



COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 21 MARCH 2007

POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEADER

Local Government White Paper

- Three weeks ago the Deputy Leader and I met with the District Council Leaders to consider further how we can progress the requirements of the White Paper.
- Having decided not to bid to be a unitary council or to be a pathfinder area, Leicestershire is in a third category of 'remaining 2 tier'. That requires the 2 tiers to work together to deliver efficiency savings and service improvements greater than those being delivered presently. Council Taxpayers should expect nothing less.
- This was our third meeting in three months and I have to inform the Council that I found the Districts' response disappointing. The forthcoming elections may well be their main focus of attention but sooner rather than later there has to be a move from a lot of talk to some specific action.
- The Cabinet has put some proposals to the Districts to achieve efficiency savings and service improvements. It may assist if we suggest to the Districts some targets, not least for savings, so that our progress can be better measured.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

- At last month's Council I was prevented by an embargo from informing members that the County Council had again been awarded 4 stars under the CPA. The news came out a day later. For the third year running, the County Council has now been awarded the highest rating.
- That is a considerable achievement and I am sure the Council will want to record its thanks to all our employees whose work on a daily basis has led to this deserved recognition.
- Equally, I believe that members can feel their own efforts have contributed to this award. Leadership at both the corporate and local levels is crucial to the way in which the Council manages its business and leads our communities.

- The next CPA rating will be determined largely by a Corporate Assessment in the autumn which will be undertaken alongside a Joint Area Review of Children's Services.

Travellers

- On Monday evening of this week Dr Feltham kindly stood in for me and chaired a meeting to which we had invited representatives from all the parish councils in North West Leicestershire along with the District Council. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss together the ongoing problems caused to the people of North West Leicestershire by travellers. Members will be aware that the most recent problems have been caused at Snibston.
- Clearly an answer needs to be found and a large part of the meeting was taken up with discussion about what might be suitable criteria for a transit site or sites. This is not just a matter of location in terms of the nearest village but also has to take into account amenities and services which need to be provided at any site.
- No one pretends that there are easy answers to the problems and the County Council is committed to any action it takes being in full consultation with local people and with travellers' representatives. For now, we are awaiting feedback from individual parish councils and local people about the criteria for sites.