that they need.

#### **Increase Academic Attainment**

- We will continue to develop leadership and management in schools, and our successful induction programme for all new and acting Headteachers/ Principals will continue.
- We will target work specifically at Key Stage 2, ages 7 - 11, in order to improve attainment further. A focus on improving educational progress and outcomes will also support the LAA priorities. We will continue to raise standards achieved by looked after children with a target of 30% achieving 5 A\* - C grades in 2008.
- We intend to improve attendance at schools and reduce permanent exclusions.
- We intend to develop and sustain District Youth Councils representative of local youth populations in partnership with District Councils, so at least 50 young people are involved in each area with at least 4 District Youth Council meetings each year. We will develop and maintain the T2C group of young people in care and collect evidence of young people influencing their own service provision.
- We will continue to improve the achievement of pupils with special needs through the implementation of our Special Educational Needs

Inclusion Strategy and the further development of Area Special Schools. We are currently consulting on the building of a new special school in North West Leicestershire.

### **Integrate Children's Services**

- We will continue to integrate central management services of the former Social Services Department into our Children and Young People's Service. We will work with our partners on the Leicestershire Children and Young People's Board to foster a closer working relationship and to begin to develop a procurement and commissioning strategy to support the move to a Children and Young People's Trust.

### **Provide Local Placements for Looked After Children**

- We will increase the numbers of local foster and adoption placements, reduce the use of out of authority placements, and continue to reduce the number of placement changes experienced by looked after children.
- We will continue to monitor our recruitment and retention policies to ensure we have sufficient foster carers of the right type to meet our placement matching needs. We will continue to develop the exit interview process for foster carers. We will continue to monitor enquiries about fostering to test the effectiveness of our promotional activity, and encourage family and friends to become child specific foster carers where this is feasible.

### **Improve the Life Chances of Vulnerable Young People**

- We will continue work to establish a new service to support vulnerable young people through intensive multi agency support and intervention. The service will be trialled in Melton and Charnwood and then rolled out across Leicestershire from 2007 to 2009.

### Our achievements in 2006-07

Our Children and Young People's Service has helped to make a real difference for children and young people in Leicestershire over the last twelve months.

- We developed a Leadership and Management Programme with the National College for School Leadership and the Government Office for the East Midlands. Ofsted (the school inspection agency) judgements of leadership and management in Leicestershire schools have improved since September 2006, and the overall grade rating moved from 2.5 to 2.3 (where 3 is satisfactory and 2 is good).
- The new national reading framework was introduced in all schools. Performance in writing improved by 5% at Level 4 and 4% at Level 5.

- Our draft Special Educational Needs Strategy was written, and a new special school, Dorothy Goodman, opened in Hinckley.
- We made good progress in the integration of different elements of service in the new Children and Young People's Service. In addition, Children's Trust arrangements to ensure local services and partners work together more effectively to improve the lives of young people were agreed and are now in place.
- We continued to maintain our performance in reducing the number of placement changes experienced by looked after children – our target was 16%, and our figures indicate a final year end performance of around 14%. We continued to approve a significant percentage of kinship foster carers (foster carers from within the child's own family) for looked after children, and our cinema fostering recruitment campaign received a national award.
- We made progress on the creation of a new service to support vulnerable young people through intensive multi-agency support and intervention, with a project officer appointed.
- We completed two new high schools at Castle Rock and Bushloe, and two more are underway. Castle Rock High School won an award for its environmentally friendly design.
- Through widespread consultation in the Vale of Belvoir and Melton Mowbray, and focus group meetings with children and young people, we gained consensus to change the way we provide secondary education in North East Leicestershire.

### **Adult Social Care**

We value the contribution that older and disabled people make to society, and recognise the vital role they play. We will develop a better understanding of the needs of older people, and of adults and carers, and will design services with them to support these needs. Our Adult Social Care Service will continue to deliver excellent services – the service has been awarded the highest three star rating for the last five years.

#### **What we will do in 2007-08**

We will transform the way in which we provide adult social care in Leicestershire. Based on the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, our Say', our approach will be known as Promoting Independence, Changing Lives. Achieving the aspirations of the White Paper will require a significant change in the way we currently provide services. We will need to shift our focus so that people themselves are in control and are assisted to play a full and active part in the life of their communities. While we have provided excellent social care services in Leicestershire and will continue to do so, we know that we must do things differently to meet people's expectations in future.

This will mean working together to develop more personalised services that help people stay as healthy and independent as possible. We will build partnerships at different levels - between the health community and local government, as well as with service providers.

We will embark on a major programme to develop self directed support and to encourage people to take more control to plan and choose the services that they use. Within this, we have signed up to the national In Control programme and are also piloting self assessment for people with physical disabilities. This programme of work will lead to increased choice and control for people needing social care support, and deliver greater flexibility, improved quality and increased satisfaction levels.

## **Older People**

### **Supporting older people to live at home**

- Our key priority will continue to be to support older people who want to remain living independently at home. We will do this through the greater use of rehabilitation, intermediate care, and respite services. We are also committed to developing a range of supported accommodation for older people, as an alternative to residential care. This will enable people to live in their own homes, but with access to much higher levels of care and support.
- Ensuring that older people feel safe in their homes is an important aspect of our overall approach. Our successful multi-agency Home Safety Group will be implementing a number of initiatives, including specific actions on fire safety and 'cold calling'.
- We will also improve older people's health and emotional well-being by increasing the range of leisure and recreational activities available to them through greater use of Direct Payments.

### **Maximising older people's income**

- We will continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to maximise the levels of income for older people. In particular, we will increase the take-up of benefits such as Attendance Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

### **Decisions at Life's End**

- A new service aimed at providing the care that older people in Leicestershire and Rutland want in their final days began in 2007 and will continue to develop. The Decisions at Life's End (DALE) service, which recently received a national grant of £2.3m, focuses on enabling older people and their families and carers to make choices about where they want to die. The aim is to reduce the numbers of older people who die in hospital separated from friends and family, and to support people to die in their own homes if they wish to do so.



## **Adults**

### **Modernising services for people with learning disabilities**

- The ongoing development of day services for people with learning disabilities will continue to create a range of new opportunities and will significantly increase choice and promote independence. In 2007-08, the programme will focus on Charnwood and North West Leicestershire.
- Major schemes are planned to improve respite facilities and to increase the availability of supported housing options. These projects are being undertaken in partnership with District Councils and housing providers, and will enhance the choice and independence of people with learning disabilities.

### **Increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability**

- We have set ambitious employment targets for people on Incapacity Benefit within our LAA, and have entered into a new partnership with the Leicestershire Adult Learning Service in order to create pathways for disabled people who wish to enter or re-enter the workforce.

### **Joint working for better outcomes**

- NHS and the County Council's social care staff within the Learning Disability Service are now co-located. This will help to deliver improved quality of life through increased capacity for person-centred and health action planning, and through improved supported living and community opportunities. We are now working towards the full integration of services in 2008.

### **Promoting mental health and well-being**

- We will promote mental health and wellbeing within all public sector workplaces and in at least fifteen commercial sector workplaces by implementing the Health and Safety Executive Stress Management Standards.

### **Modernising day services for adults with mental ill health**

- We will complete the review of adult mental health day services to ensure that they are person-centred and socially inclusive.

## **Carers**

- We will publish a new Carers Strategy and increase the range of services available to carers, including increasing the take up of Direct Payments and the availability of flexible breaks.

## Equalities

- We will participate in a new national initiative to improve rapidly services in mental health care for black and minority ethnic and excluded groups. This will ensure that people have access to appropriate services and experience less discrimination.
- We will also develop a commissioning strategy for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to improve the range and quality of services available to them.
- We will continue to use Equality Impact Assessments as an integral part of service development.

## Our achievements in 2006-07

During 2006-07 our new Adult Social Care Service was formed. Created from the former Social Services Department, the Service retains strong links with children's social care. During this period of change, we are proud that we have continued to deliver excellent services – our Social Care Service has been awarded a three star rating for the last five years, and we are the only county council to have maintained this rating since the inspection scheme was launched. Our overall performance improved; around 90% of performance indicators are 'good' or above.

- As part of our commitment to helping people to remain as independent as possible, greater numbers of older people received intensive home care services in 2006-07 and are being helped to regain skills after a hospital admission and return home.
- New contracts for independent sector home care were introduced, and have successfully delivered more reliable and better quality services across the county at a lower unit cost.
- The countywide Older Persons' Consultative Network was established and is working to ensure that older people have a voice. Older people are now represented on key planning groups within the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Adult Social Care Service.
- The Supported Employment Scheme had a positive inspection report from the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Good progress continued to be made in supporting disabled people into employment.
- We made continued progress in modernising learning disability day services, with a focus on the Market Harborough and Charnwood areas. Plans for North West Leicestershire were approved, whilst funding to implement the remainder of the modernisation programme across the county over the next three years was also approved.
- We are strongly committed to the integration of learning disability services. NHS and social care staff have been co-located and continue

to develop joint working practices, which are having a positive effect on the service. The pooled budget agreement was signed in March 2007.

- Electronic social care records were successfully introduced. The benefits, which include better information sharing and less paperwork, are now being realised.

## **2 Improving Quality of Life in Communities**

We value the importance of culture and leisure and of safer communities in enriching the lives of people and communities in Leicestershire. We will continue with important initiatives in transport, the environment and waste, which will contribute to Leicestershire being further recognised as a richly diverse and pleasant place to live. Our achievements will be underpinned by partnership working and community engagement, and we will continue to provide excellent services in response to people's needs and views, to ensure that all our communities are stronger for the future and that Leicestershire is a county of which we can be proud.

### **Leading and Engaging Communities**

Working with our partners will play a very important part in our commitments in the year ahead. We will continue to act as community leaders and to engage with communities to plan our shared future. We are also undertaking a diverse range of activities to promote the profile of Leicestershire both in the UK and European Union, and wider afield, notably in China. Economic benefits for Leicestershire are also being experienced from some of these initiatives.

#### **What we will do in 2007-08**

We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that Leicestershire has a strong and diverse economy. We will continue to engage with people and communities, and ensure they have a voice in developing a safe, prosperous and sustainable future.

#### **International**

- We will maximise the amount of funding available to Leicestershire through programmes such as the European Social Fund.
- We will continue to develop our economic, educational and cultural links with China, particularly through our twinning arrangements with the Sichuan Province.

#### **Regional**

- We will continue to work with our partners in the Three Cities and Three Counties alliance to secure improvements for the economies of Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and their surrounding counties. Together and with the encouragement of the Government, we will develop a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to identify priorities for improving the economy, transport and other infrastructure.

## **Sub regional**

- With the City Council and other partners we will work towards a more prosperous Leicester and Leicestershire through widespread consultation on a new sub Regional Economic Strategy. The working relationship with the City Council will also be enhanced in other areas.

## **Leicestershire**

- A new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) will be prepared by Leicestershire Together Partnership to identify the improvements to services and quality of life we want to see for people (individuals and families), themes (such as less crime and better housing) and places (such as our towns). We will then prepare with Leicestershire Together a new LAA from April 2008 that will set out how these improvements will be achieved.
- We will implement our new Rural Strategy as a key document guiding partnership work. Our Access to Services programme, aimed at rural communities with a population of less than 5,000, will focus on developing alternative ways of delivering key services to rural communities.
- We will continue to develop infrastructure support for the Voluntary and Community Sector, that ensures that it can deliver both strategically and locally, and to support Parish Councils across the county.
- Our Access Centres Programme, which offers a range of public services to communities across the county, will create a further six centres with a focus on adult learning and improving employment opportunities

## **Places**

To ensure that the County Council and its partners are focussed on improving services we will work to ensure that together we focus on improving services.

- We will identify the most important ways that life in the eighteen identified priority neighbourhoods can be made better, and include these in the SCS
- We will implement Community Forums covering the whole county, ensuring that they contribute to the development of the SCS, and more generally in local engagement with public sector providers.
- We will improve community spirit in Leicestershire through the social capital project in the LAA (which will also be rolled out to the priority neighbourhoods) and through other community planning activities such as parish planning.

## Our achievements in 2006-07

We are very proud of our activities and achievements in the last year. We have worked with our partners to achieve real improvements in the quality of life for people and communities, and in the continued development of a strong and diverse economy in Leicestershire.

### **International**

- We expanded the Leicester Shire-China Trade Bureau into the East Midlands China Business Bureau, which is now funded and hosted by the East Midlands Development Agency. The Leader of the County Council is the Chair of the Regional Opportunity China Group, and we continue to play a key role in developing trade links with China.
- We developed our role in Europe, with the Leader undertaking activity on behalf of both the Council and the Regional Assembly, including as Spokesman for the Committee of the Regions in relation to the Single Market.

### **Regional**

- We contributed to the development of the Regional Plan to ensure that development in the county is appropriate and that it provides the necessary social, economic, environmental and physical infrastructure to improve places for residents and employers.
- The Three Cities and Three Counties alliance continued to lead improvements to the economies of Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham and their surrounding counties. This partnership has obtained substantial funding from the Government's Transport Innovation Fund to tackle congestion. New Growth funding has been obtained to support communities to achieve sustainable growth, including new housing.

### **Sub regional**

- We worked with our partners to attract over £1.5million of East Midlands Development Agency investment to the County and assisted the Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LSEP) in the delivery of their mandatory core targets. We are also working with the LSEP to prepare a new sub-regional economic strategy.
- The six month review of the LAA by the Government Office for the East Midlands found that the implementation of the agreement was progressing well.
- A peer review of Leicestershire Together was undertaken and an improvement plan has been implemented to ensure that partnership working is effective and efficient.

- The Voluntary and Community Sector was supported to review how infrastructure support is provided to community and voluntary groups.

## **Places**

- We worked with our partners in Leicestershire Together to agree a neighbourhood engagement strategy, including a new protocol with Parish Councils, the development of neighbourhood management approaches, and the introduction of Community Forums.
- We began consultation on a new Rural Strategy for Leicestershire, which highlights the key issues for smaller communities across the county. In support of this we have delivered small programmes tackling rural housing, community development, social inclusion, and social enterprise through the Rural Social and Community Programme.
- We supported a range of communities in funding and implemented community projects across the County. We have developed a Funding Toolkit to assist all voluntary and community sector organisations that need information about sources of funding.

## **Culture, Leisure, and Community Initiatives**

We continue to recognise the benefits of culture and leisure to our economy, and to our physical health and well-being. We will continue to promote and develop the county's cultural heritage, with the help of national and regional funding bodies, and through a partnership approach. We also recognise the valuable role of sport to people and communities.

### **What we will do in 2007-08**

We will continue to build on the range of diverse activities across the county that will develop cultural and leisure opportunities for all Leicestershire people and communities.

- We hope to raise funding and start work on the next section of the Ashby Canal restoration.
- We will open the revitalised exhibition and museum at Bosworth Battlefield, and bring an exhibition of the recently discovered coin hoard to Market Harborough museum.
- We will complete the modernisation of libraries at Bottesford, Desford, Earl Shilton, East Goscote, Enderby, Groby, Huncote and Ashby, and will open new facilities at Braunstone, Mountsorrel, and Oadby. A satisfaction survey for young customers will be carried out.
- We will sustain the high level of local events and environmental improvement schemes.

- We will support Loughborough University in its efforts to benefit from the 2012 Olympic Games and will work with regional partners in the ongoing development of a regional strategy to maximise 2012 opportunities.

#### Our achievements in 2006-07

We have maintained our high standards of service, and continued with our programme of library improvements. We have continued to seek imaginative ways of developing Leicestershire's cultural attractions and of restoring parts of the county's heritage.

- We have made good progress with our five year plan to improve the county's libraries. The libraries at Birstall, Kibworth, Castle Donington, Narborough, Hinckley, and Cosby have been modernised, and new libraries have been opened at Kirkby Muxloe and Markfield. A major survey of our users shows that customer satisfaction with their library service is running at 96%.
- New Heritage education rooms were opened at Snibston Discovery Park and Bosworth Battlefield. These new facilities will provide a better venue for schools' visits. At Bosworth, work has started on the complete transformation of the Battlefield Visitor Centre.
- Design and planning work has been completed for the restoration of the next section of the Ashby Canal, from Snarestone to Measham.
- Over 800 educational, cultural and leisure events have been held in our libraries, museums and parks, and the programme to bring affordable cinema shows and live performers to rural venues has been developed further.
- Working in partnership with local people and Parish Councils, we have supported over 120 environmental, landscape and village hall improvement schemes, through our FLAG and SHIRE grant schemes.

#### Transport

We are continuing to work towards the creation of a better transport system for Leicestershire that delivers safe and efficient transport whilst at the same time addressing the increasing concerns we have about the impact of transport on our environment.

#### What we will do in 2007-08

##### **Reduce road casualties**

- Every effort will be made to continue our long-term trend in delivering road casualty reductions. We are working towards the production of a rolling programme of local safety schemes that will aid scheme planning and implementation as we move through the Local Transport



Plan (LTP) period. We will also be working with the Road Safety Partnership to review for the Safety Camera scheme.

- We will continue to focus efforts on reducing motorcycle casualties. An Action Plan will be implemented from the start of 2007-08 with the objective of meeting our target of reducing motorcycle casualties by 10%. This is particularly challenging given recent national trends and predicted growth in motorcycle use.

### **Tackle congestion and improve air quality**

- Following a successful bid to the Government, in conjunction with neighbouring authorities we will be looking into ways of further curbing congestion in 2007-08 as part of the Government's Transport Innovation Fund.
- In preparation for the development of the Enderby Park and Ride scheme, improvements to the surrounding Junction 21 area will also be delivered.
- We will introduce civil parking enforcement with our District Council partners in July 2007.
- We continue to work with bus operators to improve bus information and service quality. We will continue to listen to the views of local people to identify the areas where we need to target improvement, and these will be taken forward in partnership with the bus operators.

### **Reduce the impact of traffic**

- Work will start on the Earl Shilton bypass in Autumn 2007. A bid is being made to Government for the Loughborough town centre improvement scheme with the aim of securing planning consent and achieving initial Government approval during 2007-08. We are working with Melton Borough Council and the Highways Agency to develop proposals for bypasses for Melton Mowbray and Kegworth respectively.
- Our Community Speedwatch Initiative, aimed at involving people in taking responsibility for the impact of speeding traffic in their own communities, has been successfully introduced and will be further developed in the coming year.

### **Improve access to facilities for people in rural Leicestershire and for those countywide who do not have access to a car**

- We will be working with the Leicestershire Rural Partnership to formalise funding arrangements for the delivery of our LTP accessibility strategy, implementation of which will remain ongoing throughout the year.

- We will prepare for the launch of a national concessionary travel scheme in 2008/09.

### **Improve the condition of our roads, pavements, bridges and street lights**

- Our first Transport Asset Management Plan is now in place, covering our roads, footways, bridges and lighting, and we will review maintenance practices accordingly to ensure we are maintaining our roads and other assets in best condition at minimum cost.
- We aim to sustain our impressive record of delivery of our highways maintenance performance indicators. This will be particularly challenging in the coming year given a cut in Government funding for our maintenance programme. Plans will also be drawn up detailing how we can best adjust for the longer-term should the cut in funding be sustained.

### **Improve customer satisfaction with the Highways and Transportation Service**

- We will introduce our departmental Customer Service Centre in November 2007 as part of the Council's Customer First initiative. This will provide improved access to information about Highways and Transportation services, and make requests for services simpler and more convenient.
- We have developed an equalities action plan, and we will work to achieve equality standards for our services and facilities.

### **Service efficiency**

- We will focus on improving service efficiency in 2007-08, with an ambitious plan for achieving efficiency savings through our Change Programme. This will involve new private sector alliances for the delivery of highway works and some professional services, a departmental restructuring to streamline management, and the introduction of arrangements for continuous process analysis and improvement.

### Our achievements in 2006-07

We have continued to deliver an excellent service in the past year, and are on track to achieve 80% of our performance indicators in our second Local Transport Plan (LTP). We are also on track to deliver all our Highways and Transportation performance indicators in the LAA.

- Our long term trend in delivering road casualty reductions remains very good. Against the 1994-98 average used as a benchmark by the Government, our 2006-07 casualty figures (based on 2005 calendar year) showed reductions of 24.9% in people killed and seriously injured

and 46.5% in children killed and seriously injured. We made excellent progress in reducing the number of slight injuries on our roads.

- As part of the our Change Programme, the Passenger Transport service underwent a major re-structure in 2006-07 to improve service delivery and integrate all elements of passenger transport procurement into one Unit. We maintained levels of service delivery during this period, increased bus patronage on all services by 4% from 2005-06 levels, and increased the number of passengers on County Council bus services to 2.62m.
- We successfully progressed the Enderby Park and Ride scheme.
- We made good progress towards in improving access to facilities for people in rural Leicestershire and countywide who do not have access to a car. We achieved our 2006/07 targets for the percentage of households without a car within 30 or 60 minutes of a town centre. In partnership with District Councils we also helped to introduce and deliver a countywide concessionary travel scheme.
- We continued to improve the condition of our roads, pavements, bridges and street lights, and we produced our first Transport Asset Management Plan.
- Customer satisfaction levels with the Highways and Transportation service continued to improve. Independent surveys found that 85% of residents are satisfied with the highways service overall, and 81% are satisfied with the overall road condition. Following our satisfaction results in 2005-06, we reviewed both our Roadworks Protocol and the Highway Patrols Initiative in 2006-07, and have implemented a number of recommendations from each review. Resident satisfaction with how well informed the public feels about roadworks also rose in 2006/07 from 51% to 56%.

### **The Environment and Waste Strategy**

We are committed to working with our partners to ensure that the volume of waste sent to landfill is substantially reduced in a manner that is both cost effective and minimises environmental impacts.

#### **What we will do in 2007-08**

We will work to increase the amount of recycling and composting being undertaken by Leicestershire's residents, and continue to work with our partners to develop innovative ways of reducing the environmental and economic impact of waste.

#### **Implement the revised Waste Management Strategy**

- We will investigate the provision of a kitchen waste collection service and facilities to treat such waste. We will also continue to improve our

Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS), and consider the provision of both interim and long-term waste treatment capacity and improved recycling.

- We will work with our District Council partners to face the challenges in delivering the Waste Management Strategy that were identified in the recent review, particularly around timescales, funding, and national planning dependencies.

### **Recycling and composting**

- As part of the LAA we are aiming for an increase in recycling and composting performance to an average of 42% for the seven District Councils by 2008-09, and an increase in diversion of waste from landfill at RHWS to 60% in the same time period. We will continue to pursue an innovative programme of waste prevention, awareness and education initiatives to increase the amount of recycling and composting being undertaken by Leicestershire's residents to ensure we are able to meet our ongoing Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) and LAA targets.

### **Procurement of waste disposal facilities**

- We will take a number of key decisions so that an expression of interest can be submitted to DEFRA for Government support for funding our waste infrastructure development this autumn. These decisions include identification of the preferred long-term technological treatment solution for the county. A number of funding alternatives are available to finance our treatment solutions - all of these will require significant funding from the County Council and are being investigated as part of the initial business case. The new Local Development Framework planning process will identify a number of suitable sites for future waste facilities which are large enough and in the right geographical location.

### **Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS)**

- We have begun the process of selecting prospective tenderers who will provide alternative recycling and composting options to enable us to deliver our LATS requirements, and an invitation to tender will go out by the end of June 2007. We will finalise our LATS Strategy which will put in place plans to deliver our ongoing LATS commitments.

### **Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS)**

- We will develop a business case for the delivery of a long-term plan of improvements to the RHWS infrastructure during 2007-08. This will allow us to improve existing facilities to meet ongoing legislation, service provision and diversion from landfill.

- In response to customer opinion, we will continue to pursue a programme of minor improvements at our sites, which will improve customer satisfaction and service delivery. This will include a review of RHWS opening hours.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

- Following our good results in 2006-07 we will be undertaking a full review of our satisfaction survey results to identify, target, and deliver key areas for improvement.
- The service will also form part of the new Customer Service Centre that will be introduced in November 2007.

### Our achievements in 2006-07

- estimating levels of county-wide recycling and composting increased to 41.29%. This is well ahead of the government's national recycling and composting target of 30%.
- The Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy was adopted in July 2006 by all partner authorities. The aim of the strategy is to achieve our landfill directive targets by reducing the volume of waste disposed of to landfill, through a combination of waste minimisation, recycling and composting initiatives, together with the development of new treatment facilities.
- We developed and implemented a new system for recycling credits to ensure we meet the Government revisions of June 2006. Government consultancy support was obtained for the delivery of a pilot kitchen waste collection scheme with a number of District partners. As lead authority the County Council commenced work on developing a Waste Prevention Plan, as well as an overarching Communications Plan to aid publicity and increase awareness of the Waste Management Strategy.
- A new contractor was appointed in July 2006 to run our Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS). We continued to improve our RHWS and completed refurbishment work at our Oadby site, as well as a programme of minor improvements such as signage and CCTV. Our Loughborough site was re-developed in 2005-06, and won the 2006 Letsrecycle.com Civic Amenity Site of the year award. The site doubled its recycling and composting rate to 41% in 2006-07.
- The Government's Best Value User Satisfaction survey in 2006 endorsed our current modernisation and improvement plan with satisfaction and usage of RHWS rising overall from 82% in 2003-04 to 84%. This remains above average when compared with the results of other authorities. The results of the Council's own MORI customer satisfaction survey undertaken in early 2007 backed up these good results. 95% of residents expressed satisfaction with our RHWS, whilst

80% of residents indicated that they had used their local RHWS in the last 12 months.

- We introduced a number of initiatives in 2006-07 to aid delivery of our waste prevention and re-use action plan in the Waste Strategy. Our participation in the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) joint home composting initiative has delivered more than 8,500 compost bins to the residents of Leicestershire. We introduced a new Rot-a-Lot home composting club in partnership with Leicester City Council. We also developed a Real Nappies initiative to encourage residents to use 'real' nappies instead of disposables. This initiative has had over 1500 applicants in the 3 years it has been set up. We recently launched a waste minimisation trial with 40 households. Such initiatives have contributed to our success in reducing the amount of waste collected per head by 4.20% in 2005-06 and a further reduction is forecast for 2006-07 when the final figures are received.

### **Safer Communities**

Reducing crime is a high priority for our residents, in particular, reducing violent crime, domestic violence and hate crime. We will play our part in delivering priorities identified in local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies, and participate in responding to the multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Strategy. We will continue to work with Leicestershire Together to deliver our LAA priorities to ensure that all our communities are stronger and safer for the future.

#### **What we will do in 2007-08**

##### **Reduce overall crime**

- We will build on the progress made in year one of the LAA in relation to the targets and outcomes within the Safer Communities Block. We will work with our partners to ensure that overall crime levels are reduced in higher crime areas.

##### **Reduce domestic violence and hate incidents**

- Our new Domestic Violence Reduction Strategy supports the achievement of the LAA targets to increase reporting of domestic incidents and a reduction in domestic violence crimes by repeat offenders, and we are on track to achieve the domestic violence targets. We have extended our inter-agency racist incident common monitoring project to encompass all hate incidents. Our aim is to increase reporting of hate incidents so we can use our understanding of the full extent of such incidents to inform future prevention.

##### **Reduce re-offending by adult and young offenders**

- The Youth Offending Service (YOS), Children and Young People's Service, and Adult Social Care Service will continue to be involved in

intervention and the management of youth offenders, including management panels, with the aim of reducing future re-offending.

### **Build respect in communities**

- The new Anti Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy and Action Plan will continue to focus on prevention, enforcement and strengthening and re-assuring communities, and the YOS Prevention and Anti Social Behaviour teams have key roles in prevention and enforcement.

### **Reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and misuse of alcohol**

- We will continue to play our part in tackling drug related crime and, through the work of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team, we will continue to increase the numbers of problematic drugs users in treatment and continue to implement the Drugs Intervention Programme. An Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy is also being developed which will enable us to set a new target to reduce the harm caused by misuse of alcohol during the course of 2007-08. Trading Standards officers will also continue to build on their success in 2006-07 in tackling under age sales of alcohol.

### Our achievements in 2006-07

We have continued with our partners to develop joint approaches to reducing crime and increasing community safety across the county.

- The Hate Incident Monitoring Project was launched in February 2007. Partner agencies are enthusiastic and a number of reporting centres have been established.
- The Youth Offending Service (YOS) appointed a Co-ordinator in place to ensure agencies work effectively together to target prolific offenders. A joint Leicester City/ Leicestershire Youth Offending Service Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme, recognised by the Youth Justice Board as one of the best in the country, made a significant contribution to reducing re-offending by young targeted prolific offenders (offenders with repeated court outcomes, i.e. sentences) and those at risk of becoming prolific offenders.
- The expanded Youth Crime Prevention Strategy was put in place, and we established a dedicated team to deliver its objectives and benefits. Working with the Community Safety Programme Board, which co-ordinates the community safety and criminal justice agendas across Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland, work was completed to establish a common recording system, along with reduction targets for 2007-08. We developed a highly successful joint action plan with the Police to reduce the number of new entrants to the youth justice system.

- The Drug Intervention Programme remained on course for full implementation. The Models of Care Programme to improve the effectiveness of treatment services progressed well and increasingly began to impact on the quality of local services.
- Trading Standards officers continued to advise businesses about complying with laws on underage sales of alcohol, and the use of proof of age cards, and supported increased test purchasing work using child volunteers. There was a significant improvement over the course of the year through a sustained effort at targeted businesses where problems were reported. Where illegal sales were made, nine businesses were prosecuted, thirteen fixed penalty notices issued, and a number of other cases remain under investigation.



### **3. Improving Services to Deliver High Quality and Value for Money**

We are committed to improving people's quality of life by providing high quality services that offer excellent value for money. Leicestershire County Council was rated as Excellent by the CPA inspection, and we have since achieved and retained a Four Star rating. We know that we must continue to improve in order to meet increasing public expectations as well as national challenges. To help us to maintain our reputation for delivering high quality services, the Council has developed an ambitious programme of change that will ensure we continue to deliver services that are cost-effective and targeted to our customers' needs.

We will continue to investigate innovative approaches, and have entered into a strategic partnership with a leading private sector company to assist us with building knowledge and capability for change. Our Change Programme will continue to deliver service improvements and efficiencies. Our continuing commitment to equalities and diversity will ensure that our services and priorities take account of the needs of everyone in the community.

#### **Strategic Change Programme**

The Council's Change Programme is all about a co-ordinated approach to organisational change. The Customer First programme will enable us to improve customers' access to Council services, including the creation of new Customer Service Centres. The People and Performance Programme is ensuring our employees have the skills to deliver high quality services. The Organisational Efficiency Programme is supporting our commitment to achieve the Council's targets for efficiency savings.

#### **What we will do in 2007-08**

The Strategic Change Programme enables the Council to be well-placed to address the strategic pressures faced by all local authorities but we are now reviewing its focus so that there is impact on front line services as well as support services.

#### **Customer First**

Through the Customer First programme we will:

- Introduce our first departmental customer service centre in Highways, Transportation and Waste Management in November 2007. This will provide greatly improved access to information about council services, and make requests for services simpler and more convenient.
- Continue with the development of an improved website to encourage more customers to obtain information and carry out transactions
- Continue to implement our programme of face to face access to customer services within local communities through the use of our modern libraries.

## **People and Performance**

Through the People and Performance Programme we will:

- Develop further Attendance Management initiatives across the Council. We will also continue to develop a proactive approach to employee well-being including a review of links with the Occupational Health Service.
- Introduce a new targeted programme of management development, building on the Management Competence Framework which has already been successfully introduced.
- Report on our Equal Pay Review and ensure our policies are robust for the future.

## **Organisational Efficiency**

Through the three key areas, Asset Management, Modernising Support Services, and Strategic Procurement, we will continue to identify and deliver efficiency savings. £14.2m of efficiency savings are planned from 2007-8 to 2009-10, the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), and a further £8m additional savings also need to be identified to meet new targets in 2008-09.

- We are committed to reducing the costs of internal support services without reducing the performance of external services. We are implementing strategies to consolidate internal support services and to manage our assets better. We will continue to use innovative procurement approaches to reduce the cost of externally-provided services. We will review and improve the performance of both internal support services and professional services, such as HR, and transactional services.
- We will improve the quality of management information used for resource planning decisions. We currently hold customer, asset, employee and financial information in different systems across departments, and information is sometimes incomplete, inaccurate or out of date. A review of our information management will enable us to make more informed decisions about resources and planning.
- We will simplify and standardise our internal processes. This will support collaborative working and sharing services with other organisations.

Our Highways Efficiency Review has close links to the Organisational Efficiency Programme. This review will look closely at how we organise, procure and deliver our Highways services, and develop a more efficient and cost-effective approach.

## **Mobile and flexible working**

The aim of this programme is to develop and implement a strategic approach to mobile and flexible working across the Council. We will look at ways of modernising our work practices, including new technology, modern management practices, and better use of our property assets. This will enable us to structure our work practices more effectively and flexibly around the needs of our customers.

### Our achievements in 2006-07

The Council's Change Programme continued to generate momentum in the last year. As project teams have been established, the programme has begun to deliver real and tangible benefits to the Council.

- The Customer First Programme remained on target to deliver a technology solution that can support a new Customer Service Centre for Highways, Transport and Waste Management. New processes were designed to deliver better customer service and efficiency savings over the next three years.
- The People and Performance Programme was firmly established. A new Management Competence Framework was developed and implemented. The Council introduced a new staff benefits scheme. The Attendance Management project implemented a new Attendance Management Policy and Procedures. Our Organisational Values were adopted.
- The Organisational Efficiency Programme delivered significant savings. The Corporate Strategic Procurement project has identified cumulative savings of about £9m up to the end of 2009-10. A number of other projects were planned or underway. The Passenger Transport Fleet was successfully reorganised, and a review of our Highways Service was begun – these will contribute to the target of £13.5m.

## **Quality, Customers and Diversity**

We are committed to providing the level of service people expect, at the time and in the manner they expect. We will ensure our employees have the skills to provide high quality services and we will take account of customer needs through regular widespread consultation with the local community and partner organisations. We will continue to promote equality in our workforce and in the delivery of our services, both directly and with our partners.

### What we will do in 2007-08

#### **Equalities**

- The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government, and we aim to reach Level 3 by December 2007. To achieve this,

equality objectives and targets for service delivery and employment are being set across all Departments.

- Alongside this we will be implementing our Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme, and policy statement on sexual orientation and gender identity, jointly developed with trade unions.
- We will continue to engage with faith communities across Leicestershire with the support and assistance of the Leicester-based St Philip's Centre for Engagement in a Multi-Faith Society.

### **Consultation**

- We continue to recognise the importance of consulting with local people and involving them in the planning and development of the services they use. Over the past year we have consulted a range of service users, the public and other interested parties on various local priorities and plans, including school structure in the Melton area. We intend to extend and improve consultation activity further in 2007.
- We have refreshed the Leicestershire Citizens' Panel with new members to ensure it more fully reflects the diverse communities of Leicestershire. In 2007 we will launch the new Panel and continue recruiting new members to ensure that we have the best possible sounding board for future service improvements.
- We will implement new neighbourhood structures to ensure more effective consultation and engagement with local communities on local issues. We will also respond to new arrangements to ensure effective public and patient involvement in Adult Social Care and Health services. We will also be reviewing and improving our approach to the co-ordination of consultation information with partner agencies.

### **Our achievements in 2006-07**

- The Council achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard.
- The Disability Equality Scheme was approved in December 2006, and the Gender Equality Scheme was approved in March 2007. The Joint Policy Statement with the Trade Unions on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and the 'no retirement age' policy were both approved in January 2007.
- The Equalities Board agreed an approach to the development of equality in religion or belief. Pilot training programmes on multi-faith issues were held for senior and front line managers and staff.
- A number of positive action measures were implemented to improve the recruitment, retention and development of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff, including a mentoring scheme and a register to

increase the representation of BME staff in the recruitment and selection process.

- New consultation standards were put in place and promoted widely. Work to refresh the Citizens' Panel resulted in a significant new intake to the Panel, including BME, young, and disabled people. Targeted recruitment with certain under-represented groups continues.
- The Have Your Say pages were regularly updated, and technology, including electronic handsets, is now used regularly to ensure quicker and more efficient consultation. Council meetings are webcast, and an archive has been created.

### **Survey of public satisfaction with the Council**

- The Government's Resident Satisfaction Survey was carried out in 2006, and identified that some of the Council's improvement plans were tracking through into improved service satisfaction with household waste sites, library services, bus frequency, and reduced perceptions of anti-social behaviour. The survey also identifies some largely positive perceptions of the Council including that it is:-
  - making the area a better place to live, to be safe and in respect of the environment;
  - trustworthy and treats all types of people fairly;
  - efficient and well run;

The survey also shows generally good levels of satisfaction amongst service users. This backs up results from the Council's own service satisfaction surveys which show some very high levels of service satisfaction. However, these good service scores amongst users have not always tracked into positive perceptions of services amongst non-users and indeed of the Council as a whole. Overall satisfaction with the Council has dropped from 52% to 46% - below the position it should be given our performance. This is in line with national trends. The Council is carrying out further analytical work to understand the factors behind the results with a view to implementing an action plan for improvement.

### **Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Council approved a three year Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2007, which shows how the priorities for service improvements contained in this Annual Plan will be funded.

Leicestershire had the lowest grant increase (0.8%) for 2007-08 of any upper tier council, of which there are 150 in England. This fact, together with a desire to keep down Council Tax, meant that finding resources for service improvements was not easy. It was made possible largely through the continued success in achieving efficiency savings (£14m over the three years of the Strategy). For the first time the Medium Term Financial Strategy contained indications of Council Tax increases for later years. These are planned to be 4% in 2008-09 and 2009-10, down from the 2007-08 figure of 4.25%.

Achieving lower levels of increase will depend on the outcome of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review later in 2007 and the Council continuing to achieve the substantial efficiency savings. The Financial Strategy also gives figures for growth (including Medium Term Corporate Strategy service improvements) and savings.

### **Contracts**

We have taken full account of staff matters in contracts that have been placed with external providers and we comply, where applicable, with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.