

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 2 APRIL 2008**DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL
ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENT POLICIES AND
PROGRAMMES****LEADERSHIP AND THE ENVIRONMENT****Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the recommendations arising from the second block of work on 'Leadership and the Environment', undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Panel established to consider the County Council's environment policies and programmes.

Membership of the Panel

2. The following members were appointed to serve on the Panel:-

Dr. S. Hill CC	Mr J S Moore CC
Mrs M. L. Sherwin CC	Mr David Snartt CC
Mr Neville Stork CC	

Mrs Sherwin was appointed as Chairman of the Panel.

Background to the Review and Terms of Reference

3. At the beginning of 2007, the Scrutiny Review Panel on Energy reported its findings which sought to assist the County Council in reducing its energy usage and its carbon emissions. During this time the County Council, on an all-party basis, signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change pledging to work to reduce carbon emissions to help tackle climate change.
4. The Scrutiny Commission in considering how best to contribute to the Council's commitments, at its meeting held on 28 February 2007, resolved that this Review Panel should be convened 'to consider the Council's current and planned response to the Environment agenda with a view to identifying the key areas of County Council activity that can be investigated further so as to deliver the Council's commitments to the environment and climate change.'

Conduct of the Review to Date

5. The Scrutiny Review Panel decided that given the scale of the Environment Agenda the work of the Panel would be divided into the following priority areas:-
 - i) Environmental Procurement;
 - ii) Environmental Leadership;
 - iii) Climate Change issues for the County Council;
 - iv) County Hall Waste Audit Action Plan; and
 - v) Biodiversity and Water.
6. The Panel also decided that waiting for the full programme to be completed would result in unnecessary delays and could result in missing the opportunity to influence the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy and the negotiation on the Second Local Area Agreement.
7. The first block of work, on Environmental Procurement, was therefore completed and reported to the Scrutiny Commission on 19th December 2007. Subsequently the Cabinet approved the Action Plan on Environmental Procurement on 15th January 2008.
8. The attached report (marked as 'Appendix A') deals with the second block of the panel's work – Environmental Leadership.

Recommendation

9. The Commission is asked to consider the findings of the Panel and agree to submit the report together with any comments it may have to the Cabinet.

Resource implications

10. There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.
11. However, it is anticipated that regulations designed to reduce the impact of climate change, in addition to those already in place through national government and the European Union, are expected to have an increasing impact on County Council budgets and the way we work. By providing improved leadership now and encouraging the development of 'self-help' schemes for staff and County residents these costs can be mitigated.

Equal Opportunities Implications

None

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council Environment Strategy, 2004;
Draft Sustainable Community Strategy for Leicestershire, 2008-13;
Environment Strategy and Action Plan
Local Area Agreement
Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Leicestershire
Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan;
Landscape and Woodland Strategy;
Minerals and Waste Local Development Frameworks;
Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
Community Woodland and Greenspace Strategy; and
Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (under preparation).

Circulation under the Sensitive Issues Procedure

None

LEADERSHIP AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Conduct of the Review and Evidence

1. The Panel met on 3 occasions to consider this issue. It received presentations on this subject from Stan Crawford OBE of Sherwood Energy Village, David Nicholls of Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire, and Ruth Fenney of Enable and the Women's Institute (details of those organisations are referred to in Appendix 1) together with reports from officers.
2. Arising from the presentations and reports the following key themes emerged:
 - i) Those who provide leadership need to carry a clarity of vision in parallel with openness and honesty if positive environmental changes were to be successfully implemented;
 - ii) Long term environmental trends need to be understood in order that appropriate and necessary decisions are taken to reduce the level of unsustainable practices in the workplace and the wider community;
 - iii) It is important to recognise that environmental issues are not the remit of one particular section or Department within an organisation, rather this work needs to be recognised and tackled throughout the organisation from a corporate level through to departmental and section plans and policies;
 - iv) Community projects supported through council funded projects, grant contributions, officer time and advice all have the potential to galvanise communities and residents' participation in changing their environment for the better. It is noted that recent examples of best practice in Leicestershire included:-
 - Renewable Energy in Schools/Building of Eco Schools as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme – this enables pupils/parents to learn how sustainable energy projects are developed for new buildings and to think about their schools and by extension how their own homes impact on the environment;
 - Cross-departmental County Green Team that ensures effective and co-ordinated action across the County Council to protect and enhance the environment of Leicestershire and improve the quality of life for Leicestershire people both now and in the future.
 - Provision of energy information packs to all County Council buildings to educate on, and provide a means

of encouraging the reduction of, CO₂ and climate change problems.

v) In enabling environmental improvements, the combination of economic, social and environmental benefits are often more likely to engage certain communities than simply environmental benefits in their own right. It is also important for organisations such as the County Council to be seen as facilitators rather than controllers to increase community take-up.

3. In order that community take-up is maximised there needs to be a sense of local ownership over environmental initiatives. This can be ensured through a set of community governance arrangements which allow the local community to remain in control.

What is Environmental Leadership?

4. The Panel has concluded that Environmental Leadership is a process which should involve:

- A) Offering a Vision;
- B) Developing a sense of responsibility;
- C) Setting and leading by example;
- D) Following through on commitments;
- E) Effective communication; and
- F) Embedding beliefs and values within organisational culture.

The views of this Panel, including recommendations on the way forward in relation to each of these broad themes is set out below:

A) Offering a Vision.

- 5. Environment is one of the key areas of Sustainable Development. The overall vision for the environment in Leicestershire is properly set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and its evidence base. The internal vision for the County Council is covered in the Environment Strategy and Action Plan.
- 6. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) as the implementation arm of the Sustainable Community Strategy covers, by necessity, only a small part of the activities of the Leicestershire Together Board (LTB) and its partners.
- 7. Leicestershire Together has approved a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Leicestershire and this has been helpful, as has the commitment of the County Council to the Nottingham Declaration. It is pleasing to note that the County Council has also endorsed the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and agreed that a set of climate change targets is needed - this will be the subject of the Panel's next block of work.

8. Other key documents which set out the vision and priorities for the Leicestershire environment are covered by the:-
- Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan;
 - Landscape and Woodland Strategy;
 - Minerals and Waste Local Development Frameworks;
 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
 - Community Woodland and Greenspace Strategy; and
 - Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (under preparation).
9. **The Panel welcomes the documents which set out the key priorities and vision for the Leicestershire environment. However the Panel believes that there would be merit in:**
- i) **Leicestershire Together (as the key strategic partnership body) producing an Environmental Implementation Plan which brings together the key priorities and sets out clearly how partner bodies and local communities can help deliver environmental improvements and address issues on climate change;**
 - ii) **reviewing the Environment Strategy and Action Plan (i.e. the internal vision of the County Council) and as part of this review refocus the Plan on the key priorities/strands of activity.**

B) Responsibility.

10. The Panel has noted that a consistent theme, and complaint, across large organisations is that environmental initiatives that are taken by a few individuals taking a lead whereas they should be corporate led.
11. The Panel considers that there is merit in developing corporate initiatives, particularly programmes of staff awareness training and staff induction on environmental values and the championing and promotion of environmental initiatives.
12. **Whilst proposing the development of corporate initiatives as the way forward, the Panel is also concerned to ensure that a corporate approach does not lead to the stifling of individuals or sections in developing new initiatives, but to positively encourage more radical and innovative ways of improving the environment and celebrate such successes.**

C) Setting and Leading by example.

13. Setting an example applies both internally to County Council staff but also to the wider community. Internally, this requires not only programmes that support individual staff responsibility but also a demonstration that the Authority as a whole practises what it preaches from frontline worker to the Corporate level. Externally, given the Authority has to balance many competing claims and priorities on its resources this is obviously not easy. However:

- i) the signing of the Nottingham Declaration;
- ii) the decision to allocate £60,000 in 2008/09 (£100,000 in a full year) to fund climate change work (which will include an assessment of the County Council's carbon footprint, a risk assessment on the impact of climate change and a dedicated post to help tackle this major problem);
- iii) the allocation of £50,000 per annum into the Medium Term Financial Strategy commencing in 2008/09 to fund a programme of tree planting; and
- iv) the establishment of an Invest to Save fund to promote energy and water efficiency programmes in County Council establishments

are all a useful demonstration of environmental leadership.

14. The Panel believes that the County Council has in the past few years taken a major step forward in putting environmental considerations high on the agenda, coupled with the allocation of resources. Whilst this is to be commended the Panel believes that over the coming years there needs to be a refocusing of the priorities to give an even greater prominence to issues of climate change and the environment. Such an investment in this approach will yield significant benefits both economically and environmentally in future years.

D) Following through on commitments.

15. This key element of leadership requires some vigilance. Firstly to ensure that established targets and issues of concern are appropriately monitored, and secondly that corrective action is taken, as necessary.

16. The Panel is concerned that the first step, establishing targets and monitoring these is carried out at an appropriate level. This is a concern at all levels be it national, regional or local. Whilst significant funding is invested in economic and social data, the environmental sector is characterised by lack of funding, lack of agreed key data sets, an over-reliance on the enthusiasm of volunteers and little overall leadership. As an example, whilst we can place Leicestershire against other Counties in terms of average wages, unemployment rates, crime, health, educational attainment etc, we can only compare it against very

few environmental data sets i.e. waste recycling rates, water quality and CO2 emissions (and of the latter two for the last two years only). Of the environmental data sets Leicestershire does hold it is relatively well placed.

17. The development of benchmarking and environmental data sets is reliant on various bodies such as:
- i) ENABLE¹ - on the State of the Environment reports;
 - ii) the Historic and Natural Environment Team;
 - iii) through the continuing work of the Partnership for Environmental Protection; and
 - iv) the Leicestershire Waste Management Partnership.
18. **The Panel considers that the increasing importance of evidence based planning through Local Development Frameworks and the Sustainable Community Strategy requires greater recognition, The suggested Environment Implementation Plan is the appropriate vehicle to be used in setting appropriate targets for the Environment sector.**
19. **The importance of making sound and timely decisions also needs to be stressed. Those tasked with making the decisions need to be well informed on appropriate issues and data and be able to respond to issues as they change. Whilst we have no criticism of current arrangements that ensure environmental matters are placed before Members appropriately, the Panel in its next stage of the Review will come back to this subject.**

E) Effective Communication

20. At a time when people are increasingly bombarded with more words and messages than they can cope with the Panel does not consider that it is appropriate to add more. The most effective means of communication will be what the Authority does and what its staff say about it. The existing means of communication is deemed appropriate, examples of which include:-
- i) Leicestershire Matters;
 - ii) Staff briefings;
 - iii) Chief Executive's newsletter;
 - iv) County Green;
 - v) Leicestershire Governor;
 - vi) Promotional events; and
 - vii) Staff providing advice via telephone calls, email exchanges, work within schools, and grant aid processes.

¹ Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire (ENABLE) is a countywide forum for the protection and enhancement of the environment which consists of almost 150 members including organisations, businesses and individuals.

21. With regard to how communication on environmental issues is conducted with the public the Panel has considered the extent to which the Authority should be leading on awareness raising, particularly with respect to Climate Change. ENABLE does undertake a certain amount within its limited budget and this should continue to be supported (it is specifically required for the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan) However, it is also recognised that there are numerous other organisations also involved in this area of activity.
22. In respect of climate change the Panel consider that there are already enough "aware" people and that what is specifically lacking is individually focused advice that will take the 'aware' to the point of 'involved' individuals and that should be the focus of future investment. A recent example of this was a 'Cut Your Carbon Footprint' article in the January 2008 edition of Leicestershire Matters which is delivered to every household in the County which gave details of some of the measures the Authority is already taking to tackle climate change and which asked Leicestershire residents to sign up to a series of pledges to contribute to reducing their own impact on climate change. From 164 responses received, if carried forward, this would result in a total reduction of 308 tonnes of CO₂. A copy of the article is attached as Appendix 2.
- 23. The Panel believes the focus of communication should now be on practical and targeted advice and guidance on how individuals and communities can become involved and make a difference.**

F) Embedding beliefs and values within organisational culture

24. There are two main ways to embed environmental beliefs and values within the culture of this organisation:
- i) A structural approach would be to establish an Environmental Management Assessment System, which would require all reports to include a section on environmental impact and would set a level of standards that were mandatory for all developments. This is a well-established approach which is currently being trialled within the Authority for Scrutiny Committee reports. Such an assessment system is for example already used in reports for Equal Opportunities Implications.
 - ii) A more culturally based approach would be to establish a clear set of environmental values at a corporate level (as in the current Environment Policy) for projects and initiatives that deliver quality outcomes to be valued and celebrated, and for some resources to be made available to support staff trying to deliver change whilst still doing their 'day job'.

25. **The Panel, having participated in an Environmental Risk Assessment Workshop on this subject supports a hybrid approach, which on the one hand provides detailed management of environment critical activities, and, on the other, a more strategic management of other areas. This approach recognises that there is already goodwill amongst staff towards improving environmental performance and that a responsive level of control based on the level of environmental risk is best calculated to maintain that support whilst improving performance. We recognise that members of staff already have many performance targets and also structural change to contend with.**
26. **It is therefore believed that support for, as well as control of the environment agenda can be constructive. Within this the Panel notes and supports the introduction of a number of workshops for key staff that will be held over the coming months in order to better embed environmental thinking within departmental policies and programmes.**

The Way Forward

27. There must be shared responsibility and ownership from all stakeholders if we are to make a positive impact on the environment. In order to further develop the principles of environmental leadership and associated policies and programmes, the Scrutiny Commission is recommended to consider advising the Cabinet to have regard to the findings and conclusions in this report.

Mrs. M. L. Sherwin
Chairman of the Review Panel

Appendix 1

Environmental Leaders

Stan Crawford, Sherwood Energy Village

Sherwood Energy Village has transformed a 36.8 hectare former colliery into an environmental enterprise park for industrial, commercial and tourism uses. The inspiration behind the project came from a public meeting following the closure of the pit with the local community instrumental in accessing funding and driving the project forward.

The Village is recognised as an exemplar of sustainable development, having won many awards including the first ever Enterprising Britain competition in 2005. The project is sharing its expertise with many different organisations and in many different countries.

<http://www.sev.org.uk/>

David Nicholls, Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire

Formerly known as Environ, Groundwork Leicester & Leicestershire is an independent charity and member of the national organisation, Groundwork UK. The Trust provides information, advice and practical help in order to encourage individuals and organisations to take practical steps towards a more sustainable future.

<http://www.gwll.org.uk/>

Ruth Fenney, Enable and the Women's Institute

Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire (ENABLE) is a countywide forum for the protection and enhancement of the environment. It consists of almost 150 members including organisations, businesses and individuals that have a passion for the environment. ENABLE is a member of Leicestershire Together, the County's Local Strategic Partnership and aims to influence others, provide leadership on environment issues and highlight their importance in decision making.

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/enable.htm>

The Women's Institute has a long history of working and campaigning for a better environment and is a member of ENABLE.

<http://www.womens-institute.co.uk/viewFederation.aspx?id=178>

Appendix 2

Extract from Leicestershire Matters, January 2008 – Cut Your Carbon Footprint

We all have a carbon footprint – this is how much carbon dioxide we create and our contribution to climate change.

We are asking you to reduce your carbon footprint. By doing so, you could win one of four energy-efficient Eco Kettles. There are also 200 Saver Flush bags on offer. These reduce the amount of water flushed when you use the toilet and work best in older, larger cisterns.



The County Council has signed the 'Nottingham Declaration' which commits us to cutting our carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. A group of councillors are looking into how to achieve this.

Already, the County Council:

- Buys green electricity from renewable sources to power street lighting
- Has reduced carbon emissions at County Hall by 23% in the last four years
- Has built four new schools to a high environmental standard
- Monitors how much energy and water we use and acts if use is excessive
- Recycles pavement material, road chippings, street lighting lamps and engine oil.

Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire (ENABLE), the County-wide environmental partnership is asking you to reduce your carbon footprint by 20%.

You could sign up to the climate change pledge which asks you to do a number of quick and easy actions. Everyone who signs will be entered into our competition.

You can either [fill in the form](#) or visit the [Climate Change](#) pages of this website. You can calculate your own carbon footprint by visiting the [Direct Gov](#) website Alternatively, for more details call 0116 305 7068 or e-mail: hapatel@leics.gov.uk