

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2002/03**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 About Leicestershire County Council

Leicestershire County Council is the largest local authority in the County and provides a wide range of services to local people either directly or through other organisations acting on our behalf.

These services impact on every aspect of people's lives in their communities. They involve the direct employment of around 18,500 people to deliver them and the expenditure of over £500million of public money. Chapter 15 of this Plan gives more details of the range and size of services provided by the County Council.

### 1.2 About This Best Value Performance Plan

It is important that these large resources are used as effectively as possible and in the areas where they can provide the most benefit to local people. This is the third annual Best Value Performance Plan produced by the Council setting out how it proposes to apply its resources to make improvements to its services. This Plan reports on our progress to date in meeting previous targets and commitments, and sets out how we intend to take them forward in the coming year. It reports on specific services which we have reviewed in detail in order to identify how they can be improved. It also compares our performance with that of other Councils on a wide range of Indicators.

### 1.3 About Best Value

The Government introduced the principle of Best Value into local authorities and other public organisations such as Police and Fire authorities with an Act of Parliament that became effective on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000. Since then all the public bodies covered by the Act, including the County Council, have to produce an annual Performance Plan containing a wide range of information about their past performance and their future targets for improvements to services. These Plans are intended to become a major tool by which communities can judge the quality and cost of their local services and also hold their elected representatives to account.

Best Value is based on two complementary elements. The first is that a culture of seeking continuous improvement in all services can be achieved by a process of detailed service planning that involves identifying weaknesses, setting targets for improvement, and monitoring progress regularly. The second is that major issues in service delivery can be addressed by carrying out fundamental reviews of each service area in order to identify the most suitable way of providing the service. In order for these reviews to be effective they need to:-

Challenge why, how, and by whom a service is provided.

Compare performance with other similar providers across a range of relevant indicators, taking the views of both service users and potential suppliers into account.

Consult local taxpayers, service users, partners and the wider business community in the setting of new performance targets.

Use fair and open competition wherever possible as a means of securing efficient and effective services.

Following the practical experiences of the first two years of Best Value the Government has recently proposed changes to the Best Value process in the Local Government White Paper "Strong Local Leadership, Quality Public Services". A further review of Best Value by the Secretary of State is also still ongoing. The first effect of these changes is that this Plan is now published to a 30<sup>th</sup> June deadline rather than by 31<sup>st</sup> March. Further changes in the process are likely to take effect during 2002/03.

## **1.4 External Audit Report**

The Council's external auditors must report on the completeness and accuracy of each year's Performance Plan. Last year they considered that our Plan met all the statutory requirements. However they made three statutory recommendations relating to the future development of the Best Value process. These recommendations and the Council's response are reproduced below.

*Recommendation - Ensure that, as corporate objectives are reviewed, outcome measures are determined for each against which performance can be clearly assessed.*

Response -

The Council needs to be in a position to judge its progress against its Corporate Objectives if those Objectives are to be meaningful. We agree that we need to have some relevant and measurable criteria to make this assessment. In reviewing our Corporate Objectives we will therefore identify, wherever possible, suitable ways of measuring the outcomes of the plans and policies that are put in place to achieve those Objectives.

*Recommendation - Develop a budget strategy for the medium term which underpins corporate objectives and service priorities.*

Response -

The Council agrees that a medium term budget strategy is essential to inform the realistic forward planning of service provision. If we wish to move towards our Corporate Objectives over time, then such a strategy will need to be developed to facilitate the process. In recognition of this, we are currently developing an approach to medium term planning of services as a matter of priority. This will include a medium term budget strategy as an essential component.

*Recommendation - Establish a robust corporate mechanism for managing reviews through to timely completion (including the implementation stage).*

Response -

The Council has acknowledged the difficulties it has had in meeting the original timetables for Best Value reviews. In the light of experience last year we have attempted to produce more realistic timetables for new reviews starting in 2001/02.

We believe that we already have robust arrangements in place to meet the requirements of the Best Value legislation in this area. However the detailed and prescriptive nature of the legislation has proved to be very time consuming and resource hungry. This appears to be supported by the experience of many other authorities, and by recent comments of the Best Value Inspection Service and by the recent comments of the Secretary of State. In addition we have made significant resources available to support individual reviews and ensure their successful completion. However, we will continue to keep our processes under review in order to minimise delay and use the Best Value mechanism to focus attention on the major issues facing the Council.

## **1.5 Your Views are Welcome**

The County Council is committed to applying the principles of Best Value in order to improve the services it provides, both directly and in partnership with others, to the people of Leicestershire. This Plan sets out how we aim to continue the development of our services in 2002/03. Your comments on these proposals are welcomed and should be addressed in the first instance to :-

The Public Relations Unit, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RA. Telephone (0116) 2656274 or by fax to (0116) 2656266 or by e-mail to [pressoffice@leics.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@leics.gov.uk)

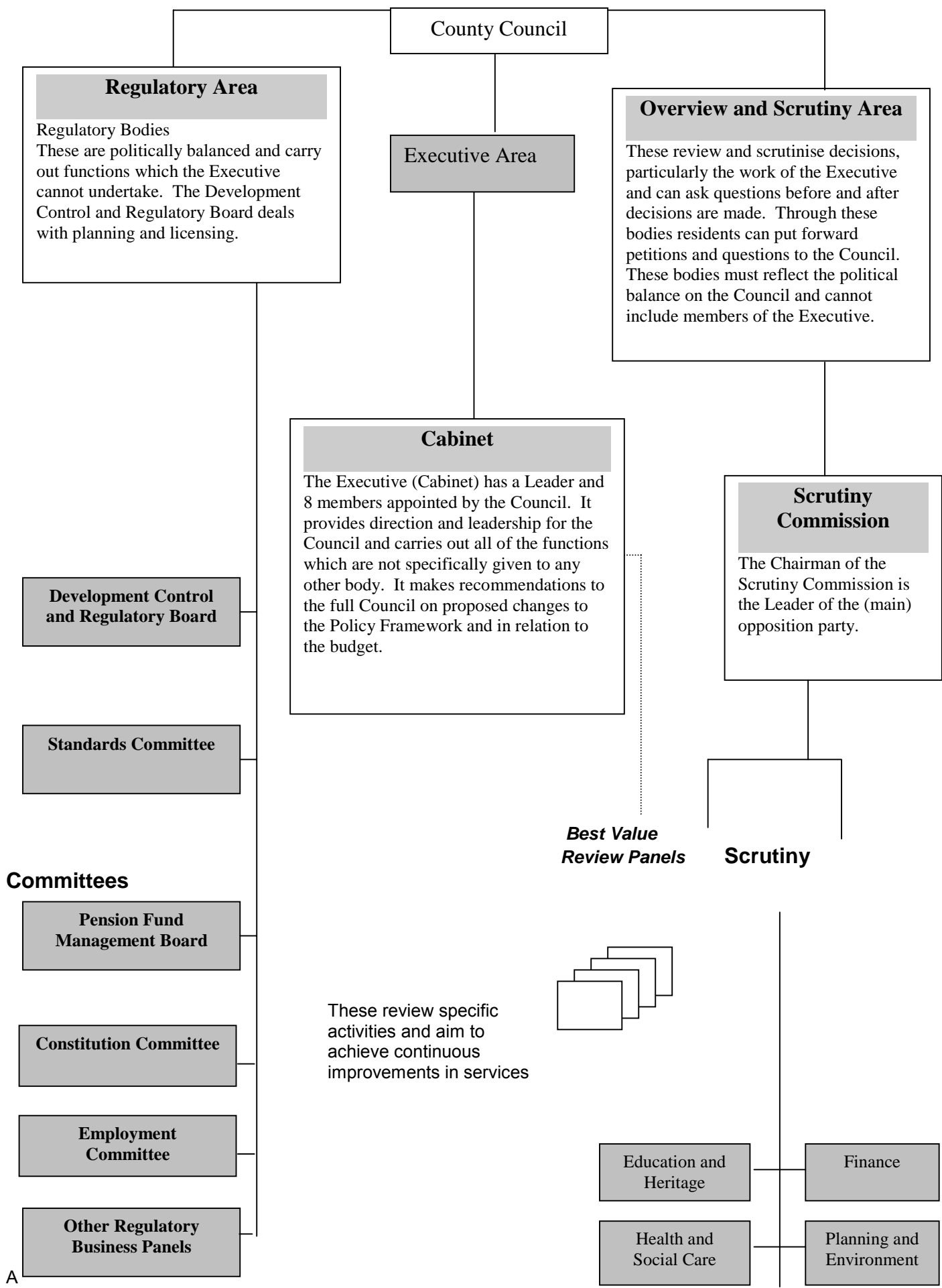
## **Chapter 2**

### **Our Constitution and Corporate Objectives**

#### **2.1 Our Constitution and Political Framework**

The Council has adopted a new constitution under the Local Government Act 2000. The constitution applies the Leader and Cabinet model. This model was overwhelmingly endorsed by over 80% of the respondents to the public consultation exercise required by the Government and has now been accepted by them. The model had been piloted from September 1999.

The decision making framework in the approved constitution is as follows:



A

Within this framework:

**The County Council** is responsible for the final decisions on the policy framework and budgets, including the structure and process which enables all County Councillors to contribute in different ways to the Council's business, as follows:-

**The Cabinet** take collective decisions relating to the implementation of policies and plans previously approved by the County Council. Under the Constitution approved by the Council individual members of the Cabinet take 'lead Member' roles for particular service areas, but do not have personal executive powers.

**Scrutiny bodies** co-ordinated by the **Scrutiny Commission** advise on policies and plans being submitted to the Council and ensure that the Cabinet and officers acting under delegated powers are held to account.

**The Scrutiny Committees** cover broad service areas.

A number of **Regulatory bodies** including the Standards Board deal with business outside the remit of the Cabinet, e.g. planning applications and conduct of members.

Individual **County Councillors** are able to represent their electoral divisions in an effective manner.

Following the County Council elections in June 2001, the political composition of the Council is as follows:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Members</u>
Conservative	28
Labour	15
Liberal Democrat	10
Independent	<u>1</u>
	54

This is the first time in 20 years that a single party has achieved an overall majority on the County Council. As the single largest party, the Conservative Group has formed the Administration of the County Council. The Conservative Group therefore occupies all places on the Cabinet. All other bodies within the decision-making framework listed above are filled in proportion to the political representation of the political groups on the Council as a whole.

## **2.2 Medium Term Corporate Strategy and Council Objectives**

The County Council in November 2001 approved a Medium Term Corporate Strategy to guide the work of the Council for the period up to 2005. The Strategy builds on commitments made in the Administration's manifesto. It also incorporates changes made in response to comments received during consultation on the draft. The Strategy identifies the Administration's objectives as:

- Working together to deliver quality services
- Achieving excellence in education and learning
- Meeting health and care needs
- Improving our transport system
- Caring for our environment
- Promoting economic well-being

- Supporting culture and leisure
- Making communities safer
- Managing waste effectively

These objectives therefore replace the corporate objectives of the previous joint administration.

The Medium Term Corporate Strategy sets out the key priorities that the County Council intends to focus on over the period up to 2005, the life of the present Council. Therefore it does not include reference to all the services the County Council delivers or the detailed ways in which the objectives and priorities will be delivered. These are set out in a range of service plans and strategies that the County Council is required to prepare and referred to elsewhere in this Plan. Key activities from these plans and strategies are summarised each year in the Best Value Performance Plan.

The extent to which we are successful in achieving the priorities in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy will be reported through the Best Value Performance Plan. The rest of this Plan has been set out to relate to the objectives in the Strategy in order to assist this.

### **2.3 Departmental Structures**

The Medium Term Corporate Strategy contains a commitment to review our internal structures in order to reduce the number of separate departments to improve our ability to deliver services in accordance with our objectives. We have produced, for consultation with employees and unions, a new departmental structure to deliver this commitment. It is intended that new structures will be put in place during 2002/03 alongside the introduction of a new job evaluation scheme.



## Chapter 3

### Working together to deliver Quality Services

The County Council has the principal role in providing community leadership for the people of Leicestershire. We recognise that, to carry out this role effectively, we must ensure that the identification of needs and the solutions to problems reflect the views of local communities. Improvements to the quality of services delivered to Leicestershire people will also require a co-ordinated effort by a range of national, regional and local organisations.

We will work to bring services closer to where people live and to improve access to services for people who live in rural areas or away from town centres. Services will be accessible to all groups in the community and responsive to people's needs. We will act positively to tackle inequality and discrimination, building on our existing approach to equal opportunities. We believe that the multi-tier system of local government in Leicestershire gives opportunities both to plan services strategically and to bring services closer to people. We will work with the district, parish, and town councils and with other agencies to achieve this.

In 2000/01 we were in the best-performing 25% of authorities with 63% national citizens satisfied with the overall services provided by the County Council compared to an average score of 59%. A further more limited Countywide survey carried out last year indicated that 71% of people were satisfied with the overall service. We want to continue improving the services we provide. There are a number of ways in which we can do this.

#### 3.1 Working in Partnership

We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations. Our key partnerships are:-

- Leicestershire Strategic Sub-Regional Partnership
- County/District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Leicestershire Rural Partnership
- Leicestershire Waste Strategy Partnership
- Health Improvement Plan Partnership
- Life Long Learning Partnership
- CVS Community Partnership
- Community Legal Service Partnership
- Leicestershire Partnership for Safer Communities
- Local crime and disorder partnerships
- Forum for a Better Leicestershire

Further details of how these partnerships help to improve the services we deliver are given in the Chapters that follow.

We seek to work across boundaries where this is the most effective way of delivering good quality services. The sections on Key Partnerships in the following Chapters give many examples.

## **3.2 Forward Planning**

The quality of services will only be improved if we have a clear idea of what we want to achieve as an authority. This means developing longer term plans that identify our major objectives over time and setting out how we intend to achieve them. A number of these Plans have been in existence for some time and others are currently being developed.

### **3.2.1 Developing a Community Strategy**

The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to prepare community strategies. We have embraced the requirement to produce a long term vision for the sustainable future of Leicestershire. Discussions between the County Council and District Councils have proceeded on the basis that there will be a countywide community strategy together with community strategies at the level of each district area, and associated local strategic partnership arrangements. We have indicated that we wish to support the preparation of district level strategies and will contribute at executive member level to local strategic partnerships set up to guide their preparation. One district-based strategy, for the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough area, has been prepared. Its contents have been supported by the County Council.

We have agreed with District Councils a timetable for the preparation of a countywide community strategy which aims to have a final strategy in place in early 2003 following consultation during 2002. We will also develop with partners our approach to the development of a local strategic partnership at county-wide level. This timetable has been shared at a stakeholder conference attended by a wide range of bodies. Our Medium Term Corporate Strategy will contribute to the preparation of a community strategy for the County area but will not take its place. The Medium Term Corporate Strategy will also guide our contribution to District level community strategies.

### **3.2.2 Medium Term Corporate Strategy**

This Strategy, which is described in Chapter 2, identifies the Administration's priorities until the next elections in 2005. It represents a major step forward in the planning framework of the Council. We recognise that much work still needs to be done to link this to the development of medium term performance management and financial planning.

### **3.2.3 Other Planning arrangements**

We produce a number of significant Plans relating to the future development of specific services. These are listed in Chapter 14. In addition to these all Departments of the Council are now required to produce service plans that relate their work to the Corporate Objectives and measure their performance against suitable indicators.

### **3.2.4 Comprehensive Performance Assessment**

The Government has recently announced its intention to carry out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment of all top tier authorities, including the County Council, in 2002. This will evaluate their overall performance in providing leadership, communicating with, and delivering services to their local community.

As a result of this assessment, authorities will be classified into 'high performing', 'striving', 'coasting' or 'low performing'. There will be incentives to improve performance and attain the 'high performing' level. We expect this assessment will help to confirm the major issues that we must address in the future, and allow us to develop an agenda for further improvements to services.

### **3.3 Public Service Agreement**

We will be bidding for a Public Service Agreement with the Government during 2002/03. This will involve negotiating an agreement which commits us to achieve targets over three years. The targets will be challenging and will only be achieved with the help of others. In return the Government offers substantial financial rewards if the County Council, with its partners, achieves the negotiated targets after three years, and flexibility locally to improve service delivery. Resources have been added to the budget for 2002/03 to help develop and implement the Public Service Agreement. The major financial rewards of a successful Public Service Agreement will be available after the life of the present Council. The approved Medium Term Corporate Strategy and further consultation with partner bodies, together with priorities identified in the comprehensive performance assessment of the County Council, will guide the selection of targets for the Public Service Agreement.

### **3.4 Joint Arrangements for Consultation**

A large amount of consultation with service users and other interested parties already takes place. For instance last year we consulted on:-

- the draft Medium Term Corporate Strategy
- the Council's budget proposals
- the reviews of the highways network, community safety, and the youth and community education services.

Further details on the outcomes from the various consultation activities undertaken by the County Council in 2001 are reported separately in each of the subsequent chapters. A summary of the consultation exercises proposed in 2002/03 is given at Appendix 1.

We intend to improve our arrangements for consultation with local communities. Working with our partners we will establish a citizens' panel, hold at least four citizens' juries each year and support at least twenty local consultation events, including village appraisals, parish plans, "visioning", and "planning for real" events.

We want to ensure that our services are responsive to local needs and combine quality with value for money. We will act with honesty and integrity in delivering these services. We will report on our achievements and also inform people when services need to be improved.

We have always carried out a considerable amount of consultation on the services we provide. However this is now being further developed and co-ordinated so that the most effective use can be made of all the information gathered in this way.

Recent initiatives have included the establishment of a range of internal processes to allow information to be shared and outcomes from activity to be learnt from more easily across the organisation. Planned improvements for 2002 include the development of an electronic "consultation toolkit" which will support the Council in developing, implementing and evaluating its consultation activity.

It is important that the views of all parts of the local community are taken into account. The Council will this year look to strengthen its existing approach to obtaining the opinions and experiences of groups and individuals who are traditionally excluded from consultation activity by producing further and more detailed guidance to ensure that all views are adequately reflected.

### **3.5 Improving access to Services**

We intend to develop new and improved arrangements for co-ordinated service delivery, including e-government. We also want the people of Leicestershire to have easy access to information and advice about the range of public services available to them.

In order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) the Government has set a target for local authorities to achieve 100% of services that can be delivered electronically by 2005. Last year we produced a strategy intended to deliver greater access to services by electronic means, including a commitment to work with District councils and other bodies. This strategy was approved by the Government, and we have included £245,000 in the budget for 2002/03 to continue this work. It is encouraging to note that Leicestershire has already been identified in a recent survey as having one of the best council websites.

This year we will also initiate a major project with other agencies to explore the ways, including e-government, in which we can work together to improve access to services. A budget of £100,000 has been earmarked for this work. This will replace the formal Best Value review that was previously included in our review programme for 2001/02, although we hope to carry out this work with the assistance of our external auditors and inspectors. We have developed a major policy initiative 'Better Access to Better Services' to take this forward.

Much work is already going on with our partner agencies in the county to use technology to make information more widely and easily available. Some examples of this are:-

Infolinx – A database of community information now available on the internet.

Leics Care Online – A pilot project to deliver interactive services directly to the homes of people in receipt of caring services.

Bridging Communities – A programme of community based ICT initiatives aimed at overcoming some of the disadvantages of rural life.

East Midlands Broadband Consortium – Aimed at developing broadband access to all schools.

People's Network – Providing public access to ICT facilities in all libraries.

Harborough Learning Network – An ICT centre in Market Harborough and community access points in 60 villages.

Post Office "Your Guide" pilot project – Developing the use of the Post Office network to provide information on County Council and other services.

We have bid with partners for major funding through the Local Government on-line initiative to develop the range of services and information available electronically throughout the County. We will review the range of service and contact points throughout the County with the aim of developing a co-ordinated approach to access to services and information about services with other service providers.

We will use the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act to carry out a further audit of how well our services are meeting the needs of disabled people. We will prepare and publish a race equality scheme covering service delivery and employment issues. This will build on an audit we carried out last year using the Commission for Racial Equality Standard for local government. The audit showed that whilst some County Council departments were at level 3 of the Standard other departments were only at level 1.

### **3.6 Developing our workforce**

Providing good quality services depends on having a well trained and motivated workforce. Two significant changes will affect all our employees this year. Firstly, the results of a job evaluation exercise will be applied to the entire workforce and will introduce new pay scales and relativities between different types of work. This is likely to involve considerable adjustments in some parts of our services. Secondly, the Administration is consulting on new management structures for the council which could involve changes in the number and arrangement of departments.

It is intended that both of these changes should take place during the autumn of 2002. The intention of the above changes is to put our workforce in a stronger position in the future to respond to the demands placed upon it.

We are aware that further improvements need to be made in our personnel management systems in order to improve our service delivery. Issues such as the countywide introduction of Investors in People and other quality marks will need to be addressed in the future, as will the consistent application of other personnel policies. Progress on these should be assisted by the installation of a new combined payroll and human resource computer system during 2002/03 which is intended to provide improved management information. This includes monitoring information which is important to help us make a positive response to our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

We are the largest employer in Leicestershire. If we want to deliver high quality services it is essential that our employees are well trained and motivated. We will invest in training and support to ensure that all employees are able to play their part in delivering services.

We aim to encourage and promote the highest standards of conduct and performance by our employees. Wherever possible we will involve employees in decision making and developing services in order to make use of their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the community.

## Chapter 4

### Delivering the Priorities

#### 4.1 Introduction to our Financial Plans

This Plan outlines our commitment to provide the best possible services to the community of Leicestershire. As a publicly funded body we have to meet these commitments from limited resources, and we work hard to ensure that budgets are spent properly in a way which ensures value for money. This Chapter of the Plan explains how we have managed our budgets in 2001/02 and how our spending plans for 2002/03 are aimed at achieving our corporate and service objectives. Our financial plans need to be considered in the context of the following issues:-

- Availability of resources will dictate the speed and extent to which our priorities are achieved. The Government has issued spending plans and forecasts. If these plans and forecasts change, this inevitably will have an impact on the delivery of our priorities and targets.
- A Government review of local government funding is under way. It is clear that this needs to produce a fairer share of Government funding for Leicestershire. It should allow us to have more flexibility in the use of Council Tax levies to achieve our priorities. We will press the Government to ensure that adequate funding is made available to enable our priorities to be met.
- We will need to respond to policy changes as a result of new Government directives whilst continuing to deliver local services. We will also need to take account of increases in demand as a result of demographic changes (for example increased numbers of older people, children with statements of educational needs), heightened public expectations of services and increased costs of providing quality services.
- Resources can also be made available by making efficiency savings and maximising external funding. Achieving other priorities, for example more integrated service delivery and waste management initiatives, will require substantial capital investment.

#### 4.2 How our resources have been managed in 2001/02

The following table sets out the latest estimate of what we will spend in 2001/02 compared with our original plans. The table indicates that we expect a small net underspend (£206,000 or 0.5%), at the year end. During the year we had to deal with significant increases in costs in several services that could have resulted in an overspending on the total budget. This has been avoided by close monitoring of the budget and by taking action to control potential budget overspends and to offset unavoidable overspends by making savings elsewhere.

The most significant changes to the budgets during the year were:-

- i) Education - Additional spending on special education needs of £548,000 offset by savings of £245,000 as fewer children were placed in schools outside the County. The costs of maternity cover for teachers also increased by £100,000.
- ii) Social Services - Despite receiving additional funds of £350,000 via a new Government grant during the year, the budget was still significantly overspent due mainly to the continuing rise in the number of people requiring residential places and home care services. The net increase of £548,000 would have been much greater but for the efforts made to restrict staff recruitment and make other efficiency savings.

- iii) Transport, Roads and Planning - Unforeseen additional costs had to be allowed for when Hinckley & Bosworth Council decided to terminate their highways agency agreement with the County Council. In addition staff and related costs increased with a large expansion of the highways capital programme by the Government. The net increase of £201,000 was partly offset by an increase in income received from the utility companies for the costs of road works.
- iv) Maintenance of Buildings - Most of the saving is due to the next phase of window replacement at County Hall being deferred in view of the other pressures on the budget.
- v) Museums and Arts - This is an increase in net spending of £145,000 mainly due to a shortfall in income, largely at Snibston Museum.
- vi) Central Departments - The planned installation of a Computer Wide Area Network has taken longer than anticipated due to the need to develop a sensible managed service contract with suppliers. This has generated most of this underspend.
- vii) Central Items - Provision was made for the likely cost of a job evaluation process on the whole Council workforce expected to be concluded during last year. This was delayed and will now happen during 2002/03.

**Revised Estimate 2001/02 (compared with updated budget)**

	<u>2001/02</u> <u>*Updated</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2001/02</u> <u>Revised</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Difference</u> <u>£000</u>
<b><u>SPENDING</u></b>			
Schools	202,154	202,154	0
Education Other	54,422	54,768	346
Social Services	72,540	73,088	548
Transport, Roads & Planning	29,287	29,489	202
Waste Disposal	11,135	11,142	7
Libraries & Information	6,631	6,550	-81
Maintenance of Buildings	5,518	5,296	-222
Economic Wellbeing	2,506	2,426	-80
Museums & Arts	2,180	2,325	145
Trading Standards & Regulatory Services	2,017	2,017	0
Central Departments	15,357	15,032	-325
Total Cost of Services	403,747	404,287	540
<b><u>CENTRAL ITEMS</u></b>			
Combined Fire Authority	15,783	15,783	0
Flood Defence Levies	2,428	2,428	0
NDR Revaluation Savings	0	-20	-20
Magistrates' Courts	602	602	0
Bank & Other Interest	-2,800	-3,000	-200
Pension Costs	1,792	1,786	-6
Financing of Capital Expenditure	18,000	18,150	150
Job Evaluation	670	0	-670
Total Central Items	36,475	35,729	-746
Total Spending	440,222	440,016	-206
Withdrawal from Balances	3,631	3,425	-206
Budget Requirement	436,591	436,591	0

<b>FUNDING</b>			
Revenue Support Grant from Government	-141,285	-141,285	
National Non-Domestic Rate Income from Government	-147,894	-147,894	
Net Surplus on District Council Collection Funds for 2000/01	-1,114	-1,114	
Council Tax Benefit Subsidy Contribution	530	530	
Council Tax	-146,828	-146,828	
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>-436,591</b>	<b>-436,591</b>	

\* This is the original budget for 2001/02 updated for inflation and the carry forward of underspendings from 2000/01.

### 4.3 The budget for 2002/03 and how it has been constructed

The Council receives over 60% of its funding directly from central Government. We are therefore very reliant on the levels at which that is set when we are considering the amount of Council tax needed to make up the rest of the budget required to meet the demands for good quality public services.

Leicestershire does not benefit as much as many other authorities from the current funding system. In addition the Government is funding an increasing number of service areas by specific grants that cannot be used elsewhere. These are sometimes inadequate to meet the demands for the service, which means that any shortfall has to be met by local council tax payers.

In arriving at the budget for 2002/03 we have:-

- considered what additional funds we can afford to put into those areas we have identified as part of our Medium Term Corporate Strategy.
- closely examined the current spending pressures on services to identify areas where additional funds are required to meet those pressures.
- identified where savings can be made in order to release funds to be used in areas of greater priority or pressure.

The budget for 2002/03 requires an increase in Council Tax of 8.9%. The grant we receive from the Government assumes we will increase Council Tax by 5% but we are increasing spending by about 1% above the Government's figure to meet the actual costs of pressure on services, for example the rapid growth in Social Services and Waste Disposal costs. The table below sets out the budget for 2002/03 and indicates where the amounts of growth and savings that have been allowed for. The key features of the budget are:-

- The element of the overall increase in Government funding that relates to Education has been "passported" into the Education budget so that schools get the whole of the increase allowed for by the Government. This means that schools will get an increase of £9.54m or 5.3% in 2002/03, including inflation. Other Education services, such as special educational needs provision, will receive growth of £5m. This excludes sixth form provision for which budget responsibility has been transferred by the Government to the new Learning and Skills Council.
- There is a 10% increase in spending on Social Services, although most of this is to meet pressures such as:
  - Extra demands, especially for people with learning disabilities and older people;



- Cost increases of independent providers of residential and home care;
- The shortfall in Government funding for new responsibilities for residential care;
- There is a 13% increase in waste disposal costs due to new legislation on the disposal of fridges and a further tax increase on disposal at landfill sites;
- An amount of £1.5m has been set aside to meet the anticipated costs of major exercises on job evaluation and departmental restructuring which will take effect this year;
- An amount of £5.4m has been allowed for the estimated costs of inflation during the year on services in addition to schools.

#### **4.4 Medium Term Corporate Strategy**

Due to the continuing pressures on our budgets there are limited resources available to develop the priority areas identified in our Medium Term Strategy. However additional funds have been allocated to the following service developments:-

- Improving academic achievement in schools.
- Continuing towards a common first time schools admissions policy.
- Providing alternative children's accommodation to the Blaby Community Home.
- Safeguarding the quality of residential and home care provision in the private sector.
- Improving access to libraries and the quality of library services.
- Making services more accessible, including progress on e-government.

These developments are referred to in more detail in other Chapters of this Plan.

#### **4.5 Efficiency Savings**

Efficiency savings might be described as the search to obtain the maximum benefit from available resources. They may result in cash savings or in the provision of more or better services for the same amount of money.

In many areas the demand for services outstrips available resources so that the search for efficiencies has become a regular and accepted part of managing and delivering services across the Council's activities. The development of formal service planning and monitoring and the use of the review process on service areas have increased the opportunities to identify areas where further efficiencies can be made.

During 2001/02 the Council's budget has been under considerable pressure due to rapid growth in a number of demand led budgets. The overall budget position has been contained largely because departments have made efficiency savings that have offset a proportion of this growth. This has been done by holding staff vacancies and reducing other running costs whilst maintaining the levels of service provided.

The budget for 2002/03 includes total savings of £2.2m that release funds to be used to meet demands elsewhere. Some of these savings are fortuitous but a proportion is due to positive action taken to increase the efficient use of resources.

The following services intend to generate savings within their budget whilst continuing to deal with the same or increasing workloads:-

	Planned Savings £
- Education	160,000
- Social Services	100,000
- Libraries	10,000
- Economic development	30,000
- Museums	33,000
- Regulatory	20,000
- Treasurer's	20,000

In addition we will generate efficiencies as a result of several Best Value reviews which were completed last year:-

**Domiciliary Services** – The meals on wheels service is being reorganised and anticipated savings will be used to extend the service to more clients. Further market testing of the home care service will also be carried out this year, and the in-house laundry service will also be closed and put out to external suppliers.

**Financial Services** – The increased use of electronic methods of paying invoices and receiving income will reduce duplication of input and errors. This will increase our staff efficiency and also help our suppliers to operate more efficiently.

**Industrial Properties** – The management of small business units and the services offered to tenants will be improved, for example by even better management of void periods and arrears. This service regularly generates a surplus for reinvestment.

**Maximising our income from other bodies.** In addition to the above there are significant amounts available each year from bodies such as the National Lottery. We have established a small group of officers to co-ordinate our knowledge and approach to these bodies so that we can make the most of any opportunities that arise to obtain additional funding for service developments.

### Our Spending Plans for 2002/03

	<u>Proposed Budget £000</u>	<u>Includes Growth £000</u>	<u>Includes Savings £000</u>
<b><u>SERVICES</u></b>			
Education Other than Schools	58,960	5,029	370
Social Services	77,705	6,751	375
Transport, Roads & Planning	30,047	735	330
Waste Disposal	12,484	1,055	
Libraries & Information	6,584	232	25
Maintenance of Buildings	4,791	65	500
Economic Wellbeing	2,338		55
Museums & Arts	2,383	270	103
Regulatory Services	2,151	162	20
Central Departments	15,315	799	320
Total Services at Nov. prices (except schools)	212,758	15,098	2,098
Contingency for inflation (except schools)	5,453	414	58
Schools (Outturn)*	188,430		
Total cost of Services	406,641		

<b><u>CENTRAL ITEMS</u></b>			
Financing of Capital Expenditure	19,350		
Combined Fire Authority	16,629		
Flood Defence Levies	2,477		
Magistrates' Courts	648		
Pension Costs	1,813		
Job Evaluation/Organisational Change	1,500		
Banks & Other Interest	-2,400		
Total Spending	446,658		
<b><u>FUNDING</u></b>			
Revenue Support Grant from Government	-119,944		
National Non-Domestic Rate Income from Government	-162,341		
Net Surplus on District Council Collection Funds for 2000/01	-840		
Council Tax	-161,446		
Withdrawal from Balances	-2,087		
TOTAL FUNDING	-446,658		

\* For all services other than schools we make a central provision for inflation which we allocate in detail later in the year. An allowance for inflation is built into the budget allocated to schools at the beginning of the year. This is described as the 'outturn' budget.

#### **4.6 Medium Term Financial Planning**

The Medium Term Corporate Strategy makes it clear that the availability of resources will dictate the speed and extent to which priorities are achieved. In this respect we are very dependent on Government funding. The position on Government resources should become clearer when the outcome of the 2002 Spending Review and the new system for distributing Revenue Support Grant are announced in the Summer. When information on resources is known we intend to produce three year financial plans, along with the three year capital programme which is already produced, which together will highlight the resources available to implement the priorities in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy.

#### **4.7 Our plans to improve our buildings and other assets in 2002/03**

As well as the amount we spend on day to day services which are described in the revenue budget above, we also invest in the longer term future of our capital assets. This is done for example through the construction or refurbishment of schools or through new or improved road schemes. The Council owns a significant amount of property and other capital assets, and in order to have a logical approach to its maintenance and development we have produced an Asset Management Plan which identifies all our assets and evaluates the maintenance and development priorities.

In 2002/03 we will spend £36.25m on capital projects. This includes payments of £3.88m relating to schemes that began in earlier years, and £32.37m on new projects starting in 2002/03. These total amounts include amounts allocated to us by the Government specifically for the New Deal for Schools programme, the school access initiative, devolved capital to schools, seed challenge and other small specific programmes for Education.

The major new projects that are planned to start in 2002/03 are:-

**Capital Programme**

	<u>Cost in 2002/03 £000</u>	<u>Total Cost £000</u>
<b><u>EDUCATION</u></b>		
Loughborough Burleigh College - replacement of temporary classrooms	782	940
Bottesford Belvoir High - replacement of temporary classrooms	747	835
Markfield South Charnwood High - replacement of 'Horsa' building	387	524
Birstall Riverside Primary - replacement of mobiles	656	1,086
Ashby Upper - consolidation of science accommodation on one site and replacement of temporary classrooms	670	670
Countesthorpe Greenfield Primary - replacement of temporary classrooms	644	1,225
Ashby Willesley Primary - replacement of temporary classrooms	198	839
Replacement of Special School in Melton	210	2,566
Coalville Broomleys Primary - replacement of temporary classrooms	295	700
<b><u>TRANSPORT</u></b>		
Various bridge strengthening and carriageway maintenance works	6,788	6,788
Various schemes to meet targets laid down in 5 year Local Transport Plan	5,141	5,141
Continuation of design work upon Rearsby & Earl Shilton bypasses (approved in principle by DTLR)	255	
Replacement of defective street lighting columns	280	280
<b><u>SOCIAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Acquisition of property to provide a replacement community home	350	700
<b><u>LIBRARIES</u></b>		
Replacement of Fleckney Library	122	148
<b><u>MUSEUMS</u></b>		
Remedial works to Records Office	190	190
<b><u>OTHER</u></b>		
Sapcote - Improvements to Travellers Site	91	91
County Farms - Effluent Control	125	125
Acquisition of land for civic amenity site	100	100
Access for disabled people	200	200
Development of 'E' Government and ICT infrastructure	600	739

Significant expenditure will also be incurred in 2002/03 on the following schemes which began in 2001/02 or earlier years.

<b><u>EDUCATION</u></b>		
Loughborough Limehurst High - annexe replacement	530	
Oadby Woodland Grange Primary - new school hall and classrooms	429	522
Cosby Primary - replace annexe on split site	302	531
Market Harborough Welland Park High - replacement of temporary accommodation	424	749
<b><u>TRANSPORT</u></b>		
Ashby Bypass	1,248	8,374

#### **4.8 Major Trading Operation**

We operate an in-house highways maintenance service (the Direct Labour Organisation or DLO) which has to win a significant proportion of its work in competition with other private contractors. This service has an estimated annual turnover of £22m. Unlike the other services we provide there is an element of market risk involved in such an operation. Since this is public money we need to demonstrate that this service is operating effectively and the Council is safeguarded from financial loss. This service has been profitable in the past, and has been able to make significant contributions each year out of its profits to the Council's funds.

In 2001/02 we anticipated that a contribution of £100,000 would be available from the profits generated in that year. However, as profitability has increased, this contribution was improved to £200,000, and a similar amount has been included in the 2002/03 budget.

## Chapter 5

### Achieving Excellence in Education

We believe that all the people of Leicestershire should have lifelong access to high quality education and training to satisfy vocational, social and personal needs; to improve the quality of their lives and to contribute to the economic and cultural development of this county and beyond.

We will achieve this through:

- Providing equal opportunities for all children of all abilities, irrespective of whether they live in urban or rural communities
- Campaigning for proper funding through the Fair Funding for Education campaign
- Working with governing bodies and diocesan authorities to ensure that school facilities are available to all
- Supporting small village schools that offer high standards of education
- Aiming to deliver a full range of services to children with special educational needs, and providing a programme for those who are very able to develop their talents
- Encouraging schools to implement a focused anti-bullying programme
- Ensuring that libraries and museums contribute to Lifelong Learning
- Maintaining youth and community education services, working positively with the Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions Service.

#### 5.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services currently provided to meet this objective are given in Chapter 15 of the Plan.

#### 5.2 Overall performance and key priorities

##### 5.2.1 Overall performance

We have submitted to the Department for Education and Skills a new Education Development Plan, (EDP), for 5 years from 2002-2007 to improve and update our provision for supporting schools in raising standards of achievement for all pupils. We also have a Strategic Plan which includes work additional to the EDP, as well as contributing to aspects of Corporate Strategy and Planning.

Despite being the lowest funded County in England, Leicestershire schools are not under-resourced. We continue to spend substantially in excess of resources provided by the government for the Education Service. In 2002/03 this top up funding will exceed £9.6 million.

In 2001/02 external evaluation of the Education Department's work occurred through national tests and public examinations, and pupil examination performance continues to improve across all age groups. We are already in or very close to the best performing 25% of Authorities across all three key stages and GCSE. The only exception to this is in the education of young people leaving care where performance is only near to average. To address this, additional resources have been allocated to children looked after by the local authority. The Education Support team provides them with two teachers, and two Welfare Officers are dedicated to care leavers and youth offending.

## 5.2.2 Test and Exam Results

Schools' results at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are good, and we intend, in partnership with schools, to improve our results at Key Stage 4 to achieve our aim of getting into the top 25% of our OFSTED neighbours for all Stages by 2005. We have committed an additional £1.5 million in local authority contribution to the Standards Fund budget from 2002/03 to support this improvement. We will also be exploring the possibility of a Local Public Service Agreement (PSA) in these areas aimed at improving our performance even further than current targets.

### Summer 2001 Results

	Level 2 at Key Stage 1	Level 4 at Key Stage 2	Level 5 at Key Stage 3	5 A*-C GCSEs
Leicestershire	89%	80%	76%	48.5%
Best 25% OFSTED Neighbours	89%	80%	73%	51%

During 2001/02 we commenced pilot activities specifically aimed at improving our performance at Key Stage 4 (GCSE). These target resources on priorities agreed with schools including Key Stage 3 to 4 transition and specific subjects (technology and modern foreign languages). We will see the benefits of these projects in two to three years' time.

Leicestershire has shown a significant improvement in the number of children receiving a good quality free Early Years education place in voluntary private or maintained sectors. The percentage of 3 year olds has increased substantially from below average at 6.7% in 2000/01 to 44% in 2001/02, which is above the 42% achieved by the best performing 25% authorities. 96.4% of 4 year olds are now in nursery places provided or funded by the Council through a government approved plan. The budget for 2002/03 contains £535,000 to provide for 500 schools places to contribute to our aim of providing all children with a school place for three whole years before KS1 assessment. A further improvement has been the reduction of all KS1 classes to 30 or fewer children, and we are striving to improve the proportion of smaller classes for older age groups.

These figures show that we are making a significant contribution to the government's declared objectives of improving Social Inclusion. The budget for 2002/03 contains an additional sum of £80,000 to support the strategy for primary age pupils with Extreme Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). This can also be demonstrated in the area of absences and exclusions from school. For unauthorised absence, our performance for Primary Schools is in the best 25% of local authorities' performance however it is below average in Secondary Schools. The low number of permanent exclusions shows better than average performance, and we are in the best performing 25% for providing alternative tuition for excluded pupils, with more than 90% now attending more than 10 hours per week.

The local authority continues to improve its performance in supporting schools. We are in the best performing 25% of authorities for the low percentage of schools maintained by the authority with serious weaknesses, whilst we are performing at about average levels with regard to the schools maintained subject to special measures. Although we have only 2% of schools that are deemed by OFSTED to be under-achieving, this figure is more than the 1% target which we have set. We are determined to improve further in this area.

Our performance in removing surplus places from schools is again superior in the Primary sector, where the picture is well above average with only 7.1% of Primary Schools having at least 25% of unfilled places compared with a best 25% figure of 10.9%. However in Secondary schools our

figure of 7.4%, although better than the average of 7.7%, is still above the figure of 5.3% for the best performing 25% of authorities.

In 2001/02, we met the government's target of devolving 85% of the local schools budget to schools. The average expenditure on Adult Education per head of the population in 2000/01 was £2.96, and Leicestershire's expenditure was £4.62; rising to £5.18 in 2001/02. We are also above average in expenditure on Youth Service Provision. Spending in Leicestershire in 2000/01 was £65.25, compared with £63.74 average expenditure per head of population in the Youth Service target range. Our spend per head is expected to rise to £69.52 for 2001/02.

Our strength as a provider of adult education continues to be reflected in its performance this year. The number of enrolments on adult education courses provided by the local authority per thousand of the adult population is more than twice that of the best performing 25% of local authorities (105 compared to 47). Similarly the percentage of adult education hours which students attended was high at 77% compared with 78% for the best performing 25%.

### **5.2.3 Key Priorities: - continued improvement in academic achievement**

- a) In 2001/02 approximately 190 "Gifted and Talented" pupils have been supported directly through specialist summer schools. Two of the five summer schools offered a one week residential experience, whilst the others provided students with a variety of educational and enjoyable activities at a variety of locations. Pupils were asked to complete a questionnaire and comments were extremely favourable.

During the Autumn term funding has been allocated to five schools to develop strategies designed to increase attainment for the most able pupils in KS4.

At the same time a pilot project for the 10+ group has been set up in order to support the most able when they transfer to High School.

Training programmes for staff continue, with over 150 teachers attending briefings to consider provision made for the most able pupils in their schools.

In 2002/03, the Summer schools programme will continue at a cost of £45,000, and gifted and talented pupils will be among those benefiting from the council's strategy to raise standards at KS3 and KS4.

- b) The second annual review of Leicestershire's SEN Development Plan has now been completed. The priorities for the year 2002-03 will be developing improvement of the funding arrangements for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, refinement of the monitoring of resources and educational outcomes for children with SEN, the development of area special provision, further development of services and provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties and the expansion of support for pupils with SEN in early years settings. We have provided an additional £80,000 in 2002/03 to support our strategy for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in primary schools.

We will continue to make specialist provision for children and young people who have difficulty in making the most of educational opportunities: children for whom English is not their first language; the children of travelling families; children who are too ill to attend school; and children in the care of the local authority and young parents.

- c) During 2001, the Specialist Teaching Service's five teaching teams have supported 1,700+ children with special educational needs in a variety of early years settings, schools and colleges. In February 2001, the Service relocated to its present base in Coalville. This has alleviated accommodation pressures, has greatly boosted staff morale and has enabled the Service to offer a wider range of specialist support.



- d) Libraries are playing an increasing role in supporting informal lifelong learning and providing points of access. With the roll out of the People's Network computers will be available in all libraries by December 2002 with staff trained to give help and advice.
- e) Museums and archives also have a recognised role to play in supporting lifelong learning. It is hoped to slightly increase the current numbers of pupils visiting museums in 2002/03 thus retaining the position within the best 25% of authorities (average 13,810 in 2001/02).

Classroom and community-based learning through museum resources and works of art. (The Open Museum) will be a priority for 2002/03, particularly targeted at under-performing and high achieving students.

### **5.3 Key Partnerships**

A priority of the Medium Term Corporate Strategy is to ensure a shared understanding of responsibilities and accountabilities with schools, and the development of this partnership remains the key factor in ensuring continued improvements in education in Leicestershire. The Government has introduced a Code of Practice on relationships with schools which we are using to ensure that together, we deliver our national and local priorities. Our commitment is demonstrated by the fact that, yet again, we have provided a budget for education that allows for a significantly higher level of spending than the Government considers necessary. In addition, the Education Department has a large and complex range of partnerships including:

- All learning institutions (schools, colleges, early years providers, further and higher education)
- Borough and District councils (especially in relation to community education arts, and sports/leisure).
- Local authorities in the East Midlands Region (especially Leicester City and Rutland).
- A large number of voluntary organisations.
- Other statutory bodies (especially health services, the police, Leicestershire TEC and Leicestershire Careers and Guidance Service).
- Relevant national bodies including Sport England, English Heritage, and English Nature.
- Governors and parents (including the Associations of Leicestershire Governors and the Leicestershire Federation of Parent Teacher Associations).
- Early years education and childcare providers.
- Travel and Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity service.
- Regional organisations (especially East Midlands Arts).
- The emerging Connexions Service which will be operational in Leicestershire and Leicester from September 2002.
- Learning and Skills Council, Lifelong Learning Partnership

### **5.4 The Management of Change**

#### **Small School's Policy**

In February 2001, following a consultation, the County Council adopted a policy on Small Schools, which dealt with the issues of viability, organisation and structures, resources and funding, and the quality of education provided in small schools. The policy included a commitment to Small Schools by the LEA and identification of means of providing additional support.

#### **Development of Connexions**

We are working in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Careers and Guidance Service, the Voluntary Sector and a range of relevant providers and support agencies in order to establish a Connexions Service for Leicester and Leicestershire.

A shadow Connexions partnership board has been constituted. The expectation is that the Service will be established as a legal entity by April 2002 and will commence delivery of services to young people in the target age group (13 to 19) in September 2002.

The Connexions Service will operate in all secondary schools in Leicestershire. The Youth and Community Education Service and the Student Support Service will both be significant partners providing services complementary to those provided by the Connexions Service.

### **Relations with Learning and Skills Council**

The local (Leicester and Leicestershire) arm of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has been responsible for planning and funding adult learning and training from April 2001. In April 2002 the responsibilities of the LSC will be expanded to include a funding responsibility for all students aged 16+ including school sixth forms.

We have worked closely with the local LSC to submit an adult learning plan that has secured continuing resourcing of those adult and community learning activities that are planned and delivered by the LEA. The LEA will strive to continue to offer cost-effective, high quality learning opportunities for adults funded by LSC. This incorporates an increased emphasis on national priorities in relation to basic skills, widening participation in adult learning and activities designed to match the needs of local and national employers.

Arrangements for the transfer of responsibility for funding school sixth forms are at an advanced stage and seem likely to be financially beneficial to most of the affected schools.

## **5.5 The Outcome of Reviews**

### **5.5.1 Youth and Community Education**

The County Council has reviewed Youth and Community Education services in light of the changes necessitated by the establishment of both the Learning and Skills Council and the Connexions Service.

The Review Panel is consulting on a preferred model and will take account of consultation responses before deciding how to proceed.

If possible, the final proposals will address the key issues faced by the Service whilst taking account of specific concerns that have come from consultees.

Final proposals are likely to be made soon leading to decisions in the 2002 Summer term.

### **5.5.2 Special Education Needs Transport**

This review is comparing Leicestershire's policies and practices with those of other L.E.A.'s. Analysis of data shows that this provision is operating efficiently; however, the policies followed are more generous than in some of the other L.E.A.s surveyed. There is consequently scope to make improvements. The review is scheduled to produce its report in Spring 2002. It is expected a further period of consultation with stakeholders will follow and details of the outcome will be included in next year's Plan.

### **5.5.3 Specialist Teaching Service**

The Specialist Teaching Service is currently subject to a review which is due to be completed in April 2002. Consultation with stakeholders on Service performance and possible improvements to service provision has been undertaken and options for future development are being considered.

### **5.5.4 Library Services for Education**

Library Services for Education operates as a business unit within the County Council, offering schools loan of resources, advice and practical help and training. Loan services are used by 89% of secondary schools and 51% of primary and special schools in the County.

A Best Value Review of Library Services for Education was completed at the beginning of 2002. The Review analysed services provided to schools and colleges in relation to their identified needs now and in the future, in respect of the service provided, the current take-up of the service, and future opportunities and demands. The Review contained an Action Plan aimed at improving; take-up of the service; use of ICT; use of performance measures and staff development that will guide work during 2002/03.

## **5.6 Consultation in 2001/02, and outcomes**

### **5.6.1 Education Development Plan (EDP)**

The Education Development Plan Liaison Group met regularly during 2001 to plan and prepare for the writing of the Education Development Plan for 2002-2007. A large and successful conference was held in November 2001 attended by most of the Headteachers of Leicestershire which identified an additional priority for the Education Development Plan, the Recruitment and Retention of teachers. Support for ICT Curriculum and administration and SEN – EBD issues in mainstream schools were also identified as issues of concern which have now been further developed in the school improvement aspect of the Plan.

A wide range of individuals and groups were consulted on the EDP proposals at all stages of its developments; these included representatives of school governors, the Chair of the Early Years Partnership, the Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council, other departments of the County Council, members of the Cabinet and the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee, representatives of the Diocese of Leicester and Nottingham, representatives of Teachers' Associations.

### **5.6.2 Youth and Community Education**

A consultation with young people of Leicestershire took place in November of 2001 concerning how they felt about the service. The outcome of this consultation was generally positive, with good relationships with youth workers cited as a main strength.

In relation to the Best Value Review of Youth and Community Education

- a) During the Spring of 2001 a consultation took place around the second phase of the review which affirmed the priorities of the Service as Youth Work and Adult and Community Learning.
- b) The third phase of consultation centred around proposed options for change and took place from December 2001 to the end of February 2002. Those consulted included all providers, staff, governors, the voluntary sector, District Council Officers, County Council Lifelong Learning Group, all schools, free standing centres, Further Education Colleges, the local Learning Partnership, all departments of County Council, Parish Councils, District Councils and the Local Learning and Skills Council. The outcome of this consultation is not available at the time of writing.

### **5.6.3 The Adult Learning Plan**

Consultation on the Adult Learning Plan for 2002-03 with the following groups took place in January and February 2002:-

- The Local Learning Partnership
- The programme managers in all LEA institutions providing adult and community learning
- The corporate Lifelong Learning group of the County Council
- The local Learning and Skills Council

#### **5.6.4 Early Years Child Care and Development Plan**

The Childcare Information Service has co-ordinated a range of consultation processes throughout 2001 and 2002. This has included:

- distributing the findings of the parental unmet needs childcare service
- completing an additional parental survey which focuses on parents perceptions of “quality childcare”
- children’s consultation exercise in partnership with Charnwood Arts which has been aimed at children of the ages 8-14 years, the results of both this survey and the Quality Services survey will be launched during National Childcare month of June 2002.

#### **5.6.5 Behaviour Support Plan**

One of the agreed actions of the Behaviour Support Plan 2001-2004 was that children and young people should be consulted on issues related to the Plan. This was undertaken during the Autumn Term of 2001 through schools, using School Councils where those exist, and youth groups. The responses of children and young people focussed on bullying, good relationships with teachers, quality of teaching and well managed classrooms as key issues. The budget for 2002/03 includes £60,000 to establish a post to provide advice and support on bullying issues. Quality of teaching and classroom management are addressed within the Education Development Plan and relationships and classroom management will also be addressed through activities within the Behaviour Support Plan for 2002/03.

#### **5.6.6 School Organisation Plan**

The LEA is required to prepare an annual plan setting out issues relating to the supply of and demand for schools places and the LEA policies against which Statutory Notice proposals will be determined.

The Plan is subject to approval by the School Organisation Committee (SOC). The SOC also determines the outcome of Statutory Notices.

To date the LEA has operated within the recommended timescales. The draft SOP is published in the Summer term (May or June). Following a two-month consultation period, the draft plan and any comments received are forwarded to the SOC. The SOC then decides whether to adopt the draft plan, with or without modification.

The SOC has, on each occasion, agreed a plan based on Leicestershire’s draft plan. Comments received during the consultation process have been considered and many have resulted in minor changes in the final plan.

Whilst the School Organisation Plan (SOP) is a helpful document, it is not clear why the plan needs to be redrafted annually rather than, say, every two or three years. DfES seems to be introducing some relaxation in the need for annual plans and the SOP should be a candidate for revision.

## Chapter 6

### Meeting Health and Care Needs

High quality health and social care services are important to the quality of life of the people and communities of Leicestershire. We are committed to promote people's physical, mental and social well being. We will work with the National Health Service, other statutory, private and voluntary agencies and, most importantly of all, our users and carers to ensure they receive effective and responsive services.

This will be done through:

- Assisting older people and people with disabilities to live as independently as possible by continuing to develop preventive, rehabilitation and home care services
- Commissioning and providing high quality residential care and supported living for those who need it and choose it
- Protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
- Ensuring people who need services are provided with information about what is available and can access those services easily
- Improving the life chances of the children we care for by being good "Corporate Parents"
- Co-ordinating our services to ensure they work together and with our partners to improve the general health of our community
- Continually reviewing our effectiveness and developing innovative improvements to our services

#### 6.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services currently provided to meet this objective are given in Chapter 15 of this plan.

#### 6.2 Overall performance and key priorities

In October 2001, the Secretary of State for Health named Leicestershire as one of the top 15 best performing councils for 2000/01 in our Social Services performance and in the top 10 consistently high performing councils (over the past three years). This has been achieved despite Leicestershire receiving the lowest level of government support per head of population of any County Council through its standard spending assessment.

##### 6.2.1 Services to people in Home Settings

We will continue to develop and deliver services for adults and children that aim to reduce the need for institutional care. The relevant performance indicators for supporting people in home settings show that we achieve this by, for example:

	<b><u>Best 25%</u></b>	<b><u>Leicestershire</u></b>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Percentage of children looked after in foster care and adoption	77%	77%	79%	80%

Intensive home care as a proportion of intensive home care and residential care	24%	27%	27.2%	27%
The number of adults < 65 helped to live at home per 1,000 people < 65	9.25	7.9	8.0	8.0

Progress on 2001/02 commitments:

- Through the application of the 'Building Care Capacity' Grant from the Department of Health we have built up our capacity to undertake assessments for people leaving hospitals and we established additional rapid response workers to assist in preventing unnecessary hospital admissions.
- We are continuing to develop residential reablement services and the in house home care reablement service is being rolled out across the county in line with the outcome of the Best Value Review of Domiciliary Services.
- The number of Carer Assessments increased substantially.
- The percentage of Looked After Children living in family placements has increased.

During 2002/03 we will:

- Work to improve home care services to enable more people to continue to live in the community. We have included an additional £980,000 in the County Council budget for 2002/03 to support the increased demand
- Change the Community Meals service to provide a more flexible and regular service to a large proportion of the County
- In partnership with District Authorities, N.H.S. and Probation implement the 'Supporting People' programme for housing related support services
- Reduce the time that disabled people wait for assessments for major adaptations to their homes and improve the arrangements for the provision of equipment to support daily living. An additional £60,000 is included in the County Council's budget to support this commitment
- Implement new arrangements for charging people for non-residential care services in line with the Government's guidance on Fairer Charging

### 6.2.2 Preventive Services

For some time we have targeted our resources on those most in need. Investment is now being made in preventive services to avoid the need for more intensive services at a later date.

The relevant performance indicators for preventive services show that we achieve this by, for example:

	<b>Best 25%</b>	<b>Leicestershire</b>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Older people aged 65 or over helped to live at home per 1,000	72.30	71.25	72.0	72.0
Adults with learning disabilities helped	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.5

to live at home per 1,000				
Spend on children in need but not looked after as a percentage of spending on all children's services	23%	31%	31%	31%

Progress on 2001/02 commitments:

- Substantially increased the number of children who leave care at an older age, which will increase their chances to have a successful life.
- Improved the educational qualifications of children looked after through a range of improvement measures.

During 2002/03, we will:

- With the NHS, expand intermediate care services - integrate services to promote faster recovery from illness, prevent unnecessary acute hospital admission, support timely discharge and maximise independent living
- Implement our Carers' Plan and strengthen the support given to carers through increased carer assessments and targeted training on carer issues
- Implement a joint accommodation strategy for 16/17 year olds between the Leicestershire Youth Offending Service and the Leaving Care Team in partnership with District Councils
- Improve residential services for children with disabilities, with additional funding of £330,000 in 2002/03, ensuring that more responsive respite care is available to carers across the County
- With our partners implement the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, to reduce levels of teenage conception and to provide support for young people/young parents. This year's priority will be to appoint a member of staff dedicated to co-ordinating the Sex and Relationships agenda in schools, colleges and youth settings.

### 6.2.3 Ensuring people get the Social Services they need

We have a duty to provide appropriate services for people who have social care needs. These services need to have due regard for each individual's situation and individual needs.

Some of the relevant performance indicators show that we ensure that people get the social services they need by, for example:

	<u>Best 25%</u>	<u>Leicestershire</u>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Users/carers who said they got help quickly.	91%	94%	-	-
Percentage of items of equipment costing less than £1,000 delivered within three weeks.	94%	92%	94%	94%
Percentage of people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met	87%	86%	75%*	77%*

\* The definition of this indicator has changed since 2000/01, so the figure shown does not present a strict like-for-like comparison with that for 2000/01.

Progress on 2001/02 commitments:

- Work on the single assessment process for older people has begun.
- All cases of children on the Child Protection Register are being reviewed within timescales.

During 2002/03, we will:

- Implement the recommendations of our best value review of services to people with learning disabilities to shape services in line with the proposals set out in the National Strategy 'Valuing People'. The Review Panel will present its findings in April 2002 and they will be considered by the Council early in 2002/03
- Assume new responsibilities for an additional 500 people in residential and nursing homes, who have preserved rights to Income Support, and begin a programme to assess their needs
- Continue to develop the framework to support people with mental ill-health or disabilities in a working environment as part of the 'Welfare to Work' initiative for people with disabilities
- Expand opportunities for people to receive Direct Payments to purchase their own care services. We have included an additional £100,000 in the Council's budget for 2002/03 to support this. We also aim to increase take up of Independent Living Fund payments.

#### 6.2.4 Protecting People from Harm

We have a vital role to play in protecting people from harm, including responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.

The key performance indicators appear to show we are achieving this objective, for example:

	<u>Best 25%</u>	<u>Leicestershire</u>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Inspection of Residential Homes for Adults and Children	100%	100%	100%	*
Percentage of cases of children on the child protection register reviewed	95.6%	91.7%	100%	100%
Re-registrations on the child protection register	10%	12%	11%	10%

\* In April 2002 the National Commission for Care Standards will assume responsibility from the County Council for registration and inspection of care homes.



Progress on 2001/02 commitments:

- Regular review and careful planning of cases has ensured that prompt action is taken to safeguard children considered to be at risk.

During 2002/03, we will:

- Implement the multi-agency policy and procedures jointly developed by Leicestershire, Rutland and Leicester City Social Services, Leicestershire Police, Health, voluntary and private sectors to enable agencies to assist vulnerable adults.
- Establish clear protocols to support our effective working relationship with the local Commission for Care Standards, which will assume responsibility for regulating care homes and domiciliary care services during 2002.

### 6.2.5 High Quality and Cost Effective Services

We aim to provide high quality services at reasonable cost.

Key performance indicators that illustrate our performance on this objective are, for example:

	<u>Best 25%</u>	<u>Leicestershire</u>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Unit cost per week of residential and nursing care for older people	£316	£316	£323	£339
Costs of services for children looked after	£477	£578	£610	£620
Unit cost of home care for adults	£11.06	£10.80	£10.60	£10.93

Progress on 2001/02 commitments:

- Our unit costs for services to adults are good, but our costs for services to children looked after are high. We are taking steps to address this and during 2001/02 we have opened a residential home for boys in the north of the county and contracted with an independent provider for two new small homes for girls.

During 2002/03, we will:

- Implement the outcome of our review of the provision of residential care for children. We propose to replace the Blaby Children's Home and have included £350,000 in the capital programme for 2002/03 and 2003/04 to support these improvements
- Take steps to ensure that the authority's residential homes for disabled adults and older people meet the new care standards, which come into effect in April 2002. Some homes would require significant expenditure to bring up to the new standards
- Support quality improvements in community care services by responding to the cost pressures faced by independent providers of residential, nursing and home care services. We have included £1.6m additional funding in the budget for 2002/03 for this purpose.

### 6.2.6 Corporate Parenting

Children looked after by the County Council have a higher prevalence of homelessness, health problems, teenage pregnancy and offending behaviour. Most crucially, many looked after children and young people perform poorly in education, which in turn impacts on life chances.

We have recognised that children looked after by the authority perform poorly on most important indicators, for example:

	Best 25%	Leicestershire		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est 01/02	Target 02/03
The percentage of children looked after absent from school	12%	22%	19.7%	15%
Stability of placements of children looked after	N/A	19.3%	19%	16%
The percentage of young care leavers aged 16 or over with at least one GCSE at grade A*-C, or GNVQ	55%	42%	50%	75%

The Council has confirmed its commitment to address these issues through the development of a Corporate Parenting Policy and, more recently, an Action Plan setting out how the policy aims will be achieved. This Action Plan is wide-ranging and addresses activities that impact directly on the life chances of looked after children including:

- A "Caring about Reading" project that has been successful in encouraging an interest in reading.
- A "Teenagers to Work" project that provides work experience placements in the County Council and partner District/Borough Councils.
- Providing computers for looked after children to support education and learning.

### 6.2.7 National Health Service

The N.H.S., one of the Council's key partners in meeting health and care needs, is undergoing major organisational change. The key changes from April 2002 are:

- The Leicestershire Health Authority will be replaced by the Strategic Health Authority from April 2002 and require new working relationships.
- Four Primary Care Trusts will deliver primary care services in the county.
- An Integrated Health and Social Care Adult Mental Service for Leicestershire will be established from April 2002.

During 2002/03 we will:

- Develop new working relationships, including the role of the elected members of the Council, to provide users and carers with properly co-ordinated services
- Establish arrangements for the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Councils to assume lead responsibility for commissioning services for adults with learning disabilities

- Set up new commissioning arrangements for the provision of disability equipment in partnership with the N.H.S and Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Councils
- Prepare the new arrangements for N.H.S. Funded Nursing Care for people in nursing homes, to be implemented from April 2003
- Introduce arrangements for the Single Assessment Process for older people.

### **6.2.8 Drug Misuse**

The Leicestershire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) is a partnership between the N H.S., and the Councils of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. The DAAT's purpose is to further the implementation locally of the ten year national drugs strategy, 'Tackling Drugs To Build a Better Britain'. See also Chapter 11.

### **6.2.9 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS are a national priority for Health and Social Services. The aim of these services is to provide help, advice and support to adolescents who have mental health problems and their families.

The Joint Strategy on mental health services for children and their families in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and some of the CAMH services achieved the award of Beacon Status in 2001. The key priorities for 2002/03 are to:

- Maintain Child Behaviour Intervention Initiative (CBII) beyond the end of the pilot period
- Re-establish the Strategy Manager's post which will result in improved co-ordination between partners and better functioning of the working groups
- The Joint Steering Group will receive the independent research report on the health needs of 'Looked After Children' and use the findings to plan for service improvements.

### **6.2.10 Healthy Schools**

The National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) aims to help schools act as beacons for health promotion in their communities. The NHSS is the fundamental building block in addressing the health of young people in education settings and integrates other health-related matters, such as sports and school nursing, into one programme.

To tackle these issues we have developed, in partnership with parents, carers and the NHS, the Leicestershire Health Promoting School's Programme. By April 2002 half of Leicestershire's schools will be involved and the Programme will continue to be rolled out in 2002/03.

### **6.2.11 Pollution**

There is growing public awareness of the environmental issues affecting people's health including pollution in terms of air quality. Action Plans to address specific issues are being considered. The County Council and Leicester City Council are supporting the Leicestershire Child Cohort Study, which is investigating the environmental influences of air quality on child health in the County.

### **6.2.12 Healthy Employer**

As the largest employer in the County we take seriously our responsibilities to develop policies to promote a healthy workforce and to provide a safe working environment. During 2002/03:

- our Health and Safety Unit will continue to promote and consolidate practical measures to foster the health, safety and welfare at work of all County Council employees, contractors and general public where Council duties are undertaken; and
- our Employee Welfare Service will continue to provide a counselling service, promote positive health messages by arranging talks, health fayres, poster campaigns etc. and implement the County Council's Stress Initiative which aims to reduce the incidence of workplace stress.

### **6.2.13 Food Safety**

In 2001/02, we are likely to have inspected 27% of premises as part of the food standards inspection programme, which falls short of our target of 29%. Resources had to be diverted from this to deal with the foot and mouth disease outbreak. In 2002/03 we will carry out more than 1000 inspections and take over 1600 samples of food and animal feed to ensure local people are supplied with safe and wholesome food.

## **6.3 Consultations**

Consultation and public involvement is a crucial part of our work. In the Social Services Department a Communications and Consultation Officer has been recruited to provide a strategic and co-ordinated approach to developing improved communication, consultation, and information for all service users, the public, partner agencies and other stakeholders.

### **Consultation in 2001/02, and outcomes**

#### **Mental Health National Service Framework (NSF)**

In 2001, local people were consulted to enable everyone with an interest in Mental Health services to comment on how the NSF could be met over the next three years. The consultation included the proposals for the development of the Integrated Adult Mental Health Service.

The consultation was launched at a local conference in July. Over 300 formal responses were received from individuals, user and carer groups, voluntary organisations, three social services departments and all the health agencies.

The issues covered in the consultation included:

- Improved information about mental health illness for users and carers
- Services available in GP surgeries
- Work and training
- Serving the local community
- How specialist services are organised

The results from the consultations have been built into the Health Improvement Programme for Mental Health Services. The consultation also showed significant support for a new Integrated Mental Health organisation, which will be established from April 2002.

## **Learning Disabilities - Consultations on 'Valuing People' White Paper**

Valuing People, the new Strategy for learning disability services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is the most important guidance on the provision of learning disability services for 30 years. A number of public consultation events were held across the county during 2001 to raise awareness of the White Paper and gain feedback from users, carers, voluntary and statutory agencies about the future of services for people with Learning Disabilities in Leicestershire. Feedback from the events has been considered as part of the Best Value Review of Learning Disabilities.

This approach has informed:

- Formation of the Learning Disability Partnership
- Development of stronger working relationships between Health and Social Care in readiness for lead commissioning
- Development and ownership of a shared vision
- The development of local solutions to local needs in line with shared vision.
- Work on the development of locality groups identified in the Joint Investment Plan for Learning Disabilities.

## **Older People**

Consultation with Older people is a continuous process covering the range of health and social care services.

The consultations undertaken include:

- De Montfort University consulted service users and carers to evaluate a Home Care Dementia Pilot. They found that the quality of care for service users is very high and it keeps people longer in the community.
- Tillson House (Beacon Villa) provides respite care for people with dementia. Consultation has found that carers value the service greatly as it gives them a break from their caring responsibilities.
- Consultations have been undertaken with users and carers at residential homes and day centres for older people on current service development, national and local strategies and policies. Feedback was sought on current services and ways to improve them. Common themes from the consultations are being included in the future planning for residential and day services.
- Five multi-agency activity days were held across the county for older people as part of a listening exercise. The need to improve information on a range of services has been identified.
- The Older Persons Policy Board, which is part of the Health Improvement Programme group, received additional funding for consultations on an ongoing basis with priority given to advocacy services.

## **Supporting People**

Consultation events have been held with housing related support providers and statutory agencies in the county to raise awareness of the local Supporting People programme and gain feedback about on the development of 'Inclusive Fora' to consult on Supporting People services.

## **Food Standards Enforcement Plan**

A consultation exercise on the 2002/03 Food Standards Enforcement Plan took place in 2001. The results show that, in terms of priorities for the Trading Standards Service, food standards is ranked third out of nineteen different aspects of trading standards work included in the survey.

A similar exercise was conducted to discover how consumers, business and staff viewed different aspects of food standards and animal feed enforcement. There were fifteen aspects to be prioritised. The results show that food standards inspection is considered to be the most important aspect. Work concerned with chemical contaminants in food was ranked second and "Business Advice" third. "Chemical Additives" was ranked fifth after "Complaint and Enquiry Service" which was fourth. These results support the current resources provided for food standards enforcement work and in particular the level of inspection activity anticipated for 2002/03. When devising sampling programmes particular attention will be paid to enforcing controls on chemical contaminants and additives in food and food sources. Business Advice work will continue to form an integral part of food standards enforcement provided by the Trading Standards Service.

## **6.4 Key Partnerships**

### **6.4.1 Mental Health Integration Project**

The Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (providing mental health and learning disability services) will be established from April 2002. Adult Mental Health Services are to be provided on an integrated health and social care basis, with relevant Social Services staff being seconded during 2002 to the new organisation as soon as a partnership agreement is finalised and locality management arrangements are in place.

### **6.4.2 Learning Disabilities Partnership Board**

The newly formed multi-agency Learning Disabilities Partnership Board will be implementing the proposals outlined in the White Paper "Valuing people: A new strategy for Learning Disabilities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".

### **6.4.3 Supporting People**

Supporting People in Leicestershire is a working partnership of the County Council, the District Councils, Health and Probation to implement a new funding programme from April 2003. This offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment, which enables greater independence.

### **6.4.4 Leicestershire Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership**

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is newly formed as a result of our revision of the Joint Planning arrangements of Children in Need. The partnership will develop and maintain a coherent strategic overview of the planning of services for vulnerable children.

### **6.4.5 Sports Development Partnership**

Sport can improve health and fitness and enhance communication and social skills. Thus sport has an important role to play in meeting national health targets and improving the quality of life. As a provider of sports and recreation facilities in Leicestershire we believe everyone deserves to have access to the best sports opportunities. Consequently, we continue to work with Leicester City and Rutland County Council in developing the Sports Development Partnership.

#### **6.4.6 Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership**

This is a local partnership between Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Councils, the Police and the Health Authority, which seeks to provide a safer environment on the roads using education, enforcement and engineering to enable road users to travel in confidence.

#### **6.4.7 Leicestershire Care Online**

Leicestershire Care Online is a partnership between the County Council, Harborough District Council, Melton, Rutland and Harborough Primary Care Trust, Loughborough University, South Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Service, Mosaic (Shaping Disability Services) and Mass Mitec, an information, communications, technology company. The partnership has received funding from the Government's Invest to Save Budget to pilot the use of information and communications technology to improve access and delivery of services to disabled adults and older people using the Internet. The pilot will be evaluated in early 2003 to determine whether and how the use of these new technologies may be rolled out across the County.

#### **6.4.8 Tobacco Control Strategy**

The Tobacco Control Strategy is a partnership between Leicestershire Health Authority, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council, District Councils, Leicestershire Constabulary and various voluntary organisations. The aims of the Strategy are to:

- reduce smoking uptake (principally in teenagers)
- reduce tobacco consumption
- promote smoking cessation
- protect non-smokers from environmental tobacco smoke.

Specific proposals include the development of smoke free environments and initiatives as part of the Healthy Schools initiative (see above). In 2002/03 we will implement an advisory and enforcement programme to ensure retailers comply with their legal obligations on underage sales of tobacco products.

#### **6.4.9 Transport Strategy**

The Local Transport Plan for 2001-2006, includes measures to:

- Improve the road network to concentrate traffic movements and growth on to the safest and most suitable roads;
- Improve personal security and road safety through a programme of local safety schemes, road safety education and speed management
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 40% by 2010 compared with the 1994-98 average
- Reduce the slight accident rate by 10% over the same period
- Increase the number of schools committed to implementation of a travel plan
- Increase the amount of walking and cycling to improve people's health.

### **6.5 Reviews**

#### **6.5.1 Joint Review**

During 2000/01 the Joint Review Team from the Social Services Inspectorate and Audit Commission inspected the Authority's performance of its Social Services functions. The Review concluded that:

*'Leicestershire Social Services is serving most people well. While there are some services in need of improvement, in the main it provides well-targeted community-based services, which meet peoples' needs. The Authority's prospects for improvement are promising because of the significant progress in introducing management systems over the last few years.*

*Leicestershire is successful in supporting a high proportion of adults and children within the community rather than in institutional settings. It has relatively low numbers of children looked after and a high proportion of those who are cared for by the Authority are in foster care. This is all being achieved from a relatively low level of expenditure. However, the standard of care provided in two of the Authority's children's homes needs significant improvement (a point noted by the Authority prior to this Review). Services for those with learning difficulties are also in need of modernisation'.*

In response to the findings of the Joint Review the Authority prepared and implemented an Action Plan during 2001/02. The implementation of the Action Plan was monitored by Social Services Inspectorate and District Audit, on behalf of the Joint Review Team, and resulted in January 2002, in the Joint Review Team "signing off" our Review, formally ending the Joint Review of Leicestershire. In doing so, they noted:

*"Your Department's strong commitment to implementing the recommendations from the Joint Review. It became clear that good progress has been made in several areas in the ten months since the publication of the Joint Review Report and that plans were in place to achieve further improvements. I am happy to confirm our shared view that commendable progress has been made".*

*We are aware that Council Members and staff in Leicestershire worked particularly hard to prepare for and participate in the Joint Review and I would like to underline our appreciation of this. We are encouraged by the fact that the findings of the Joint Review have been translated into an ambitious medium term plan and do wish you all the best in your ongoing work to implement this."*

## **Best Value Reviews**

### **6.5.2 Domiciliary Care**

The County Council approved the review recommendations in September 2001 and the Improvement Plan is now underway. The Best Value Inspectorate undertook an inspection of the review in February 2001 and the judgement was that Leicestershire offers good services that are likely to improve.

The review recommended the development of a new Strategic Framework for the services concerned and in particular that:

- The meals service be externalised to include the development of a new frozen meals service
- The development and modernisation of Luncheon Clubs
- The market testing of the laundry service
- A phased approach to home care provision with further market testing in the future.

### **6.5.3 Learning Disability Services**

This review is focussing on day and accommodation/residential services for people with learning disabilities and the provision of respite services for carers. The review is being implemented within the context of the Government's vision for the future of Learning Disability services as presented in "Valuing People". It will report its findings in April 2002.



#### **6.5.4 Residential Services for Older People**

The Council acknowledged that the future level of provision of residential care for older people would be influenced by the Government's final decision on care standards and the effects of other factors such as Single Status, National Minimum Wage and the Government's future plans for the residential allowance. We are exploring options to address these issues in 2002/03.

## Chapter 7

### Improving our Transport System

An effective transport system is vital for all Leicestershire residents and its businesses. The increasing need and opportunity to travel has many implications and costs as well as bringing substantial benefits. Our two Local Transport Plans set out how we intend to ensure that transport infrastructure and services are improved, including co-ordination between different modes of transport (road, rail, bus, cycling, walking) for the period up to 2006. This will be done in ways that seek to enhance the environment and provide appropriate access for Leicestershire people to facilities and services in a safe and convenient manner. The outcomes will bring about a continuous improvement in sustainability and people's quality of life, improve integration both within and between travel modes and ensure that the transport system supports the wider objectives of the County Council such as economic development, health, education and crime and disorder. A key role for the service is to underpin these relationships and seek to deliver transport services in a way which recognises the diversity of needs of the people of Leicestershire.

#### 7.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services provided to meet this objective are shown in Chapter 15.

#### 7.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

##### 7.2.1 The Local Transport Plans

Our strategies for improving the transport system are contained in the Leicestershire and Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plans (LTPs) of July 2000. These plans cover the five year period to 2006 and together with the Annual Progress Reports (APRs) are the basis for demonstrating our achievements each year. Our first APRs were submitted to the Government in August 2001 and show our achievements for the year 2000/01, which was the first year of the provisional LTPs submitted in July 1999.

As well as reporting progress, the APRs describe how the LTPs are compatible with a number of post LTP initiatives including the Government's 10 year plan for transport published in July 2000. Whilst the Government has indicated its provisional allocation of funds for transport improvements and road and bridge structural maintenance for the 5 year period of the LTPs, the August 2001 APRs were also bid documents to confirm the Government's capital funding for 2002/03.

The Government settlement following publication of the LTPs was very favourable and the County Council's funding for 2001/02 of £17.2 million was nearly a threefold increase on that for 2000/01. Three rural bypasses were approved, or provisionally approved, for construction during the LTP period. This was more than any other authority. Despite this, the Government has assessed our transportation performance as 'below average'. Like many authorities we have had difficulty in recruiting the additional staff necessary to carry out the increased work programme.

The Government considered the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan to be a sound document which had improved significantly on the provisional LTP and that there were appropriate linkages between plan objectives, measures and targets. It also considered the strategy soundly based. However, in addition to more minor comments, it felt that the Leicestershire APR did not provide sufficient evidence of improvement from that base or sufficient evidence of the benefits that the strategy was achieving on the ground.

## Key Priorities for 2002/03

The key priority for 2002/03 will be to ensure that we improve on our overall transportation performance and that the improvement is reflected in the July 2002 APRs. Particular attention will be paid to addressing the Government's comments on the Leicestershire LTP and ensuring that the work being done provides demonstrable improvements to the transport system on the ground and that the targets that we seek to achieve are appropriate and challenging.

### 7.2.2 Development of Public Transport

Bus, rail and community transport services.

The provision of reliable, frequent and good quality public transport is vital if we are to increase passenger journeys by bus and train. We are committed to playing our part in improving them to give better access to employment and services particularly for those without access to a car. We work with others to achieve this and to help the elderly, disabled and unemployed people with the cost of travel.

In 2000/01 the accent has been on improving the quality of our service delivery, but also to:

- improve management information systems and work to control the adverse impact of contract price rises;
- plan the introduction of new services for 'Rural Bus Challenge' project which won the highest ever national award of £1.6million;
- develop Quality Bus Partnership projects; and
- launch two new Rural Transport Partnerships.

In terms of performance:

- satisfaction with bus services is in the best-performing 25% of authorities;
- the subsidy cost per passenger journey for subsidised bus services is below the average but increasing quickly;
- the supply market for bus services in Leicestershire remains strong but there is a continuing major problem with steep rises in the market price;
- satisfaction with local bus services at 65% is in the best 25% nationally and for contract bus services is even higher at 79%;
- satisfaction with bus passenger information at 69% is at the national average, but for contract bus services is only 59%; and
- there remains a high level of user satisfaction with Council-funded services for mobility-impaired people.

Performance Indicator	Best 25% 00/01	Actual 00/01	
		Leicestershire	Leicestershire County Council Supported Services
Percentage of users satisfied with local bus services	62%	65%	79%
Percentage of users satisfied with local provision of public transport information	70%	69%	59%

## Key Priorities for 2002/03

Bus, rail and community transport services were the subject of a Best Value Review ending in November 2001 (see section 7.5.2)

Outcomes from it which will be the key priorities for 2002/03 include:

- a new network of hourly bus services reaching about 95% of people;
- new community transport services to improve transport for the more rural areas;
- a new bus passenger information strategy to deliver timetable information more effectively;
- expanded accessible transport services for people with mobility impairments, to give countywide coverage;
- changes to improve the quality of the bus services operated on the Council's behalf and to ensure they are provided cost-effectively;
- a proposal to pass support for the Leicester to Loughborough local rail service to the Strategic Rail Authority.

### **Mainstream home to school transport**

During 2001/02 work has continued to reduce the impact of increases in the market price for transport and to improve the operational quality of school buses and combat problems of pupil misbehaviour. However, whilst the loading efficiency of school buses has increased from 79.8% to 87.1% from 1999/00 to 2000/01, the cost of school transport per pupil per day has also increased from £1.73 to £1.90.

## Key Priorities for 2002/03

In 2002/03 the priority will remain to reduce the cost and increase the quality of school transport. In addition we will review our office administrative procedures and seek to improve our measurement of customer views of the service.

### **Concessionary Travel**

Significant changes to the concessionary travel scheme were introduced in May 2002. District Councils now have the responsibility to fund concessions to a nationally defined minimum level but the County Council's continued funding will ensure a co-ordinated countywide scheme is maintained.

Much time and effort has been put in to ensure that the revised scheme is introduced with least disruption to customers, and to prepare for further development to improve the administration of the scheme. This work will continue into 2002/03.

### **7.2.3 Transport Improvements and Traffic Management**

A greatly expanded programme of transport improvements is being undertaken which continues to give priority to road safety and improvements for public transport, cycling and walking. We have taken a number of steps to ensure its delivery in the face of a shortage of skilled staff in this area of work resulting from the scale of the local and national programmes. This has included the use of consultants to complement the Council's own staff resources and the development of a more streamlined process for construction procurement. Although funds for the 2001/02 improvements programme were provided over a two year period in recognition of the difficulties which would be experienced in delivering the programme in one year, 70% of the programme was completed by the end of the financial year and development of many of the remaining schemes is at an advanced stage. The Ashby Bypass opened to traffic in March 2002 and this has brought much needed relief to the centre of Ashby. It will also allow further improvements to take place in and around the town centre. Preparatory design work has continued on the Rearsby and Earl Shilton Bypasses.

Programmes of traffic management and traffic control operations continue to seek to achieve the most efficient use from the highway network. Our performance for the percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people continues to improve (83% in 2001/02) and our target is to reach the performance of the best-performing 25% of authorities by 2002/03.

#### Key Priorities for 2002/03

With the introduction of the “Single Capital Pot” the Government has unfortunately removed the flexibility to carry over expenditure into the following financial year. A key priority in 2002/03 must therefore be to deliver the remainder of the 2001/02 programme and the entire 2002/03 programme within the financial year 2002/03. This will be a major challenge given the continued shortages of skilled staff. Design work will continue on both the Rearsby and Earl Shilton Bypasses and on a programme of town centre improvements, focusing initially on Ashby and Hinckley town centres.

#### 7.2.4 Road Safety

Improved road safety is a key priority in our Medium Term Corporate Strategy. A multi-agency approach is adopted through the Leicestershire Road Safety Partnership, in which the Council works closely with the Police, the Health Authority, the Highways Agency and the Councils for Leicester City and Rutland. This Partnership has helped the various agencies involved in casualty reduction to work more closely together through a combination of engineering, education and enforcement. Local Safety Schemes and other accident remedial measures are targeted at locations where physical improvements to the highway can help reduce accidents. Road safety education training and publicity is an integral part of the overall approach, working with all sections of the community, particularly children. To provide a focus for our road safety work we have reviewed and updated our Road Safety Plan.

Although we are already in the best performing 25% of authorities with respect to the low number of road casualties, a more challenging target than the Government’s has been set to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads, particularly children.

Performance Indicator	<u>Best 25%</u>	<u>Leicestershire</u>		
	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Estimated 01/02	Target 02/03
Number of road casualties per 100,000 population - killed/ seriously injured	66.9	45.2	45.9	40
Number of road casualties per 100,000 population - slight injuries	429.2	381.7	382.4	377.9

#### Key Priorities for 2002/03

The key priority for 2002/03 will be to continue to focus our efforts on the challenging road safety targets we have set. Greater use of road safety cameras is expected to reduce speed related casualties and a pilot programme of 20m.p.h. zones outside schools will be implemented and assessed to see whether a more comprehensive programme should be pursued.

#### 7.2.5 Travel Management

Through road safety education, training and publicity, the promotion of travel plans and other TravelWise initiatives, we are working towards reducing dependence on the car. This starts with children at the age of 5 and 6 with the First Steps scheme – practical training in pedestrian skills, and is developed through regular Walk to School days, and cycle training for children in their final year of primary school.

A school Travel Plan co-ordinator works with schools across the county to encourage more sustainable travel. Around 50 schools have now made a commitment to adopt a School Travel Plan. This is a promising start, but will require sustained effort to support existing initiatives, extend the scheme to more schools, and to ensure that plans result in reduced car travel. We are also committed to support the development and implementation of Employer Travel Plans, including one for County Hall. So far some 19 major employers have made a commitment to adopting a Travel Plan, which is in line with the County Council's target.

Performance Indicator	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Targets		
			02/03	03/04	04/05
The percentage of Year 6 children (10/11 year-olds) receiving cycle training	50%	56%	57%	58%	60%
The number of schools committed to implementation of a travel plan	37	50	80	110	140
Number of major employers committed to the implementation of a travel plan	13	19	23	30	36

#### Key Priorities for 2002/03

The formal adoption of an effective Employer Travel Plan for County Hall will be a key priority for 2002/03. There will also be an increasing emphasis on turning the commitments of schools and employers to adopt travel plans into tangible benefits on the ground. Many substantial pedestrian, cycling and road safety improvement schemes are now being carried out on the routes to schools. In 2002/03 and beyond there will be a greater focus on seeking commitments from those schools, and those associated with them, to implementing comprehensive and effective travel plans.

#### 7.2.6 Maintenance

During 2001/02, programmes of safety, environmental, street lighting, winter and structural maintenance have continued. The revenue budget for structural maintenance has been targeted towards keeping the highways safe for the use of pedestrians and vehicles. The capital budget for structural maintenance rose by approximately £4.4M over the 2000/01 allocation to approximately £6.5M. These funds have been targeted towards halting the decline in the state of the highway network. Programmes of bridge inspection, assessment and maintenance have been completed.

In 2000/01 we repaired or made safe within 24 hours 90% of dangerous damage to roads and pavements. This performance was below average (95%), but we have set targets to raise performance to 97% by 2003/04, which will match the current performance of the best performing 25% of authorities.

There are a number of other areas where our comparative performance appears to be poor:

- high cost of highway maintenance per 100km travelled by a vehicle on principal roads (25% higher than average) in 2000/01;
- 22% of principal roads with negative residual life (average 7%); and
- 10% of non-principal roads with significant defects (average 5%).

The increased structural maintenance programme will help tackle these problems. The Government has set targets to arrest the deterioration in local road conditions by 2004 and eliminate the backlog by 2010. The Council is on target to achieve this on the principal road network and to arrest the decline on the non-principal road network. However, funding provision from Government for maintenance beyond 2002/03 is uncertain and therefore no targets have yet been set with respect to eliminating the backlog on the non-principal road network.

Although DTLR has described our road maintenance strategies as excellent and meeting all the requirements of a good LTP we are seeking to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our maintenance work by introducing a Best Value pilot project, which combines the Divisional and DLO staff at Ashby. We are also currently completing a review of highway network management which, amongst other things, has been investigating maintenance provision with a view to developing further proposals for improvement.

Good progress has been made on the implementation of the Highways Maintenance Review recommendations. Key achievements have been:

- achievement of the enlarged structural maintenance capital programme;
- completion of the bridge inspection programme;
- completion of the bridge assessment programme for 1.5 – 1.8m span structures;
- development of a priority ranking system for bridge maintenance;
- completion of the 2001/02 community safety lighting programme;
- tendering and re-award of the contract for the supply of energy for street lighting and illuminated signs with 100% 'green' energy, commencing 1 August 2002; and
- further progress on the implementation of the Highways Maintenance Review recommendations in respect of:-
  - optimising winter salting routes
  - installation of an ice prediction system
  - production of winter maintenance thermal mapping
  - continuation of the gully emptying and street cleansing pilot and the public liability claims (insurance claims) trial
  - the evaluation of potential options for a highways management system
  - the continued development of the street lighting management system.

#### Key Priorities for 2002/03

In addition to the normal highways maintenance programmes, there will again be a large programme of structural maintenance capital works. This should enable us to continue to tackle the backlog of maintenance of both the principal and non-principal networks and bridges maintenance. Further progress will be made towards completion of the Highways Maintenance Review Implementation Plan.

Key priorities will be:

- achievement of the structural maintenance capital programme;
- implementation of the priority ranking system for bridge maintenance;
- completion of all outstanding bridge assessments;
- completion of the bridge strengthening programme;
- a continuing programme of street lighting column replacements;
- achievement of revised winter maintenance salting operations for the 2002/03 winter;
- purchase, introduction, and development of the highways management system modules; and
- implementation of the outstanding actions from the Highways Maintenance Review which are to progress the gully emptying and street cleansing trial, and the public liability claims trial, and to complete the update of the County's current policies and standards (the Maintenance Code of Practice).

## 7.3 Consultation

### 7.3.1 Highways Network Management

A major consultation exercise was undertaken in connection with the Highway Network Management Best Value Review (see Section 7.5). This involved seeking views on all aspects of the service to inform the review. It comprised:

- stakeholder meetings;
- community meetings;
- a MORI user survey;
- surveys of Parish Councils;
- meetings with other related organisations;
- consultation and involvement of District Councils; and
- employee consultations.

### **7.3.2 Public Transport**

A similar exercise was undertaken in connection with the Public Transport Best Value Review. This involved seeking views on all aspects of bus, rail and community transport services. It comprised:

- questionnaire surveys of stakeholder groups;
- discussion groups involving:
  - users and non-users of local bus, rail and accessible transport services;
  - major local bus companies;
  - the Quality Bus Partnerships;
  - the operators of accessible transport services;
  - regional bus operators;
- attitude surveys for the national BVPIs.

### **7.3.3 Other Improvement Schemes**

In addition to the comprehensive public consultation associated with the many individual schemes within the transport improvements programme, including the Hinckley Town Centre Improvements, a public consultation in Ashby sought the views of over 1,000 people to gauge public opinion on what should happen in the town centre once the Bypass is open to traffic.

Public consultation also took place on the development of a preferred scheme for the Earl Shilton Bypass and the planning application for the Rearsby Bypass.

#### **Key Priorities for 2002/03**

In 2002/03 it is anticipated that further public consultation will take place in Hinckley and Ashby as the town centre improvements are developed and further stakeholders views will be sought on the implementation of the Local Transport Plans and the Public Transport Best Value Review.

## **7.4 Key Partnerships**

There are many providers and stakeholders involved in or affected by transport services. To achieve maximum benefit from the significant investment that is now taking place, it is therefore essential that services are delivered in partnership with those service providers and stakeholders.

The following key partnerships operate in Leicestershire:

- the Central Leicestershire, Loughborough and Shepshed, and Hinckley Quality Bus Partnerships;
- the East/West Leicestershire Rural Transport Partnership;
- the Transport Business Partnership;
- the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership;
- the Freight Quality Partnership;
- the Central Leicestershire Transportation Joint Members Steering Group;
- the Hinckley and Ashby Town Centre Joint Members Steering Groups; and



- the Harborough Highways Partnership.

## **7.5 Major Reviews**

### **7.5.1 Highways Network Management Review**

This review covers all major aspects of the management operation of the highway network including:

- transportation policy and strategy;
- development of the highway network;
- travel and road safety management;
- highway maintenance and administration;
- construction and maintenance work;
- highways development control; and
- street lighting.

The review looked at a range of options across a wide range of issues. Amongst the most significant were options for :

- policy and strategy;
- improving user focus and satisfaction;
- organisation and management;
- business management;
- working with District and local Councils;
- service design and priorities;
- procurement.

It is anticipated that the inspection will take place in Spring 2002, and the County Council will make a final decision on the review in Summer 2002.

### **7.5.2 Public Transport Best Value Review**

This review covered support for bus and rail services and community transport. Following extensive consultation in late summer 2001, the review looked at a range of options across a wide range of issues covering service policy, competitiveness and quality. Amongst the most significant were:

- policies for the support of local bus services;
- ways of improving the quality of both commercially run and contract local bus services;
- ways of better controlling the price of local bus service contracts;
- policy for the provision of bus passenger information;
- policy for providing countywide coverage of accessible transport services; and
- ways of improving the cost competitiveness of service administration.

Customer views of the service were generally favourable, though confusion is caused by the fact that most bus services are commercially operated and therefore outside the control of the Council. The proposals in the Panel's final report were generally welcomed.

An implementation plan, with targets, has been agreed (key elements of this are described in Section 7.2.2). Implementation will take place over a two and a half year period and will require extensive further local consultation as services change.

## Chapter 8

### Caring for our Environment

Leicestershire is an attractive place in which to live and work. We are committed to ensuring that the best of Leicestershire and its heritage is protected and enhanced and that the remainder is improved. This will be done through:-

- Ensuring that investment in new development occurs mainly within our urban areas and that it brings with it associated improvements to the local environment;
- Promoting the reduction in consumption of non-renewable resources;
- Improving, promoting and protecting the natural and historic environment in both our urban and rural areas;
- Promoting opportunities to understand and enjoy the environment;
- Continuing to support the National Forest and other woodland areas;
- Moving towards sustainable development and adopting an approach to service delivery that integrates environmental, social and economic concerns.
- Maintaining the biodiversity of the County.

#### 8.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services currently provided in support of this objective are set out in Chapter 15 of this Plan.

#### 8.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

We recognise that the protection and enhancement of the environment cannot be undertaken successfully in isolation. The quality of our environment is directly related to the decisions we make on transport and development in particular. In its turn, the quality of the environment has an impact on health, welfare, crime and private investment decisions. We need to ensure that we respect these relationships in implementing our policies and that others also understand their implications.

##### 8.2.1 Strategic Planning

Work has continued towards the adoption of the revised Structure Plan. Working jointly with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council, the Plan was placed on deposit in May 2000 - and the Panel Report was received in October 2001.

The Plan, covering Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland will seek to balance the provision of new dwellings and land for employment with the need to move towards sustainable lifestyles. It seeks to restrict as far as possible the development of greenfield sites and to encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the vitality and viability of both urban and rural communities. It aims to promote sustainable living through improving people's health and their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

The Panel Report broadly endorsed the aims and objectives of the Plan and supported the overall approach to securing a sustainable pattern of development across the Plan area. There were a number of issues on which the Panel disagreed with the approach proposed by the three Structure Plan authorities, notably in the amount and distribution of housing provision. The three authorities are working together to prepare Proposed Modifications to the Plan, taking into account the Panel's recommendations and the final Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands.

We have continued to support the work of the East Midlands Regional Local Government Assembly (EMRLGA) Planning Forum, commenting on the Secretary of State's draft Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). We have also assisted in the preparation of an RPG-related work programme. The final RPG was published by the Secretary of State in January 2002.

In order to implement Structure Plan policies, we have worked with District Councils and other service providers to publish a statement of developer contributions. This sets out the financial contributions and other actions that developers may be required to make before their development proposals can go ahead. The statement was approved as interim planning guidance by the County Council and published in Spring 2001. It will be subject to endorsement by all Leicestershire local authorities. It is intended that it be adopted as supplementary planning guidance in Structure and Local Plans, and further reviewed in 2003.

The Waste Local Plan, being prepared jointly with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council, seeks to ensure that, through land use planning, provision is made in the most sustainable way practically possible for the treatment of all wastes arising in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Following the Public Local Inquiry in 1999, the Inspector's report was received in 2000 and it had been intended to adopt the plan in 2001, following its statutory deposit period. However, staff shortages have led to a delay in the Plan's adoption until 2002.

We are also a member of the Regional Technical Advisory Body on Waste. It is responsible for the provision of advice to the Regional Assembly who will be adopting a Regional Waste Strategy in 2002.

Similarly, the Minerals Local Plan is in need of revision. A draft monitoring report has been prepared but further progress has been hampered by staff shortages and delays in the review by Government of Minerals Planning Guidance Note No. 6 which deals with the demand for aggregates. This will set regional targets which will then need to be disaggregated by the East Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party, of which we are members. Government intends to review the role of all Planning Guidance notes as part of its review of the planning system. It has indicated that MPG6 will be an early candidate.

### **8.2.2 Strategic Planning – Priorities for 2002/3**

We aim to consult on proposed modifications to the Structure Plan in summer 2002 and move as quickly as possible to adopting the Plan thereafter. Updating the Developer Contributions Statement and improving mechanisms for its implementation and monitoring will be an additional priority. At the Regional level, the Secretary of State's approval of the RPG requires a number of areas of work to be reviewed and submitted within the year.

The Waste Local Plan will be adopted in 2002. The roll-forward of the Minerals Plan is of high priority and preparation of the draft strategy together with public consultation on it is programmed for 2002.

The DTLR published a Green Paper on planning entitled "Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change" late in 2001. It proposes radical changes for the delivery of the planning function, including the abolition of Structure Plans and Local Plans, (with the exceptions of Minerals and Waste Plans), and their replacement by Local Development Frameworks. These would be prepared alongside Community Strategies to consist of a statement of core policies, detailed action plans where change is imminent, and topic plans. It also seeks to strengthen arrangements for regional planning by providing a strategic policy framework, through the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies, within which local development frameworks and Local Transport Plans can be prepared. Although the necessary legislation to bring these proposals into effect might not be in place until 2004, we will need to ensure that the County Council makes a contribution to the ongoing debate about the future of the planning system.

### 8.2.3 Environmental Initiatives

We have both mandatory and discretionary powers for the promotion, protection and enhancement of the environment.

As minerals and waste planning authority, we determine all planning applications relating to minerals extraction and waste management. In so doing, we continue to seek increasingly stringent standards of environmental protection (thus minimising pollution) whilst recognising that minerals resources are required to meet the needs of new development. Consequently, as one of the major sources of minerals in the UK, the County's environment is constantly under pressure.

We undertake an extensive range of environmental improvement initiatives. The Shire Grants scheme, launched in 2000, together with other environmental enhancement initiatives, has facilitated environmental improvements for communities in both urban and rural areas. A contributory factor to the success of the programmes has been the continuing support of the East Midlands Development Agency, especially to the derelict land reclamation programme. Over £1.8m was made available in 2001/02, compared to £950,000 in 2000/01. The Agency's support has been vital in assisting us with the ongoing reconstruction of the Ashby Canal, northwards from the Moira Furnace to Conkers, the National Forest Discovery Centre. This was completed at the end of 2001.

We recognise that environmental improvement programmes require local commitment and support for success. The Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project, our tree warden scheme and the successful Shire Grant scheme all seek to involve local communities in a greater awareness of their environment.

During 2000 the future of the Landmark North West Countryside Management Project was reviewed. In operation for over ten years, it has made a major contribution to the improvement of the former areas of mining decline in north western Leicestershire. It was decided that the area no longer requires the highest priority action and could be integrated into the overall countywide environmental enhancement programmes. Accordingly, and in support of the Shire Grants Scheme, it was decided to transfer its staff resources to give support countywide to communities seeking to develop environmental projects.

The Shire Grants programme by January 2002 has already committed over £418,000 of grant aid to over 250 projects countywide. It is estimated that the total value of the projects thus assisted is £5.6m. It was enlarged in April 2001 to embrace a range of existing environmental grants schemes.

Our speed of decisions on environmental grant applications was not good in 2001/02.

PI Code	PI Description	Target 01/02	Est 01/02
LE5	% of decisions on completed grant applications within 3 months	93%	75%

This arose as a consequence of the popularity of the scheme, the carryover of Shire Grants applications from the previous year and the consequential pressure on staff resources. The appointment of a Community Environment Officer in November 2001 and additional financial resources should lead to a marked improvement.

The Partnership for Environmental Protection, formed by the County Council in 1999 to work with the District and Borough Councils, regional and national agencies in support of the provision of the County Ecology, Geology and Archaeology Services, is working to provide timely information to

partners, improve access to data, collections and related records and information. Our role, as set out in the framework document, is to develop and maintain the county biological and geological record centre and Sites and Monuments Record (archaeology). The Record is enhanced by the active participation of amateur archaeologists through the Community Archaeology Initiative.

We have continued to work in partnership with the National Biodiversity Network, which is working to improve biological data exchange across the whole country for the benefit of all. This year we have worked on the National Gateway Project which is developing easier access to records for those that need them. We also maintain museum collections which serve as an important resource in terms of material evidence to support the record centres.

The third year of implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan has shown continued good progress in reversing earlier losses. In addition, with partners, we have secured stable funding for the Project Officer. We also co-ordinate the Local Wildlife Site System which identifies important sites both for protection under planning policies and for the setting of priorities for the provision of advice and grant aid to landowners.

The Historic Building Grants were incorporated into the Shire Grant scheme in 2001/02 and offer grants for essential repairs to listed buildings and some historic unlisted buildings, which lie within conservation areas. During the year 95 applications were received for grant assistance for a wide range of repairs from stonework and repointing through to reroofing and timber work. The offer of grant assistance, usually 12.5% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of £2,000 (certain categories of Buildings at Risk, may be increased to £5,000) is subject to the correct procedures and materials being used. This is in order to protect the long-term survival of the building concerned. A budget of £99,140 has enabled a total value of repairs in excess of £2m to be undertaken.

The Lutterworth Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) is a three-year partnership launched in November 2000 between the County Council, English Heritage and Harborough District Council that seeks to fund the preservation and improvement of the historic fabric of selected buildings within the town centre conservation area. The scheme aims to promote economic regeneration and improve the image of the area by providing financial and technical support for local businesses and community facilities. In 2001/02 20 schemes received grant aid from a total contribution of £40,000 from all the partners (Leicestershire County Council £10,000) that generated work to the value of £125,000. In January 2002 we, together with a range of partners, launched a Rural Centres Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme targeted at the rural centres set out in the Leicestershire Rural Strategy.

We have worked with North West Leicestershire District Council to conserve the remains of Grace Dieu Priory. We and our partners have successfully obtained a Heritage Lottery Fund award for this work, which will commence in 2002/03. We have also advised district authorities on the management of land set aside for conservation.

The number of volunteers in environmental work far exceeded our target for 2000/01 and is expected to increase further through involvement in the Young Archaeologists Scheme Wildlife Watch, Rock Watch, countryside management, tree warden and other local environment schemes.

The Country Parks Service relies on over 50 volunteers to help carry out environmental work on its parks, to increase the range of biodiversity. Examples are the restoration of the heathland at Beacon Hill Country Park, clearing back invasive species and the creation of a wildflower meadow.

West Beacon Fields has recently been changed from intensively farmed pasture to woodland and heathland. This included the creation of a hibernaculum to improve the habitat for reptiles.

The Country Parks Service also works closely with Brooksby College, giving students valuable experience on environmental projects at Watermead, Burrough Hill, Bosworth Battlefield and Beacon Hill Parks.

It is one of the aims of the Country Parks Service to increase the range of experiences for all visitors, through the encouragement of different types of natural habitats. For example:-

- Access and sensory planting at Watermead has been improved for people with disabilities;
- Reed bed and wet woodland management has also taken place at Watermead;
- Countryside Stewardship schemes have been approved at Burrough Hill and Beacon Hill;
- Volunteer field walking days have been and continue to be organised at Bosworth Battlefield;
- A new Wildlife Watch Group has been set up at Bosworth, working with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The Group has come runner-up in the Wildlife Trusts' Eastern Region.

The Service has been given an Institute of Parks Recreation and Administration Green Flag Award for Beacon Hill Country Park in recognition of the high standard of its management.

We are statutorily responsible for the maintenance of the definitive Rights of Way Map and the management and maintenance of the Rights of Way Network. Although the Map is up to date, work still continues to put the network in good order, a challenge that is becoming increasingly difficult to meet within existing resource constraints. The intention to put 90% of the Rights of Way Network in good order by 2004, may not be achieved, notwithstanding the recently published view of the Countryside Agency that nationally 95% should be in good order as soon as possible. However, the ease of use of the majority of footpaths is good. In 2000/01 we were in the best-performing 25% of authorities with 83% of the rights of way being easy to use.

Although our comparative performance appears poor with regard to the proportion of rights of way which were signposted where they leave a road (51% as against an average of 73%), this national indicator includes rights of way in urban areas where signposting is not necessary. In rural areas, 70% of rights of way are currently signposted and we plan to raise this to 87% by 2006/07.

	Best 25% 00/01	Leicestershire		
		Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
The percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way that were easy to use by members of the public.	83%	83%	80%	85%
The percentage of links of footpaths and other rights of way in rural areas which were signposted where they leave a road.			70%	75%

#### 8.2.4 Environmental Initiatives – Priorities for 2002/03

We intend to build on the success of the Shire Grants scheme by integrating a number of other community grants schemes - some not directly environment-based - and have brought them into the overall format of the Shire Grants programme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002. We have also taken steps to ensure that more support is given to applicants in the preparation of schemes.

Continuing to work with *emda* and other partners, particularly through the Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership, we aim to maintain our derelict land reclamation programme and in particular progress with the reopening of the Ashby Canal. Our intention to place a Transport and Works Order before Parliament for the acquisition of land and reconstruction of the Canal between Snarestone and Measham did not come to fruition in 2001/02 because of continuing negotiations with British Waterways Board. We hope to progress the Order in 2002/03.

Similarly, whilst intentions to develop Measham Station as a local museum and workspace have so far been thwarted by an absence of funding, there appear to be better prospects in 2002/03. The development of the rest of the station site has progressed satisfactorily, including the opening of the Millennium Garden and the conversion of the railway goods shed for employment purposes (the construction of canal boats).

In 2002/03 we will continue to support the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan focusing on the development of wetlands (particularly in connection with the increasing use of natural floodplain management methods) and restoration of heaths. We expect to declare four Local Nature Reserves in the year ahead, two of which will be in our own country parks.

We will continue to support the National Forest, recognising that its future is now secure but key areas such as visitor infrastructure and sites management need further development.

We will continue to ensure that we move towards putting the Rights of Way network in good order by 2005. In addition, many of the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002. These place new statutory responsibilities on local authorities. We will ensure that we meet them, although it is not clear as yet what impact they will have on our central aim of putting the network in good order and, in particular, improving on signposted links from metalled highways, where we are particularly deficient.

Following on from obtaining Heritage Lottery Grant Aid for Grace Dieu Priory, we will be working with the District Council to implement the project in 2002/03.

We shall build a new toilet block on Bosworth Park with sustainability high on the agenda. Its features will include material from a sustainable source, a treatment plant which will release treated effluent in the form of water to water courses, waterless urinals, sun pipes, photo voltaic cells to heat water and re-use of grey water.

Improving public access to information will be the priority for the biological record centre at Holly Hayes. This will involve the upgrading of GIS systems and the publication of data on web sites. We aim to continue to operate the Heritage Warden scheme when the current project funding ceases in December, as this is an effective way of getting relevant information out to local communities and also generating new data in return.

We will carry out a series of roadside checks to ensure that goods vehicles comply with the requirements of Weight Restriction Zones.

### **8.2.5 Planning Control**

The planning control service dealt with 290 planning determinations in 2001/02. It was responsible for issuing 102 decisions on planning applications, of which 21% were for minerals and waste developments. We determined 8% of minerals and waste applications within 8 weeks but just over 40% for County Council developments. Although assessment of environmental impact studies, public consultation and ongoing negotiations with the applicant of necessity tend to result in a longer determination period, the nature of applications received in 2001/02 has allowed for more speedy processing, despite continuing staff shortages.

The average time taken to determine all applications was 15 weeks, although this varies between types of planning application where County Matters (i.e. minerals and waste applications) took 28 weeks to determine whilst County developments only 9 weeks.

Nevertheless, and despite ongoing recruitment problems, customer satisfaction with our planning services places us in the best performing 25% of authorities.

	Best 25% 00/01	Leicestershire	
		Actual 00/01	Target 02/03
% of applicants and those commenting on planning applications satisfied with the service received	87.5%	87.5%	95%

### 8.2.6 Planning Control – Priorities for 2002/03

The average time taken to determine minerals and waste ('county matter') planning applications is improving. We aim to increase the percentage of applications determined in 8 weeks from 8% to 10% by 2003/04 and 12% by 2004/05. In 2001/02 we achieved our target of getting the average time taken to determine applications down to 28 weeks. We aim to reduce that figure to 26 weeks by 2002/03. This would bring us close to the national average of 25 weeks. However, the service is demand-led and complex major proposals, which often give rise to public concern, cannot be anticipated in advance and may impact adversely on targets. The existing targets for the determination of applications exclude processing applications for the discharge or variation of planning conditions attached to planning applications. Almost 90% are determined within 8 weeks.

The Government's recent Green Paper on the review of the planning system also includes proposals to speed up the decision making process for planning applications with the intention of ensuring it is responsive to the needs of customers, delivers decisions quickly in a predictable and transparent way, produces quality developments and genuinely involves the public. During 2002 discussions will take place between the DTLR, the Local Government Association and professional bodies about the proposed changes, and we will need to ensure that the interests of Leicestershire are represented in these discussions.

### 8.2.7 Local Agenda 21

Working with the Forum for a Better Leicestershire (Fable) we prepared a Local Agenda 21 Strategy entitled 'Ways Forward for a Better Leicestershire' in 1998. This sets out a shared vision of what life for people in Leicestershire could be like in 20 or 30 years' time. During 2001/02, work has gone on to relate this study to the requirement to prepare a Community Strategy. 'Ways Forward' is a useful starting point, identifying as it does the shared vision of Leicestershire community. However, as a consequence of the need for a period of reflection, to relate 'Ways Forward' to the emerging Community Strategy, only limited progress has been made on raising the profile of sustainability by the development of practical examples. Examples of progress include support for the development of a wood fuels producer group, support for food links and farmers markets, use of the sustainability appraisal scheme and development of the cycling network. Further work is planned to extend this programme.

Also during 2001/02, work has continued on:-

- managing and improving our sustainability performance
- integrating sustainability issues into policies
- awareness raising and education.

As a consequence of the climate change levy, we have entered into contracts for the supply of 'green' energy for the County Hall campus. We have also introduced a successful paper recycling scheme at County Hall.



### **8.2.8 Local Agenda 21 – Priorities for 2002/03**

As the move towards the introduction of more 'green' taxes continues, it will be important for the Council to ensure that it monitors their financial impact and, where necessary, reviews its policies as a purchaser of goods and services. We already purchase 'green' electricity, thus ameliorating the impact of the climate change levy. The aggregate tax, introduced in April 2002, will impact upon our development responsibilities, especially for roads and Council buildings. The landfill tax continues to place increasing pressures on our waste disposal budget. We need to lead by example, as well as disseminating advice and information on the implications of these green taxes.

We also intend with partners to revitalise the Forum for a Better Leicestershire (FABLE) which published the "Ways Forward" document, seeking further practical exemplar projects and setting up an information dissemination and exchange system.

We will continue to work with partners at regional level to implement the regional sustainable energy strategy and more particularly apply it to Leicestershire.

### **8.3 Consultation**

In 2001/02 consultation continued on the Rights of Way service through the Rights of Way Advisory Group, comprising representatives of the user groups, landowners and other organisations. There was a major consultation exercise on improvements to Ashby Town Centre, aimed at seeking views on the future environmental improvements required following the opening of the bypass. Residents' views in Melton were sought on their needs following successful bids for funding a Town Centre Parks Feasibility Study. A Heritage Lottery bid for restoration works is proposed once the views have been analysed. The Minerals and Waste Liaison Committees continued to operate throughout the year. Comprising councillors, site operators and representatives of residents, they oversee site operations.

In 2002/03 a second round of public consultation based on initial design proposals is planned for Ashby. The Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project will launch a series of workshops to discuss its future work programme. The Rights of Way Advisory Group will be reformed into a statutory Local Access Forum with wider responsibilities in line with the proposals of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Subject to staff availability, and the publication by Government of updated minerals guidance, the Minerals Local Plan will be reviewed and rolled forward to consultation this year.

### **8.4 Key Partnerships**

The nature of the environmental function means that extensive partnership working occurs. Schemes need to be owned by those who seek to benefit from them; partnership is an essential prerequisite.

- We work with English Heritage and District Councils to deliver Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes at Lutterworth, Castle Donington, Loughborough, Hinckley and various Rural Centres.
- The Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project partners us with six District Councils and the Countryside Agency.
- The Ashby Woulds Forum brings together all stakeholders with an interest in the future of that area. Such has been its success that it was awarded the Royal Town Planning Institute's Silver Cup in its 2001 awards for national achievement in planning.
- We work with nature conservation groups in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan Forum the Rights of Way Advisory Group involves all those with an interest in rights of way development and promotion.

- We increasingly work through the Leicestershire Rural Partnership in delivering schemes that deliver sustainable improvements to town centres and rural areas. We have a long-standing and successful involvement with the Rural Priority Area on the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield.
- An increasingly positive relationship is being built with WREN in delivering countywide environmental improvements.
- The momentum behind the National Forest increasingly involves discussion and joint working on site management and promotion as it used to with development issues.
- Partnerships with voluntary recorder groups such as natural history societies and the Leicestershire Fieldwalkers are crucial for maintaining a flow of data into the county record centres.
- The Partnership for Environmental Protection involves all District Councils, English Heritage, English Nature, the Environment Agency and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and is now serving as a model for similar partnerships being set up in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.
- Finally we must acknowledge the very significant role that *emda* increasingly plays in our work. Although *emda* focuses on economic performance, there is a recognition of the importance that environment plays in the climate for investment. Some £2 million was spent on environmental programmes in 2001/02 from *emda* funds. We anticipate that this relationship will grow through the transition to arrangements for the Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership.

## 8.5 Best Value Reviews

There were no reviews in 2001/02 affecting this service.

## Chapter 9

### Promoting Economic Well-Being

We will work with our economic partners to attract new and sustainable employment opportunities into the County and to support Leicestershire businesses. By helping to implement the Leicestershire Economic Strategy we will ensure that partners bring together their efforts with the needs of business to improve the competitive position of the County. This will involve working actively with local, sub-regional and regional partners and exploiting the potential for external funding.

#### 9.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services currently provided to meet this objective are given in Chapter 15 of this Plan.

#### 9.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

A review in 2000 of our economic development policy framework has led to an acceptance that we need to work more closely with our local economic partners and that, in providing community leadership, the County Council should pursue a broader perspective of local economic well-being. This has been reflected in the Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy 2001-2005.

Central to this approach has been the adoption of an overarching economic strategy for Leicestershire which has ownership by those organisations who can help to deliver it. Given the inter-relationships of the local economy within Leicester and Leicestershire, the need also for an economic partnership which brings together the main economic interests serving City and County, has been seen as a key priority in helping to improve local economic performance.

A Leicestershire Economic Strategy was first prepared by consultants on behalf of the County Council and some other key local economic organisations in 1998. We updated the Strategy in co-operation with the Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council in 2001. The Economic Strategy has subsequently guided our economic work programme during 2001/02, its framework importantly linking with the Regional Economic Strategy prepared by the East Midlands Development Agency. This has led us to establish four key priorities for economic well-being. These are:-

- Improving the economic performance of Leicestershire and the East Midlands;
- Promoting conditions in which Leicestershire businesses can operate competitively and prosper and which will attract new business to the County;
- Enhancing employability and improving access to jobs and services;
- Enabling individuals, local communities and businesses to contribute to their own economic well-being.

Whilst a broad economic well-being policy framework has been established we have encountered a number of difficulties in implementing priorities during 2001/02. The Leicestershire Economic Strategy has not been owned amongst local economic organisations, which has made co-ordination of initiatives more difficult. In the first half of 2001 there were also significant differences between City and County as to an appropriate local economic partnership. Again, the impact of the foot and mouth epidemic on the rural economy and tourism, and further major job losses locally in manufacturing industry, particularly textiles, has hit many local firms and required adjustments in programme priorities.

One significant development during the latter part of 2001/02 has been the formation of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. Accredited by the East Midlands Development Agency, this new sub-regional partnership will be led by the local business community. Fully supported by the City, County and District Councils it is intended that this new body will co-ordinate regional and local resources and initiatives to improve Leicestershire's economic performance. It is expected that the Economic Partnership will be fully operational by autumn 2002. The Partnership is already reviewing the Leicestershire Economic Strategy with the aim of producing a strategy and action programme consistent with that of the region and which is supported and can be delivered locally. As a leading player in preparing the Strategy/Action Programme, we will be looking closely at how the County Council can most appropriately contribute to its delivery.

### **9.2.1 Improving Economic Performance**

We want to promote business competitiveness with partner organisations by encouraging firms to increase exports, break into new markets and build strong linkages between suppliers and customers. We will also support consumers and legitimate traders by identifying and reducing frauds and malpractice against consumers. Our initiatives are intended to support improving local economic performance which will maintain the County's unemployment rate significantly below the region's average.

During 2001/02 we:-

- Pursued a successful tourism marketing campaign 'Leicestershire – The Real Surprise' which incorporated a Visitor Guide, Cream of Leicestershire and What's On brochures and a full exhibition programme. In addition, we have developed a Gold Card discount scheme, organised the Leicestershire Tourism Conference and Awards Scheme;
- Provided financial support for the Leicester and County Co-operative Development Agency to develop co-operatives and community businesses and Credit Unions;
- Encouraged business excellence through our sponsorship of the Leicestershire Business Awards and our leading role in organising the Leicestershire Tourism Awards;
- Continued to develop and exploit the business opportunities arising from the County's twinning status with the province of Sichuan in China;
- Helped to promote a small number of equestrian initiatives as part of our rural programme, the industry having been badly affected in 2001 by the foot and mouth epidemic;

The new Leicestershire Tourism Strategy will now be published at the same time as the Leicester Visitor Development Strategy in the Spring of 2002. We have not pursued working with Business Link Leicestershire in providing European Union information for local businesses as this is now the prime function of the European Information Centre which is located within Business Link.

During the coming year we intend to continue these programmes. In addition we will:-

- Seek, with our local economic partners, to develop trade links between Leicestershire businesses and those of our twinned region in Germany, the Saarland;
- Identify and pursue appropriate European funding and other opportunities to support Economic Well-Being initiatives;
- Work closely with Business Link Leicestershire to ensure there is targeted business support to companies in the rural areas of the County;

- Through the Trading Standards Service provide business advice support as part of the 2002/03 Food Standards Enforcement Plan;
- Launch in partnership with the key local economic development agencies, a new magazine targeted at the business community;
- Host a major week of activities to promote the business opportunities arising from the Council's links with Sichuan, China;
- Facilitate the creation of industry lead sector groups for the Engineering and Food and Drink Sectors.
- Increase resources for action against rogue traders to ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses and support for small and new businesses through advice and information;
- Provide, through the Community Legal Service Partnership, an alternative dispute resolution facility for vulnerable consumers to avoid the expense and time delay of court procedures. Research will also be undertaken into the best methods of providing consumer education programmes to vulnerable consumers;
- Produce a quarterly newsletter called "Business Matters" providing advice and guidance on trading standards matters for Leicestershire businesses and made available electronically, either through the Council's web site or direct mailing.

### **9.2.2 Creating a Climate of Business Investment**

We work closely with the business community and with Borough and District Councils in supporting business and creating the right conditions to attract investment within Leicestershire. We also provide, directly through our Industrial Properties Service, 232 commercial units and serviced land to assist local companies.

In 2001/02 we have worked closely with or through other organisations in:-

- Attracting new investment to the County through our support of the Leicester Shire Development Agency. The Agency, which has private sector and District Council representation on its Board, and serves both County and City areas, has met all of its key objectives. These include attracting 7 companies to locate in the area and assisting a further 6 to remain. The Agency has handled over 500 investment enquiries in the last twelve months and 800 jobs have been either created or retained;
- Continuing to support two large managed workspaces in Coalville and Hinckley which accommodate over a hundred small businesses providing in excess of 300 jobs;
- Obtaining funds from East Midlands Development Agency towards the provision of workspace and other support for hi-tech companies in the Loughborough area. It is anticipated that work on the construction of additional accommodation at the Loughborough Technology Centre will start in the spring of 2002;
- Updating, in a partnership with other economic organisations, a business database. A new directory - data4business – containing details of 9,000 Leicestershire companies has been published and a website, from which information can be purchased, is active ([www.data4business.co.uk](http://www.data4business.co.uk));
- Developing our economic research programme through the Leicestershire Economic Research Partnership (LERP). As well as producing monthly unemployment information, we have provided a regular Business Bulletin and contributed to the six

monthly Local Business Survey. We also led in preparing the annual Leicestershire Economic Perspective. This provides a wealth of information on the local economy, labour supply, workforce skills and economic prospects. The Partnership has continued to develop its website;

- producing the Leicestershire Property Bulletin which provides a bi-monthly digest of industrial properties available for sale or let in the County. The Bulletin is distributed to 2,000 companies.

Small businesses depend on a reliable cashflow and we are committed to paying our suppliers promptly. In 2000/01 we paid 78% of undisputed invoices in 30 days, which was below the national average of 81%. In 2001/02 we should achieve 82%, which is an improvement, but is still short of the Government's target of 97.5%, partly due to problems in installing an upgraded payments system earlier this year. Improvements are in hand and we expect our performance to get close to the Government's target of 100% in 2002/03.

We have not pursued a sub regional technology transfer strategy during the last year because this is best done at a regional level by the East Midlands Development Agency. The possibility will be considered in the coming year by the new Leicester Shire Economic Partnership.

In the coming year our existing programmes will be added to by:-

- Extending our research programme to explore investment opportunities amongst key industrial sectors, the rural economy and technology transfer, as well as carrying out district level economic assessments.

### **9.2.3 Enhancing Employability**

Providing a skilled, adaptable and highly motivated workforce is essential in improving the economic well-being of the County. We are one of a number of organisations which have contributed to providing employment support and skills.

This will be achieved through the framework established by the Leicestershire Economic Strategy, through the New Deal Partnership, the Local Learning Partnership and the range of certified training opportunities that we provide. We are also pursuing a corporate strategy to improve employment opportunities for vulnerable people and have prepared a Joint Investment Plan on Welfare to Work for disabled people. This has been done in liaison with the National Health Service and various employment agencies and training providers. In addition, we have established the Leicestershire Learning Disabilities Partnership Board which inter alia will be developing employment support measures for this vulnerable group.

We have been the subject of an Adult Learning Inspection. Arising from this we are required to develop and agree with the Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council an improvement plan to address the areas of weakness identified from the inspection findings. The areas of weakness were management information and quality assurance.

#### **During 2001/02 we:-**

- Restructured County Training which in future will operate in four main occupational areas: catering and hospitality, construction, landbased industries, and administration/information technology. The emphasis will be on workforce development and helping businesses in Leicestershire to meet their skill needs through modern apprenticeships.

- Contracted with the Learning and Skills Council to develop and deliver modern apprenticeship programmes and NVQ training for young people in Leicestershire over the next 16 months.
- Funded 10 employment support projects, which provide a mixture of support and training for people with disabilities or who have been out of work for a long time.
- Managed an employment support scheme which enables people with severe disabilities to work with many local companies.
- Phased out the Work Based Learning for Adults programme with those remaining on the programme completing their training in 2001/02.
- Worked with the developing Connexions Service in pursuing a pilot scheme working with young care leavers aged 16 plus, many of whom are socially disadvantaged, to assist them into employment, education or training.
- Assisted 400 young people and adults in receiving training to achieve qualifications.

In 2002/03 we will:-

- Maintain an average of about 240 young people in training throughout the year on Modern Apprenticeship and National Vocational Qualification programmes. Within the year, 100 young people will complete their NVQ programme or modern apprenticeship.
- Assist 50 Learners to complete their Work Based Learning for Adults programme, with transitional funding from the Employment Service.
- Develop an improvement plan with the Learning and Skills Council to enhance the quality of training provided to participants and employers.
- Pursue collaborative working between the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to build capacity within the community care market.
- Manage the 'Workstep' supported employment programme which now has a target of 30% of people starting in Workstep after April 2002 moving to open employment;
- Look at ways to encourage the involvement of the Statutory Sector in the multi-agency Joint Investment Plan Group.

#### **9.2.4 Enabling Economically Sustainable Communities**

We work closely with local communities and organisations in tackling deprivation and co-ordinating programmes aimed at improving economic and social well-being. Our efforts focus across the rural and urban areas of the County where there is deprivation and exclusion.

During 2001/02 we:-

- Continued to raise the profile of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership and extending its activities. A new Rural Strategy and Action Programme was launched, together with a new website – [www.oakleaves.org.uk](http://www.oakleaves.org.uk). During the year the Partnership also won joint second prize in its first year entry to the Cabinet Office's Modernising Government Awards;
- Organised a very successful Rural Conference, held at Brooksby College, in July 2001;

- Met key targets and co-ordinated an investment of £2.3 million in projects to engage local communities, create viable market towns, support rural business diversification and social enterprise, provide lifelong learning opportunities, and promote joined-up rural ICT service delivery as part of the £8 million Bridging Communities Single Regeneration Budget Scheme;
- Met key targets and co-ordinated an investment of £1.4 million in projects to develop one stop shops, provide services and training in rural areas, and respond to health, crime and skills issues within the most deprived urban communities of Coalville and Ashby as part of the £5 million Making the Links Single Regeneration Budget Scheme.
- Co-ordinated an investment of £3 million in the delivery of over 30 economic, social and environmental projects within the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields Rural Priority Area;
- Adopted and implemented the village appraisal protocol, supported and co-ordinated County Council responses to 10 village appraisals and held a seminar for existing and potential appraisal groups;
- Supported the establishment of the Post Office's 'Your Guide' pilot initiative in Leicestershire;
- Organised, through the Leicestershire Rural Partnership, a three-day Citizens Jury on rural services;
- Pursued a series of service co-ordination events in Sapcote, Billesdon, Anstey, Mountsorrel, Lutterworth and Castle Donington.

We failed in gaining funds for a number of projects through the East Midlands Development Agency's Capital Fund and also had little success in gaining funds for initiatives through the England Rural Development Fund. We were also partners in an unsuccessful bid by Business Link Leicestershire for a Rural Renewal Fund. We were successful however in gaining the Development Agency's backing in a new £1.6m programme for the farming and tourism industries in response to the foot and mouth epidemic, as well as seeing a number of rural redundant building conversions for commercial use being completed through our grants scheme.

In the coming year we will:-

- Continue to co-ordinate and achieve key targets on our current Single Regeneration Budget, Rural Priority Area and Foot and Mouth Response programmes;
- Deliver an extended range of projects through the enlarged Leicestershire Rural Partnership programme;
- Pursue actions arising from the conclusions of the three-day Citizens Jury on rural services;
- Hold a range of innovative community consultation events, including Planning for Real, visioning and further service co-ordination events and a Young Persons' Citizens Jury;
- Pursue the various actions proposed in the Review of Service Delivery in Rural Areas. Develop the Consumer Support Network Partnership to improve access to information and advice on trading standards matters for consumers;
- Promote a "Quality Builders' Mark" scheme whereby consumers will have access to a register of approved builders through a partnership with DTI.



### 9.3 Key Partnerships

We support effective partnerships to achieve real improvements in the way that services are delivered to promote the competitive position of the local economy. The key partnerships in which we are currently involved are:-

- The new Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, planned to be fully operational in autumn 2002, which will become the key economic partnership for the City and County. It is led by the business community and is accredited by the East Midlands Development Agency. It will act as a sub-regional development agency working to promote and deliver greater economic prosperity, quality of life and social inclusion for Leicestershire communities;
- The Leicester Shire Development Agency, which was set up to attract new investment to the area but which is now also to deliver business services as the operational arm of Business Link for Leicestershire;
- A New Deal Partnership to help unemployed people, including long-term unemployed, into work;
- A Rural Partnership made up of 19 partners including local Borough and District Councils, the Learning and Skills Council, Business Link, East Midlands Development Agency, Health Authority and Police. The Partnership prepares and implements an annual action programme pursuing local projects, such as 'Business Buddies' and a Redundant Buildings Scheme, through the pooling of resources, which would not otherwise be developed by individual organisations. In 2001 the partnership came joint second in the national Modernising Government Partnership Assessment Awards promoted by the Cabinet Office;
- Local regeneration partnerships for the former coalfield area in north west Leicestershire and Charnwood, which support local economic growth and more sustainable communities;
- Collaborating with the Local Learning Partnership as well as working through the Adult Learning Plan for Leicestershire to support the delivery of a relevant range of learning opportunities;
- The Local Agenda 21 "Ways Forward for a Better Leicestershire" Partnership, which is helping to achieve economic targets identified by the Leicestershire community;
- We also work closely with the Disability Employment Advisers from local Job Centres, as well as other organisations in delivering employment support schemes for disabled people.

### 9.4 Consultation

We have carried out a number of consultations during 2001/02. The Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey is undertaken bi-annually, it being a joint survey with business organisations and the City Council. Telephone interviews are conducted with 750 local businesses, the results being used to inform various policies and plans. We also liaised closely with the business community in a consultation about the establishment of the new Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. This new body is likely to become the main organisation managing economic initiatives across the County and City.

The new Leicestershire Rural Strategy launched in summer 2001, drew upon consultations with more than 70 rural-based organisations. Actions arising from the strategy and also the Council's developing approach to service co-ordination, has resulted in a series of consultation initiatives. These include a three-day Citizens Jury on rural services in May 2001 and service co-ordination events in Sapcote, Billesdon, Anstey, Mountsorrel, Lutterworth and Castle Donington.

We plan to continue our bi-annual businesses surveys during 2002/03 undertaken jointly with business organisations. We will also be closely involved in a major consultation on a sub-regional economic strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire. This strategy, which will be developed by the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, will help to determine economic priorities for the sub-region and shape our decisions on future economic well-being initiatives. We also plan to carry out smaller consultations with the business community in researching future local prospects for various industrial sectors and the wider community in preparing action plans for some deprived communities.

Through the Leicestershire Rural Partnership we also intend to hold a range of innovative community consultation events including Planning for Real, visioning as well as further service co-ordination events and a Young Persons Citizens Jury. These events will not only highlight needs and possible action within particular communities but also test the value of different consultation methods.

## **9.5 Reviews**

### **9.5.1 Industrial Properties**

On the basis of the review carried out on this service, the County Council decided that there is a continuing need to provide industrial units. It concluded that the industrial properties portfolio is being well managed by the in-house team at a cost directly comparable with the private sector and that the commercial returns are also comparable with the private sector. An action plan has been agreed, including: criteria for future investment; systematic future estate-by-estate review; the need for future schemes in rural areas; the development of new performance indicators and improvements in IT systems.

### **9.5.2 Employment Support Projects**

A review of the Employment Support Projects was started but has been overtaken by events. Chapter 13 on Best Value Reviews explains the position on this review.

### **9.5.3 Service Delivery in Rural Areas**

It was agreed with the Best Value Inspection Service that an inspection of this review was not appropriate. The additional funding made available in 2001/02 allowed many of the recommendations of the review to be implemented. Some recommendations related to improving access to services and information will be implemented through a range of projects in the future.

## Chapter 10

### Supporting Culture and Leisure

During 2002 the County Council will work with District and Borough Councils on the development of a Cultural Strategy for Leicestershire. This work will also involve other partners, including the university and higher education sectors, the business community, the media and regional bodies. The Strategy is required to be submitted to the Government by the end of 2002.

#### 10.1 Current Service Provision

Details of the range of services currently provided to meet this objective are given in Chapter 15 of the Plan.

#### 10.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

##### 10.2.1 Cultural Strategy for Leicestershire

The development of the Cultural Strategy will be a major priority in 2002. This involves most departments of the County Council. Its scope will cover libraries, archives, museums, the built and natural heritage, the arts, media and creative industries, country parks, recreation and play, sport and tourism. The Strategy will set out the direction and focus for delivery of these services in general terms, and may be underpinned by specific geographic or service-led strategic documents. £34,500 is being made available by the County Council in 2002/03 to support its development.

Initial consultation and research has resulted in four themes for the Strategy:

- celebrating Leicestershire
- improving lifestyles and health
- strengthening communities
- supporting the cultural and creative economy.

The development of the Strategy is currently on target to be achieved in 2002.

##### 10.2.2 Libraries

A review of the libraries service was carried out in 1999 which identified a number of areas in which it was underperforming. These included, a low number of book issues per library, low expenditure on the bookstock and ICT facilities, and a high number of library premises opening for limited hours.

Developments to the service since that time have been focussed on addressing the issues identified in that review, and increased budget allocations have allowed the following improvements to be made:-

- £44,000 growth in the staffing budget has allowed 34 libraries to meet recommended minimum opening hours, and of the remainder only 2 libraries are more than 5 hours below the recommended minimum.

£183,000 has been added to the base stock fund ( books and other materials) which has allowed an increase in the number of items available per head of population from 0.87 to 1.2.

- 45 of the 54 service points will have been connected to the TALIS Computer Management System by March 2002. This controls the loan and return of stock, provides the catalogue and improves the efficiency of the service. Only 9 libraries are left to connect and this will be done by December 2002. This will be in conjunction with the implementation of the People's

Network through which all libraries will be connected to the Internet and provide access to other computer facilities free of charge.

Progress on the implementation of the People's Network is on target and all libraries will be connected by December 2002.

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Standard:</b>	<b>Target 2001/02</b>	<b>Est. 2001/02</b>	<b>Target 2002/03</b>
PLS5	Percentage of libraries open more than 10 hours a week that have access to on-line catalogues (Standard 100%)	83%	82.7%	100%

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Standard:</b>	<b>Target 2001/02</b>	<b>Est. 2001/02</b>	<b>Target 2002/03</b>
PLS6(i)	Total number of electronic workstations available to users per 1,000 population (Standard 6 per 1,000 population = 0.6%)	0.21	0.28%	0.3%

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Standard:</b>	<b>Target 2001/02</b>	<b>Est. 2001/02</b>	<b>Target 2002/03</b>
PLS6(ii)	Percentage of static service points providing public Internet access (Standard 100%)	57%	54%	100%

The extension of opening hours in the community libraries and a more user friendly pattern of opening times in all libraries, as well as the increased quality of stock available, has led to an improvement in numbers of items borrowed, especially by children. The increased accessibility of computers in libraries has also led to a rise in the number of visitors for the first time in several years from an annual figure of 2,805,300 in the year to March 2001 to 2,872,889 in the year to September 2001.

The Annual Library Plan sets out the priorities for service improvements and describes how the Service is aiming to meet the Public Library Standards set by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for achievement by March 2004. Out of the 22 Standards which are currently quantified we are already meeting 9, almost meeting another 4, and by March 2004 expect to reach all but the one for number of visitors to libraries.

The standards already achieved relate to:-

- Proportion of households residing within 2 miles of a static branch (covers 3 standards)
- The percentage of requests supplied within defined time scales
- Aggregate opening hours per 1,000 population
- Opening hours for larger libraries
- Issue period
- Number of books allowed on loan at one time
- Time taken to replace stock.

In addition to the on-going improvements in opening hours other improvements that will be made to the service in 2002/03 are:-

- An additional £30,000 is included in the staffing budget for 2002/03, which will leave only 2 libraries below the standard for opening hours.
- A further £50,000 is included in the budget for 2002/03 to increase the bookstock.

- All staff will undertake training to the European Computer Driving Licence Standard and Customer Care to ensure that the level of service provided meets the standard of knowledge and helpfulness laid down in the Public Library Standards.
- Sapcote, Newbold Verdon, Syston, Asfordby, South Wigston and Fleckney libraries will be ICT Centres by March 2002, allowing a higher level of access to ICT and support from trained staff. Fleckney Library, when it moves to its new premises, will also offer a wide range of services and facilities through partnership ventures with Harborough District Council and other agencies.
- The library catalogue and information about all libraries and services offered is now available on the County Council's website. In 2002 borrowers will be able to access their own records to renew books, place requests and check on what they have on loan via the Internet.

	<b>Best 25%</b>	<b>Actual 2000/01</b>	<b>Est. 2001/02</b>	<b>Target 2002/03</b>	<b>Target 2003/04</b>
BV117: the number of physical visits per 1,000 of population to public libraries.	6,000	4,600	4,650	4,870	5,120
Annual items added to library stock per 1,000 of population	—	200	204	204	209

### 10.2.3 The Arts

The Arts Development Service encourages a broad range of visual, digital and performing arts across Leicestershire.

During 2001/02, the Service has provided financial support to the Haymarket Theatre through a service level agreement, and to support small and large events encompassing classical and chorale music, opera, festivals and work with special needs groups and discrete communities.

Priorities for 2002/03 will be:

- A rural and community touring scheme for theatre and the performing arts will commence in 2002/03 for three years, co-funded by the Regional Arts Lottery Programme and the County Council and District Councils of Leicestershire. The scheme will aim to achieve 210 performances over three years, with 65 as the target in the first year, particularly in areas of the county lacking access to professional provision and in non-traditional arts venues.
- The Arts Development programme will continue to provide funding support for local community initiatives across the full spectrum of the arts. This 'pump-priming' financial support levers in other funding in the ratio of 1:5, enabling projects costing in excess of £100,000 in total to take place and involving up to 75,000 people.
- Partnership is vital to the Arts and the Service's work with the Eastern Orchestral Board will enable further major concerts to take place in 2002/03, including a Golden Jubilee commission.
- The Arts Audit, completed in 2001, will underpin the development of the Arts Strategy. These will influence and contribute to the four themes of the Cultural Strategy.

- In 2002/03 our funding support to the Haymarket Theatre will be reduced by £50,000. Discussions will take place with the Theatre about service delivery in relation to this reduced level of funding.

#### **10.2.4 Museums**

Our Museums Service is in the top 25% of authorities for the number of museums operated and in 2000/01 we were the top county nationally for the number of visits to museums. Despite this, in 2000/01, the cost per visit was 16% higher than average and in 2001/02 had increased by 19% over 2000/01. The latter can be attributed to three influences - changes in the way that Service costs are calculated to include capital charges, the closure of Melton Carnegie Museum for refurbishment and the resulting impact on visitor numbers, and the influence of the Millennium Festival in 2000/01 which inflated visitor/usage figures that year.

In 2002/03 Melton Museum is scheduled to reopen, after complete refurbishment costing £500,000, thanks to funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other partners. Funding for a marketing professional within the Service will enable the generation of more visitors and visitor income.

Melton Carnegie Museum will focus on the history of fox-hunting, stilton cheese and pork pie making and other local aspects which have a regional and national significance.

During 2001 it became evident that the levels of income generated by the Service, particularly at Snibston, were not reaching their anticipated targets. Additional support to the budget and economies in other areas of the service have been needed to address this problem. A review of Snibston will be undertaken in the early part of 2002/03 to assess its future development needs and management arrangements. More broadly, Snibston and the Museums Service as a whole will participate in regional and national discussions regarding the future delivery of museum services. Snibston and Leicestershire have already been identified by the DCMS as key players for the East Midlands. The Service will also seek to play a role in the newly formed Regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

A review of the opening hours of Donington le Heath, Manor House and the site's potential for income generation is being undertaken following the Council's budget decision in February 2002.

In 2002/03 the Service will continue its work improving access to collections through:-

- additional capital and revenue funding will enable a Resources Centre for the museum collections to be made available at Barrow on Soar for public access later in 2002.
- additional support from the New Opportunities Fund will enable digitisation programmes for the Great Central Railways 'Newton' collection held at the Record Office and for The Open Museum collections to commence.
- capital funding of £12,000 in 2002/3 will enable the commencement of a computerised cataloguing system at the Record Office.
- the Open Museum Outreach programme will seek opportunities to develop the existing Resource Box and Artworks Scheme which make items available to schools and communities.
- the partnership with the Mary Rose Trust and the Royal Armouries will result in new outreach programmes during 2002/03 to complement the 'Ship to Shore' exhibition at Snibston.

#### **10.2.5 Tourism**

The purpose of the Tourism Strategy for Leicestershire 2002-2007: Sustainable Tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been to review the tourism industry in the County and to determine its future direction in order to contribute successfully to the ongoing wealth and prosperity of the county. It identifies the key issues and opportunities that will enable the County Council, other authorities, the tourism

industry and other stakeholders with an interest in tourism, to build upon the achievements of the past and set out proposals for action for the next five years.

During the 1990s the tourism industry of Leicestershire grew to become an important part of the local economy, attracting some 22 million visitors a year of these around 2 million stay overnight and 20 million are day visitors. Visitors contribute around £520 million a year into the local economy and there are 19,000 jobs that depend upon visitors' expenditure. These jobs are spread across a number of sectors.

Since tourism is an integral part of the cultural experience, The Tourism Strategy for Leicestershire links into the overall Cultural Strategy whilst focusing primarily upon specific aspects and initiatives relating to tourism.

The aims of the Tourism Strategy for Leicestershire are:

- to maximise the economic benefits of tourism to the County
- to develop a sustainable tourism industry
- to create a basis for co-operation

The action programme that will be implemented to deliver the Tourism Strategy is based around four key objectives:

- to obtain Commitment to the Vision for Tourism in Leicestershire
- to improve the awareness and understanding of what Leicestershire has to offer, bringing about an increase in visits
- to develop a quality tourism product in Leicestershire, and
- to develop a sustainable tourism industry

One of tourism's major ongoing initiatives is the marketing and promotion of the County and every cultural gem that exists within the County. Snibston Discovery Park, Donington le Heath and other museums feature in the County's two main pieces of tourism literature publications, 'Welcome to Leicestershire Visitor Guide' and Cream of Leicestershire and Rutland – over 100 places to visit'.

Priority will be given in 2002/03 to the development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and e-commerce to increase the provision of consumer information, enquiry and booking services for tourist attractions and other tourism services. This will include enhanced reference to facilities and services that will be detailed in the tourism section of the council's website.

There are good prospects for growth in the overall number of visitors and in the range of visitors to the County. It is reasonable to assume that the volume and value of tourism will continue to grow over the next five years. The long-term success of the tourism industry will depend upon the on going commitment and participation of all interested stakeholders.

#### **10.2.6 Country Parks**

We intend to develop our Country Parks where possible and to establish Bosworth Battlefield as a leading tourist attraction.

2001 was a difficult year for the Country Parks due to Foot and Mouth Disease but despite this progress has been made in several areas:-

- \* The extension to Beacon Hill Country Park, West Beacon Fields, was completed and was officially opened in September 2001. This scheme was achieved with funding from The National Forest Company and provides waymarked walks with demonstration plots for woodland craft displays and interpretive panels explaining the use of forest products, a viewing platform, and a shelter built of straw. There are also improvements to the ecology of the area with mixed woodland planting and the creation of acid grassland.

- \* Beacon Hill Country Park has been awarded a Green Flag, a national award, in recognition of the high standard of management and provision for its visitors.
- \* The redevelopment of Bosworth Battlefield Visitor Centre and Country Park.
- \* Bosworth Battlefield has achieved the status of "Quality Assured Visitor Attraction" from the English Tourist Council. This is one of only four such awards in Leicestershire.
- \* Major improvements to disabled access at Watermead Country Park, including provision of sailing facilities, a sensory tree and shrub collection and tactile signing, were completed.

In 2002/03 we will:-

- \* Progress an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for development of Bosworth Battlefield.
- \* Build the toilet block at Market Bosworth Country Park.
- \* Landscape the northern end of Watermead Country Park and improve the Biodiversity Action Plan target for reedbeds.
- \* Produce, jointly with Districts, a brochure promoting all parks in the County.

### **10.2.7 Sports**

To be effectively planned, sport has to be co-ordinated across the whole geographical area of Leicestershire, including Leicester City and Rutland. To help co-ordinate this work a countywide Sports Forum has been established. This represents everyone involved in sport in the area including local authorities, professional clubs, sports governing bodies, disability interests and education professionals. To guide its work and make it more effective, the Sports Forum has produced the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Sports Strategy. We have now adopted this Sports Strategy as Council policy.

The Strategy guides the development of sporting activities and sports facilities within Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland for the period 2001 - 2006, ensuring a co-ordinated approach to sports planning, to improve standards and opportunities in the area.

Its main thrusts include identifying the needs for further sports facilities, improving opportunities for all people to take part in sport, raising the profile of Leicestershire sport to help obtain more external for the area, and improving the way athletes develop their full potential. It also strengthens links with sport in schools to help produce the next generation of athletes, and makes people aware of the sporting opportunities available to them.

The Strategy enables the most appropriate level of sports provision to be achieved for residents, and addresses both the quantity and quality of sports activities and facilities. Its co-ordinated approach to sports planning helps avoid duplication, enabling the limited resources available to sport to be used efficiently. In recent years many plans have been made to provide new sports facilities, mainly encouraged by the availability of funds from the National Lottery. Lottery funding has since been substantially reduced, requiring proposals to be prioritised. The Strategy will aim to prioritise proposals for sports facility development and identify the resources needed to enable them to be provided.

Key targets for the Sports Strategy include:

- establishing 3 centres with Healthy Living Centre status;
- developing 5 new GP referral schemes;
- producing a Forum newsletter to circulate key information;
- market research to determine whether sports services meet community needs;
- continued financial support for annual Partnership Games;
- developing a Sports Forum website to spread appropriate sporting information;
- providing 4 taster sessions / coach development courses per year;
- encouraging club development through grants and Active Sports Partnership support;
- producing a strategy to determine future sports facility needs;
- producing a comprehensive facility inventory;



- undertaking playing fields assessment and strategy;
- establishing facility management seminars/facility operator training programme;
- commissioning research into school sports facility management;
- undertaking facility access audits and publishing findings to assist users.

### **10.2.8 Key Partnerships**

The Museums Service as a whole engages in a wide range of partnerships. Partnerships with District and Borough Councils direct the Cultural Strategy development, the Rural and Community Touring Arts scheme and in museum provision. The Forum of Independent Museums is a partnership of almost 40 voluntary museums which may, in 2002/03 consider a broader, more regional role, as part of the new agenda for museum provision.

The Museums Service also works with the voluntary sector through Friends and Volunteers, through the Archaeological and Heritage Wardens schemes (the latter will cease in December 2002).

The Service will work in partnership with Leicester City Council, with Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and other authorities to achieve three New Opportunities Fund (NOF) programmes to provide greater access to collections.

The library service is working in partnership with others to deliver additional services such as career advice with the Information, Advice and Guidance Service; ICT centres with the Rural Partnership; Bookstart with the Health Service and Early Years Partnership.

Reader Development projects are being undertaken with all the library authorities in the East Midlands.

Provision of the Arts across Leicestershire cannot flourish without partnerships with the regional arts board, with arts officers at District and Borough Councils in the county-wide Arts Forum, and with specific providers such as the University of Loughborough for the Gallery of the Future - a new arts and technology project.

### **10.2.9 Consultation**

In 2001/02 the County Museums Service joined with Leicester City Museums Service to undertake a museum focused user and non-user survey across Leicester and Leicestershire. The survey was undertaken ten years after a similar consultation, and the findings, which will be made available in Spring 2002, will identify not only current issues and feedback, but changes since 1992.

Also during 2001, the results of the public consultation exercise into proposals for Snibston were made available. These will be used to inform the review of Snibston in 2002.

During 2002/03, the 'Ship to Shore' Tudor exhibition at Snibston will be subject to user consultation, as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's requirements. There will also be consultation on the draft Cultural Strategy later in the year.

In 2001/02 the library service participated in a corporate consultation exercise to gain the views of non-users of the service. Of the 35% of participants who never used the service the main reasons were lack of interest, lack of time and inconvenient opening hours.

In 2002/03 all libraries which have had the People's Network installed will consult with users about their actual and potential use of ICT in libraries.

A small survey of visitors to Country Parks was carried out in 2001, the results of which are still being analysed. It is planned to appoint consultants to carry out a more extensive survey of visitors and non-visitors in 2002/03.

## Chapter 11

### Making Communities Safer

Crime and the fear of crime or anti-social behaviour seriously affects people's quality of life. We recognise this and are committed to working with the Police, District Councils, Health, Probation, Fire and voluntary bodies, to deliver priorities identified by local crime and disorder partnerships.

We are committed to promoting community safety within our organisation and within the County generally.

#### 11.1 Current Service Provision

A summary of the services we provide in relation to this objective is given in Chapter 15 of this Plan.

#### 11.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gives us a statutory duty to:-

Be a responsible authority for the joint preparation of local strategies to reduce crime and disorder, in partnership with the Police and Borough and District Councils, and other agencies.

Adopt a corporate approach to policy and practice, to reduce crime and improve community safety.

Produce the Youth Justice Plan, and manage multi-agency Youth Offending Teams.

##### 11.2.1 Domestic Violence

Through the Rural Partnership we have appointed a worker to develop better services for victims of domestic violence in rural areas. Our research tells us that this is a very prevalent crime in Leicestershire and, unlike other crimes, happens as much in rural areas as it does in more urban environments. It is under-reported, therefore a key element in addressing this crime is to encourage more reporting. We have established links with individuals whose lives have been seriously affected by domestic violence and who are able to advise us on appropriate services and responses to the problem. We are currently reviewing all our services to ensure that they meet and address the issue consistently. We are working with schools and the youth service to encourage healthy inter-personal relationships and reduce bullying amongst young people.

##### 11.2.2 Working with Young People

We are aware of the safety needs of young people. We provide citizenship education and opportunities for young people to create safer environments for themselves and others. For example, a group of young people from Loughborough have produced their second community safety video, working with Age Concern, which alerts older people to the risk of purse theft whilst shopping.

The Behaviour Support Plan for schools provides a framework for a consistent approach to managing student behaviour, reducing exclusions, and addressing bullying. Schools have been given additional support and guidance this year to help them to address racism where it occurs.

Young people suffer disproportionately as victims of crime. This year, through the Healthy Schools programme, each student at Key-Stage 3 and 4 will receive a help card containing a wide range of information and help-lines.

As a matter of priority we are working on a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy. Young people who have been involved with the Criminal Justice System are assisting with this, as are many agencies who can respond to the needs identified. We are currently reviewing our services to ensure that wherever possible we reduce the risk of offending behaviour in young people.

### **11.2.3 Drug (and Alcohol) Action Team (DAAT)**

Since April 2001 the County Council has assumed lead responsibility for the DAAT for Leicestershire. The positive features of the previous DAT continue and senior officers from the Health Authority, Education Service, Social Services, Leicestershire Constabulary and other partners remain committed to a strategic framework for the future.

The DAAT, is responsible for implementing the Government's strategy to tackle drug and substance misuse, but has taken the decision also to include tackling issues caused by alcohol misuse in its remit.

This year the Government announced 'Communities Against Drugs' funds to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to enable local drug related crime to be addressed. The Leicestershire DAAT has provided guidance and support to local partnerships, some of which are undertaking this kind of work for the first time.

The DAAT will build on the established links with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and continue to provide guidance, support and advice for local Drugs Forums. The DAAT will also monitor and evaluate the success of the 'Communities Against Drugs' initiatives and share good practice across the County.

### **11.2.4 Youth Offending Service**

We have a successful multi-agency Youth Offending Service that has the principal aim of preventing offending by children and young people. Assisting the County Council's Social Services and Education Departments are the Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service, Leicestershire Constabulary, and Leicestershire Health Authority.

The Service works to an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Plan provides a detailed review of performance and sets out how the national and local objectives for the youth justice system are to be achieved, along with appropriate performance targets.

We are implementing a number of court orders including Reparation, Action Plan, and Detention and Training Orders. We have a Bail Supervision Project, a mentoring project for young people given a Final Warning. We have also developed intervention programmes for more serious offenders with mental health needs, and courses to help improve parenting skills.

In 2001/02 we supported 63% of final warnings to young offenders by rehabilitation programmes.

The Youth Offending Service participates in all the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and we are working with representatives of each Partnership and other agencies to develop a strategy aimed at preventing and reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **11.2.5 Personal Safety**

The County Council has adopted a personal safety policy for all staff and offers regular personal safety training sessions for managers and workers. We recognise that some of our staff may also be subject to domestic violence, or know someone in this position. In 2001, we ran a campaign to raise awareness and encourage employees to seek help.

### **11.2.6 Delivering Services with Safety in Mind**

Most County Council services can contribute to a sense of safety. We have prepared a training programme for all services. The training programme will run in 2002 and increase our capacity to deliver services with safety in mind.

We recognise that some members of the community feel more vulnerable and need extra support to ensure that they feel safe. Older people, in particular have a disproportionate fear of crime. Our services are working in partnership with the Police and Fire Service, Age Concern and others to be alert to these fears, and are taking action to improve security and personal safety in the home.

### **11.2.7 Consumer Safety in and Around the Home**

We have carried out sampling and testing programmes for safety for a number of consumer products. This has included fasteners and motifs used with children's clothing, candles and candle holders, Halloween novelty items such as capes, wigs and hats, toys and goods sold from second hand shops. This has resulted in some products being removed from sale and consequential enforcement action against distributors.

### **11.2.8 Emergency Management**

All local authorities have 'duty of care' responsibilities in respect of local emergencies, and we have the responsibility to co-ordinate or and the District Councils' combined response to major incidents, generally in support of the other public emergency services.

Although major emergencies are infrequent events, when they do occur the public expect the response from all agencies involved to be swift, professional and effective.

Much of the work done in this area is achieved collaboratively, between the County and District Councils, the emergency services, the Environment Agency, utility and transport companies, and other emergency planning partners, within the framework of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Emergency Planning Partnership. In 2002/03, we will continue to undertake our responsibilities under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) legislation, by commencing a programme of exercises in respect of potentially hazardous sites within the County, which follows on from completion of comprehensive off-site emergency plans in this regard. In addition, it is proposed to exercise our plans required under the Pipeline Safety Regulations and the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations.

Last year we:

- Co-ordinated the response to the foot and mouth outbreak, dealing with 17,000 enquiries and 14,000 licences for the movement of animals, and also ran a public information help-line throughout the outbreak;
- Provided operational support to District Councils and the emergency services in respect of emergency incidents and events, including necessary preparatory work during the immediate aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, and
- Co-ordinated/ran, or took part in, several training events/sessions and emergency exercises.

### **Overall Priorities**

Priorities for 2002/03 include:

- Completing and implementing the Best Value Review of Crime and Disorder involving District Councils, the Police and other agencies; and developing with partners new three-year Crime and Disorder strategies;

- Improving systems of monitoring community safety work and promoting what works in crime reduction;
- Developing a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy;
- Implementing new referral orders which involve members of the public taking part in Youth Offender Panels to decide how to prevent further offending by young people through offending behaviour contracts;
- Increasing by £50,000 the budget available for enforcement of animal health and welfare in order to improve controls concerned with the movement of livestock and spread of animal disease in the light of the foot and mouth outbreak;
- Developing, subject to funding from the DTI's "Modernisation Fund", a project which will ascertain the risk for consumers of burns and scalds from consumer goods such as cookware, kettles and oven gloves with a view to promoting improved design and a reduction in the number of accidents in the home;
- Working in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council Environmental Health and Loughborough University to investigate the safety of upholstered furniture in rented accommodation. Initially the project will be targeted at student lettings and may be extended to other private rented accommodation depending on the outcome of this initial survey;
- Working with the Leicestershire and Rutland Health Promotion Agency to inform and educate young mothers about the safety aspects of a range of consumer goods such as toys, pushchairs, prams, cots and bunk beds;
- Working with the Home and Leisure Safety Group of North West Leicestershire Health Forum on a range of initiatives of mutual interest and benefit;
- Appraising with our emergency management partners our arrangements for preparing for and responding to emergencies in response to the Government review of emergency management, building on the experience of recent emergency exercises and operations;
- Providing an additional £40,000 to curtail the activities of rogue traders, prevent sales of alcohol to young persons, and increase the frequency of inspections to food premises.

Relevant Statistics:

	Best 25%	Leicestershire		
	00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	10.60	13.3	12.4	12.0
Violent crimes per 1,000 population	7.9	7.9		
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	10.8	14.4	13.9	13.5
Custody Rates for Young Offenders	N/A	6.6%	9.0%	8%

### 11.3 Partnerships

Through the seven district-based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, we have continued to tackle crime and the causes of crime and promote community safety in partnership with the

Borough and District Councils, the Police, Probation, the Health Authority and a wide range of other organisations.

We have provided funding for over 30 local schemes approved by the partnerships. The range of local projects funded includes promoting services to victims of domestic violence, activities for young people, and security for community facilities.

On behalf of the Leicestershire Partnership for Safer Communities, which acts as a strategic co-ordinating body for crime and disorder matters across the county, we have continued to develop the role and functions of the Crime and Disorder Audit Team. This team provides quarterly reports to the local partnerships keeping them informed of current crime figures and undertakes specific research to inform the work of each partnership. The team also maintains a web-site ([www.lpsc.org.uk](http://www.lpsc.org.uk)), and newsletter keeping people informed of the particular activities, projects and programmes of work going on in the county in pursuit of community safety.

This year the audit team has completed the second full audit of crime and disorder for each of the seven partnerships. The new audits reflect an overall decrease in crime across the county since the initial audit was undertaken in 1998.

We have secured funding to improve the quality of information about crime and disorder collected by our partners, so that future action can be based on accurate evidence.

#### **11.4 Consultation**

In addition to the evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour held by agencies, the team has collected the experience, views and concerns of the residents of Leicestershire through a postal survey. This survey and the results of the crime and disorder audits are being used to help local partnerships prepare new three-year crime and disorder strategies to operate from April 2002. The information is also being used to support the Best Value Review of crime and disorder which was started in 2001/02.

#### **11.5 Reviews**

A review of Crime and Disorder involving District Councils, the Police and other agencies was started in 2001 and is due to be completed by autumn 2002. This is the first themed Best Value review, which is being undertaken on a joint basis with Districts, Boroughs and the County Council in Leicestershire. In order to keep the review manageable the authorities have agreed to focus on a number of 'hot' issues/ 'hot' spots, where performance needs to be improved. The topics include a mix of countywide and local themes. The outcome of this review is intended to be an improved level of community safety in these priority areas, as well as improved partnership working and the sharing of best practice.

A joint agency review of emergency management was proposed for 2002/03. This review has been postponed pending the outcome of the Government's national review of emergency management. However, well established joint working arrangements will continue to be developed. We will work with partners to appraise existing plans and response arrangements during the year and consider whether in the light of this appraisal, and the Government's proposals a more formal review will be desirable.

## Chapter 12

### Managing Waste Effectively

We are committed to ensuring that all household waste in Leicestershire is managed in an environmentally sustainable and cost-effective manner. This means we:-

- deal with the disposal of all household waste in an economically and environmentally sensitive manner;
- develop in partnership with District Councils and Waste Management companies strategies for the disposal of household waste;
- provide household waste and recycling facilities at convenient locations for public use;
- promote, with District Councils, waste recycling and reduction initiatives;
- undertake promotional and educational activities, especially with schools.

#### 12.1 Current Service Provision

Details of current service provision are set out in Chapter 15 of the Plan.

#### 12.2 Overall Performance and Key Priorities

The Government published Waste 2000, its National Waste Strategy, in May 2000. This sets specific targets to recycle and compost much greater proportions of waste in future years, and also to reduce significantly the amount of biodegradable waste going into scarce landfill sites. These targets are very challenging and may be difficult to achieve nationally.

Our service is not only responsible for the disposal of household waste through reuse, recycling, composting and the incineration of certain types of waste, but for the provision of 14 household waste and recycling facilities for the public to dispose of their own waste, the disposal of abandoned vehicles and the promotion of waste reduction and other sustainable options.

It performs this role against a background of growing waste arising nationally. The National Waste Strategy forecasts an annual average rate of growth of 3%. In Leicestershire we dispose of over 300,000 tonnes of household waste. Measures introduced locally in Leicestershire to reduce the amount of non-household waste entering the household waste stream reduced the amount of household waste produced per person in 2000/01 to 513 kg from 544 kg in the previous year. However, the figure is estimated to increase to 530 kg in 2001/02, slightly better than the target of 539 kg. In the current climate, this amount can be expected to increase over time.

In 2000/01 the amount recycled in Leicestershire (including the District Councils) was slightly less than the national average but we composted slightly more, which in fact put us in the best 25% of authorities for that element. The proportion of both recycling and composting has increased again in 2001/02 although the County as a whole still under-performed in recycling.

		<u>Best 25%</u>	<u>Leicestershire</u>		
PI	PI Description	Actual 00/01	Actual 00/01	Est. 01/02	Target 02/03
BVPI 82a	% of all household waste which is recycled	9.46%	6.9%	10.8%	11.5%
BVPI 82b	% of all household waste which is composted	7.41%	7.9%	9.5%	10%

The Government has issued mandatory recycling and composting targets to all local authorities. These require us to compost/recycle 22% of all household waste by 2003/04 and 33% by 2005/06. These figures now include District Council performance and will require enhanced performance, in particular from District Councils, which may only occur once the Household Waste Management Strategy described below is adopted.

Waste disposal costs continue to increase above inflation, partly due to the landfill tax annual escalator and partly due to the general costs of landfill operations. As a consequence, our cost per tonne of household waste continues to rise as follows:

PI	PI Description	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	Estimate 2001/02	Target 2002/03
BVPI87	<b>Waste disposal cost per tonne</b>	£23.90	£26.87	£30.44	£32.71	£32.54

In response to this continuing pressure on budgets we have agreed significant increases in the waste disposal budgets for 2002/03. These allow an extra £325,000 to pay for increased Landfill tax, and £310,000 for the costs of increased tonnages of waste dealt with. In addition, recent European legislation has meant that we must bear the costs of storing fridges until suitable arrangements for safe disposal of the gases they contain can be made. An amount of £300,000 has been added to the budget this year for the costs of both this, and the increasing costs of disposal of abandoned vehicles.

The percentage of household waste landfilled remains steadfastly at around 80%, despite record levels of recycling. However, the difficult recycling market and low values continue to be a major concern. The Government is seeking to address these issues through its Waste Resources and Action Programme (WRAP) but it is unlikely any short-term palliatives will be available.

Our residents' survey for 2000/01 showed only 74% satisfaction with civil amenity sites, which was slightly below the average of 75%.

### **12.3 Waste Management – Priorities for 2002/03**

We are actively working with District Councils to finalise a Household Waste Management Strategy. An amount of £20,000 has been included in our budget for next year to achieve this. This will identify the mechanisms for the management of waste in Leicestershire for the next twenty years. Preliminary indications are that, in order to meet Government targets, we together with District Councils will need to substantially increase composting and recycling rates and deal with the residue by a combination of (much reduced) landfilling and thermal treatment (possibly with energy recovery). The costs of these more sustainable waste management options are not expected to be substantially greater than continuing with traditional waste disposal methods which,



themselves, do not meet Government targets for diverting waste from landfill. Following intensive public consultation, it is intended to adopt the strategy during 2002/03 and work with District Councils towards its implementation.

Whilst the general level of public satisfaction with our household and recycling sites is good at 74%, we believe that there is scope for improvement. We will continue to pursue the replacement or refurbishment of those at Sileby and Loughborough.

2001/02 has shown further improvement in dealing with waste in a more sustainable manner, especially through recycling at our own recycling and household waste sites. Continual improvement is required but this may only be achieved at increased cost.

#### **12.4 Consultation**

The Household Waste Management Strategy consultation process commenced in March 2002 with the general public, interest groups and the waste management industry. Consultation on the Strategy will be ongoing during the year, with the establishment of, amongst other things, a focus group to enable a continuing debate on the evolution and application of the Strategy.

#### **12.5 Key Partnerships**

We will continue to work with the District Councils in their capacity as Waste Collection Authorities in the development and future delivery of the Waste Strategy. In particular we need to consider jointly the most appropriate administrative and political mechanisms for its delivery.

#### **12.6 Reviews**

These services were not subject to a review in 2001/02.

## Chapter 13

### Our Review Programme

#### 13.1 Our Approach to reviews in 2001/02

Last year we reconsidered our forward review programme in the light of our own experience of the first year of Best Value and experience nationally reported by the Audit Commission. We changed our review programme to try to take account of the following:-

- reviews should concentrate on what matters and where real change can be made to public services;
- there should be fewer reviews;
- a more thematic approach should be adopted;
- more work should be done to identify opportunities to work with other authorities on reviews;
- a “one size fits all” approach to each review should be avoided;
- the review process should be underpinned by the development of robust service planning and performance management processes.

The overall effect was to reduce from 96 to 40 the total number of reviews in the five-year Best Value review programme. We acknowledged that 2001/02 would represent a transition from the previous approach to a more thematic review programme. In addition we stated that the approach would need to be developed further in consultation with partner organisations and to reflect the aspirations of the incoming Council after the County Council elections in May 2001.

The review programme for 2001/02 was grouped provisionally into formal ‘Best Value reviews’ and ‘assessments’. For ‘assessments’ it was intended that the principles of Best Value would be applied in accordance with the County Council’s procedures for the conduct of reviews but that it might be possible to apply a more streamlined approach. The intention was that the scale of each review would depend on issues identified following preparation of a position audit for the service. The relevant service plan and performance management information would normally provide a starting point for the position audit. So far we have been unable to achieve this approach.

Accordingly, during the course of the year we have worked with managers who have been involved in the review process to date and the District Auditor to reconsider our review process and in particular the preparation for reviews. We accept that we need to overhaul and streamline our processes and to concentrate on outcomes aimed at improving services to the public. We will use the lessons learned from this together with an overall assessment of the Council’s performance to improve our approach to Best Value reviews, working with auditors and inspectors (see below).

## 13.2 Current Position on Reviews

The current position on Best Value reviews included in the review programmes for 2000/01 and 2001/02 is summarised in the table below:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Position</u>
Domiciliary Services (home care, meals and laundry services)	Completed. Best Value Inspection Report published July 2001.
Industrial Properties	Completed. Awaiting 'desk top' Inspection by the Best Value Inspection Service.
Payments, Income and Financial Information	Completed. Awaiting 'desk top' Inspection by the Best Value Inspection Service.
Service Delivery in Rural Areas	Completed. Agreed with Best Value Inspection Service that this review is not appropriate for inspection as a Best Value review.
Public Transport Support	Completed. Inspection in April 2002.
Library Services for Education	Completed and available for inspection.
Special Educational Needs Transport	To be completed and available for inspection by May 2002.
Youth and Community Education	To be completed and available for inspection by May 2002.
Learning Disability Services	To be completed and available for inspection by April 2002.
Specialist Teaching Service	To be completed and available for inspection by June 2002.
Highway Network Management	To be completed and available for inspection by September 2002. (Inspection of current service areas proposed for April/July 2002).
Crime and Disorder	To be completed and available for inspection by December 2002. (Inspection proposed December 2002).

The following reviews included in review programme for 2001/02 are not being taken forward as Best Value reviews for the reasons given:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Position</u>
Personnel and Training	The County Council will be implementing job evaluation across the authority in 2002 and undertaking a major restructuring of its departments. An evaluation of the human resources needs of the County Council will be undertaken in the light of these changes and the appointment of a new Head of Human Resources from January 2002.
Residential Services for Older People	The joint Audit Commission/Social Services Inspectorate review of the Social Services Department drew attention to the need for early action in this area. This issue is being addressed by the Administration following the County Council elections and in the light of new registration standards.
Employment Programmes, Employment Support projects and Employment Initiatives for People with Disabilities	Elements of the service areas covered by this review have been selected for inspection by the Social Services Inspectorate and the Adult Learning Inspectorate. An action plan will be prepared following these inspections. Some other activities originally covered by this review are no longer being delivered by the County Council following the loss of contracts.
Access to Services and Information	<p>Following the County Council election and in the light of commitments made in the Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy, the Administration has concluded that a major project should be launched, in partnership with other public service providers, on access to services and information including electronic service delivery.</p> <p>We have invited the Best Value Inspection Service to monitor progress on this project and an inspection of our progress will be made during the year.</p>

### 13.3 External Inspection

The following service areas have been subject to formal external inspection during 2001/02:

<u>Service area</u>	<u>Inspectorate</u>
Domiciliary Services	Best Value Inspectorate
Learning Disability Services	Social Services Inspectorate
Employment Training Schemes	Adult Learning Inspectorate
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages	Registrar General

The key results and progress in relation to these inspections are reported elsewhere in this Plan where available.

During 2002/03 a comprehensive performance assessment of the County Council will be carried out as part of the implementation of proposals in the Local Government White Paper ("Strong Local Leadership – Quality of Public Services"). This will be co-ordinated by the Audit Commission. Inspection work for the comprehensive performance assessment will cover our 'corporate governance' arrangements and inspections of our libraries and information Services and highways. In addition inspections are proposed, as indicated above on crime and disorder and access to services and information. OFSTED may be undertaking an inspection of the County Council's function as local education authority in addition to its normal programme of school inspections.

### 13.4 Developing Our Approach to Best Value and Reviews

As part of the development of Best Value, the County Council has agreed to take part in a national 'pathfinder' project aimed at improving integration between the Best Value Inspection arrangements and external audit. The project has developed an agreed combined audit and inspection plan for the year. We wish to use this plan and the outcomes of the comprehensive performance assessment later in the year to develop our approach to review programmes and the review process for 2002/03 and future years. We will work with auditors and inspectors to achieve this.

Our initial priority, therefore, will be to complete and implement the reviews listed above to make way for a fresh approach to reviews. For that reason we have not put forward a revised five-year review programme at this stage. In the meantime, we will be investigating and reporting on a number of key service areas identified in our medium term corporate strategy and previously identified as areas for review this year. These include:

- Access to Services and Information (additional resources have been included in 2002/03 and a major partnership bid put forward to improve electronic access to services)
- Elderly Persons Homes
- Blaby Children's Unit (additional resources included in the 2002/03 budget)
- Service Level Agreements with the Voluntary Sector (including Compacts) and Partnership Working
- School Improvement (additional resources included in the 2002/03 budget).










## Chapter 14

### Our Plans and Policies

This Annual Performance Plan provides an overview of our performance and achievements during the last year and gives details of our aims and objectives for the year ahead.

During 2001/2002, we have maintained a Council-wide service planning process to provide a foundation for the information contained in this Performance Plan. Individual departments and sections of the County Council produce separate plans to help them in implementing the aims and objectives set out in this Performance Plan and in other service-specific plans.

We also have to produce a range of plans for specific services and functions, many of which are required by law. These plans are often produced in collaboration with other organisations and bodies. They set out in more detail how we will achieve specific targets and standards. Reference is made to the various plans in different Sections of this Performance Plan. A summary of the main Plans and Strategies follows. The summary shows our Corporate Objectives (A to I) which each plan supports.

- A  Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning
- B  Meeting Health and Care Needs
- C  Improving our Transport System
- D  Caring for Our Environment
- E  Supporting Culture & Leisure
- F  Promoting Economic Well-Being
- G  Making Communities Safer
- H  Managing Waste Effectively
- I  Working Together to Deliver Quality Services

However, it must be recognised that many of the plans are wide-ranging and provide a contribution to a variety of the Corporate Objectives in different ways.

Although the main aims and objectives set in these plans have been summarised in this Performance Plan, reference should be made to the specific plans themselves for more detailed information on specific service aims, objectives and actions.

No single organisation or body is responsible for everything that a local community needs. Many issues and problems are common to different communities across Leicestershire. We recognise that it is important that the various agencies and organisations in the County work together, to tackle these common concerns for the good of the wider community. We also recognise our key community leadership role, in bringing together organisations for the benefit of the wider community. We have supported the work of the Forum for a Better Leicestershire (FABLE), in identifying common goals and aims to which all organisations can work in enhancing the quality of life of Leicestershire people.

During the next and future years, we intend to develop this work into a wider community planning process. Community planning is the process whereby the public, private and voluntary sector partners can come together to identify common concerns, analyse local need and agree priorities for action, based on a clear vision for the future of the County. This process will play a major role in helping us to develop our Corporate Objectives and the annual Performance Plan to meet community needs in the future.

Main Statutory / Multi-Agency Plans and Strategies	Corporate Objectives								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Education Development Plan									
Adult Learning Plan									
Early Years Development and Child Care Plan									
School Organisation Plan									
Literacy and Numeracy Action Plans									
Behaviour Support Plan									
OFSTED Action Plan									
Youth Work Plan									
National Grid for Learning Plan									
More and Very Able Pupils Plan									
Children's Services Plan									
Health Improvement Programme									
Youth Justice Plan									
Quality Protects Action Plan									
Promoting Independence Grant Plans									
Community Care Plan									
Local Transport Plans									
Public Transport Strategy									
Highway Maintenance Strategy									
Structure Plan									
Waste Local Plan									
Waste Disposal Management Plan									
Minerals Local Plan									
Rights of Way Strategy									
Landscape and Woodland Strategy									
Road Safety Plan									
Leicestershire Economic Strategy									
Tourism Strategy									
Rural Strategy									
Sports and Recreation Strategy									
Former Coalfield Priority Area Strategy									
Cultural Strategy									
Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies									
Community Safety Strategy									
Drug Strategy									
Food Standards Enforcement Plan									

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
<b>Service Plans</b>									
Education Department Strategic Plan									
Museums Strategy									
Social Services Department Plan									
Transportation Service Plan									
Environment Service Plan									
Economic Development Service Plan									
Annual Library Plan									
Regulatory Services Department Plan									
Museums, Arts and Records Service Plan									
Property Department Plan									
Information Systems Unit Plan									
Chief Executive's Department Plan									
Treasurer's Department Plan									
<b>Corporate Plans</b>									
Annual Revenue Budget									
Capital Programme									
ICT Strategy									
County Emergency Plan									
Asset Management Plans									



## Chapter 15

### Summary of our Services

This Chapter is intended to provide an indication of the range and size of services currently provided by the County Council. It is based around the corporate objectives identified in the Administration's Medium Term Corporate Strategy and is followed by a brief description of the Service Departments that contribute towards achieving these objectives.

#### **A. Achieving Excellence in Education and Learning**

We provide and support the following services aimed at achieving excellence in education and learning:-

##### **Early Years provision**

- Funding and supporting 295 private and voluntary sector early years education providers and providing early years education at all of our infant and primary schools;
- Specialist support and teaching for pupils under 5 with identified special educational needs;
- A range of playgroup and crèche provision through community colleges and centres;
- A Children's Information Service through libraries;
- Bookstart projects are now running throughout the County.

##### **Mainstream schools**

- 229 primary schools;
- 54 secondary schools including 18 sixth forms

which between them are responsible for educating 96,000 students.

##### **Special educational needs provision**

- 7 special schools for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs;
- 19 Specialist units; mostly attached to mainstream schools;
- Maintaining 3,220 Statements of special educational needs, to support pupils in a wide range of settings (mainstream school, specialist units, special schools in Leicestershire and specialist provision outside Leicestershire).

##### **Youth and Community Education**

- 23 community colleges across the County;
- 31 community centres within primary and high schools;
- 4 evening centres;
- 5 free-standing community centres/projects;
- Supporting a wide range of voluntary sector educational provision, especially for young people.

In 2000/01 32,180 adults and over 23,000 young people accessed these services, resulting in 395,906 youth work attendances.

## **Other Educational Services**

In addition to the above, we provide either directly, or in partnership with other agencies:-

- A wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' levels of performance in the expressive arts;
- Opportunities for residential and outdoor education;
- A comprehensive range of high quality sporting opportunities through the Sport Through Education Strategy;
- Modern apprenticeships at Foundation and Advanced levels and NVQ programmes to help young people gain vocational qualifications;
- Work-based learning for adults through Government funded programmes.

## **Libraries and Information Service**

- Provide homework study support in Melton Mowbray and Hinckley libraries;
- Library Services to Education provide services to primary, special and secondary schools;
- Manage the Caring for Reading Project at Oadby and Wigston Borough and Blaby District libraries aimed at improving reading skills in looked after children;
- By December 2002 will provide free internet access in all libraries to support informal study;
- All libraries provide information about job and career opportunities;
- The library service is a member of the LAILLAR( Libraries Agreement in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland) which aims to improve access to all public and university libraries.

## **Support Services For Learners**

Learners benefit directly from services that provide the infrastructure of the Education Service including:-

- Home to school transport;
- School meals mainly provided through a contract with a private sector company;
- School crossing patrols;
- Assessment of eligibility for student loans and other grants.

A range of other services provides support to schools and colleges. These services also benefit learners (often very significantly) but the benefit is indirect. Such services can be very effective but invisible to the learner.

## **Museums, Arts and Records Service**

Provides curriculum based exhibitions and displays at all museum sites.

Provided classroom and community resources comprising museum collections and works of art.

Provides a range of outreach facilities and activities through the "Open Museum".

Delivers specific projects with disadvantaged groups.

## **Consumers and Trading Standards**

We also advance education and learning through our work with consumers, young and old, who are helped to make better choices when purchasing goods and services. The Trading Standards Service provides advice, information and education for consumers as part of our responsibility to ensure a fair and safe trading environment.

## **B. Meeting Health and Care Needs**

We carry out many activities that contribute to meeting these needs:-

### **Social Care**

- Receive 6,500 new contacts a year, about children potentially needing assistance from Social Services;
- Provide care for about 310 children who are unable to live in their own homes (80% of whom are cared for in family placements);
- Give protection to those who are being abused - around 140 children are on the Leicestershire child protection register (children at risk of, and/or subject to, abuse);
- Arrange 1,000 respite care periods for children with disabilities;
- Assess the needs of 230 very young children with disabilities each year;
- Provide 140 adaptations a year to homes of children with disabilities;
- Assess the community care needs of 9,800 of the adult population of Leicestershire;
- Arrange services for 7,700 people after their assessment. This includes the provision of 29,000 hours of home care support a week;
- Arranging home care services for some 5,500 people aged over 65;
- Support 2,400 people in residential/nursing home care (our aim is to provide increasing support to people in their own homes and so help people remain at home where possible; therefore, this figure may decrease);
- Work through the library service and the Health Authority to deliver a patient and public information plan;
- Give access to information and services to deaf people through provision of video phones in libraries in partnership with the Centre for the Deaf;
- Provide 'books-on-wheels' and services to older people and people with disabilities who are unable to get to libraries themselves.

### **Healthy Lifestyles**

- Maintain 3,000 kilometres of public rights of way for walkers, with 500 kilometres also available for cyclists and horse riders;
- Introduce 5,000 children to sport and physical activity, by the Sport through Education Strategy, acknowledged as one of the best in England, leading to the first annual Leicestershire youth games;
- Run a sports advisory service for the protection, promotion and delivery of community sports, recreation and play opportunities including the provision of sports and village hall grants annually valued at £180,000;
- Provide books and other information in 52 libraries and 7 mobiles to support people in developing a healthy lifestyle;
- Sample food products to ensure that labelling enables consumers to make healthier choices in respect of nutrition, and that minimum standards of food quality are maintained;
- Ensure that age restricted products such as tobacco, butane based products and alcohol are not sold to young people;
- Promote Health and Safety awareness amongst our own employees through an annual safety week.

## **C. Improving our Transport System**

In relation to this objective we:-

- Implement local safety schemes targeted at hazardous road locations (26 in 2001/02);
- Carry out schemes which specifically look to improve road safety outside schools and on the route to schools (16 in 2001/02);

- Implement speed reduction schemes in residential and other sensitive areas (10 in 2001/02);
- Implement better pedestrian facilities (21 in 2001/02);
- Provide road safety education services, including cycle training, for over 4,000 children each year, and improvement courses for 207 drivers.
- Provide facilities for cyclists and providing road safety education to 77% of all schools in the LEA;
- Develop transport policy and strategies including the preparation and submission to Government of the Council's Local Transport Plan(s);
- Maintain and manage the highway network including over 4000 km of highways, 60,000 street lights and about 260 traffic signals;
- Ensure that the County's road and smaller bridge network is protected from illegal vehicle use in weight restricted zones;
- Help the County's responsible transport businesses to compete fairly and safely by deterring the use of overloaded vehicles;
- Support public transport by the issue annually of 75,000 Travel Concessions to the elderly and disabled people; support for around 150 local bus services and 50 community transport schemes and the Ivanhoe Stage 1 rail service with over 230,000 passengers;
- Undertake transport and road safety improvements including about 35 accident investigations, 400 new traffic management schemes and 100 transport improvement schemes;

#### **D. Caring for our Environment**

We provide the following services in support of this objective:-

- Regional and county-wide strategic land use planning, including the preparation of structure, minerals and waste plans;
- Through the Shire Grants programme support to local communities of over £400,000 for assistance with environmental regeneration and enhancement schemes;
- An active Landmark programme of environmental improvements;
- Determine around 300 planning applications and schemes for minerals and waste developments and the County Council's own proposals;
- Provide highway comments on around 3000 planning applications annually;
- The development of policy and programmes to move towards sustainable development;
- Carry out responsibilities as landlord of the County Farms Estate;
- Give advice on energy efficiency on the County Council buildings;
- Support voluntary groups in rural areas to provide and upgrade community centres and village halls;
- Promote access to the countryside, management of the Rights of Way definitive map, and support to a Rights of Way Advisory Group;
- Enforce legislation designed to minimise packaging;
- Roadside checks to detect overloaded vehicles and other vehicles travelling on weight restricted roads;
- Monitor radiation, where about 5 exercises are undertaken annually;
- Manage the Partnership for Environmental Protection, in conjunction with district and borough councils and others, for the protection of the historic and natural environment.

#### **E. Supporting Culture and Leisure**

In order to achieve this objective we:-

- Encourage the development of the Arts, particularly through rural and touring programmes;
- Provide access through 52 static and seven mobile libraries to the library service throughout the County;

- Promote reader development by participating in national reading promotions, including a summer scheme in all libraries aimed at children. Also a partner in a regional development project on staff training in reader development;
- Provide 9 Museums and Resource Centres, including 2 in partnership with District Councils, including the scheduled and historic museum sites at Snibston and Donington le Heath;
- Manage a number of countryside recreation facilities, including Country Parks which are visited annually by 1.5m visitors;
- Support for the Stepping Stones countryside management project;
- Provide archaeological, ecological and geological services dealing with over 3,000 enquiries annually based on access to approximately 196,000 records of the County's flora and fauna. Information is available on 9,000 archaeological sites in the Sites and Monuments Record, whilst new technology has been used to record the wildlife of 25 County parishes;
- The conservation and protection of historic buildings, sites, monuments and landscapes, and promoting access to them (involving the processing of 100 grant applications for historic building repairs (£79,000) dealing with over 300 general enquiries per annum and the maintenance of the statutory heritage records);
- Ensure descriptions and prices of tourist businesses are accurate.

## **F. Promoting Economic Well-Being**

We carry out a mix of actions to help promote the economic well-being of Leicestershire.

For example, we:-

- Provide access through the Record Office ( for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) to the County's documentary archive;
- Will provide by autumn 2002 public access to the county's museum collections through the Resource Centre at Barrow on Soar;
- Part-fund the Leicestershire Economic Partnership , which will become the main body overseeing economic initiatives supporting the local economy;
- Part-fund the Leicester Shire Development Agency which handles 30 business enquiries a month for local and inward investment;
- Encourage and market the tourism attractions of the area, by producing eight brochures (more than ½ million copies) which are circulated nationally and internationally;
- Provide professional museum support and grant aid;
- Promote access to over 40 independent museums and resource centres attracting over 500,000 tourists and local residents;
- Have updated the Leicestershire Tourism Strategy in co-operation with the tourism industry, and have started to implement 65 initiatives identified for action over the next five years;
- Produce a bi-monthly Land and Property Bulletin circulated to more than 850 customers;
- Part-fund a Leicestershire Business Database which has an up-to-date record of more than 12,500 local companies;
- Provide basic business information at market town libraries;
- Own 232 units for occupation by small businesses and two industrial estates where land is available for development by local businesses;
- Grant aid two large workspaces occupied by more than 100 businesses employing more than 300 people;
- Manage five training centres providing career start training and foundation/advance apprenticeships to some 250 young people in a variety of occupational areas;
- Provide free training for employees of Leicestershire businesses under Government-funded programmes;
- Provide work experience and employability training to unemployed young people and adults;
- Fund nine employment support and skills training projects for people with disabilities and long-term unemployed people, which have about 700 clients at any one time;

- Manage an extensive supported employment scheme, which enables people with severe disabilities to participate in permanent employment with many of the County's employers;
- Act as the accountable body and manage various Government-supported programmes, directed at regenerating the former coalfield areas in the north-west of the County;
- Manage a Government supported scheme of about 20 projects responding to the problems created by the recent foot and mouth epidemic;
- Make business information available at 7 major libraries;
- Provide public access to internet and other computer applications at all libraries by December 2002;
- Target small and starter businesses through ICT centres;
- Lead in producing a Leicestershire Rural Strategy and manage and part-implement a rural programme of more than 25 major projects, and encourage rural tourism;
- Hold a very successful annual Rural Conference which, in 2000, attracted more than 150 delegates from local councils and rural organisations;
- Part-fund a Co-operative Development Agency which in the last year helped to set up six new co-operatives in the County;
- Protect legitimate businesses from 'rogue traders', who undermine investment and jobs and put consumers at risk;
- Educate and advise consumers to make better purchases of goods and services;
- Support a debt-counselling and money advice service.

## **G. Making Communities Safer**

We carry out the following work in relation to this objective:-

- Support the delivery of priorities identified by seven local Crime and Disorder Partnerships, and grant aid thirty community safety projects;
- Coordinate an SRB funded project aimed at reducing domestic violence;
- Maintain a multi agency database of crime and disorder statistics to support the work of local crime and disorder partnerships;
- Manage a multi disciplinary Youth Offending Service;
- Respond to civil emergencies such as flooding;
- Ensure consumer products meet minimum safety standards and petroleum and fireworks are stored safely;
- Monitor food and animal feed for safety standards in terms of chemical additives and other contaminants;
- Implement controls to avert outbreak of disease in animal livestock and promote animal welfare.

## **H. Managing Waste Effectively**

We carry out the following in relation to this objective:-

- Manage the disposal of household waste amounting to over 330,000 tonnes each year;
- Organise recycling of around 35% of household waste deposited at recycling and household waste sites and the checking of 66,000 waste disposal weighbridge tickets;
- Work with District Councils to produce an integrated approach to the management of household waste;
- Promote waste minimisation by continuing to support household composting and recycling, and the National Waste Awareness Initiative;
- Help to reduce waste by enforcing legislation aimed at excessive packaging.

## **Departmental Services**

The current departmental structure of the Council is summarised below. However we are committed to reviewing this structure in order to improve our ability to deliver services in line with our objectives. The structure may therefore change from that shown below during 2002/03.

### **Education**

Works with other partners to provide, encourage and facilitate high quality education which raises the achievement of individual young people and adults. It has responsibility for deciding on the number and location of school places and manages the admission of pupils to schools. There is a particular responsibility for identifying and supporting young people who have special educational needs.

### **Planning and Transportation**

Has duties in law for highways, transport, strategic planning, control of development and waste disposal. It is also responsible for environmental conservation and improvement, and economic promotion. The department actively seeks partnerships between public and private sector agencies to ensure efficient use of resources and avoid duplication of effort.

### **Libraries and Information**

Aims to provide a comprehensive and efficient library and information service to meet the educational, information, cultural and recreational needs of the people in the County. It promotes reading to all ages and encourages book buying. It supports the use of ICT by providing free access and basic training in all libraries.

### **Social Services**

Carries out vital responsibilities for ensuring the protection and welfare of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. This includes services designed to help older people, people with disabilities and people with mental illness and their carers; and children and young people in need and their families. The aim is to support people at home or with their families for as long as possible. A high priority is given to work with the carers as well as those cared for. There are close working relationships with independent sector organisations throughout Leicestershire, as well as with the NHS and other organisations, locally and nationally.

### **Chief Executive's**

Has overall responsibility for the way in which our affairs are run in accordance with elected members' decisions. It also acts as a focal point between the County Council and the Government and other outside organisations. Responsibilities include Members Services; Legal Services; Central Office Services; Public Relations; Central Personnel; Emergency Management; Community Safety; Youth Offending; Training and arrangements for the Chairman of the County Council's civic engagements. The Chief Executive is also Clerk to the Lieutenancy and Secretary to the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committees on the appointment of Justices of the Peace, and Commissioners of Income Tax.

### **Museums, Arts and Records**

Records, conserves, maintains and promotes Leicestershire's rich environmental, historic, artistic and cultural heritage and develops access to the Arts. Delivers services directly to rural communities and supports community involvement in local heritage and environmental conservation. Maintains the collected documentary archive of Leicestershire's communities.

## **Information Systems**

Provides a wide range of information and communications technology (ICT) services to all of our departments. Also responsible for developing and maintaining the technologies required to enable e-government.

## **Property**

Works with other County Council departments to provide appropriate working environments for service delivery, and to optimise the use of our property assets. Provides comprehensive services in the main building and property professions. Sets and maintains professional and quality standards for our property needs.

## **Regulatory Services**

Has responsibilities including the Public Analyst; Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages; and the provision of the Trading Standards Service, which seeks to improve and maintain fair trading in terms of quality, quantity, safety, description and method of payment. An information and advisory service is provided to both consumers and traders. Other departmental duties include the issuing of petroleum, poisons and explosives licences and safety inspection of their storage.

## **County Treasurer's**

Ensures that our financial affairs are properly administered. Provides financial services, advice, accounting, audit and insurance services.

Other Services which are partly-funded by us but which are managed independently are:-

## **Fire and Rescue**

Responsible to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority, which is an independent Authority. The membership of the Fire Authority comprises nominated Councillors from the County, City and Rutland Councils. The Service has an obligation to save life, attend fires and provide a rescue service.

## **Magistrates**

Responsible to Leicestershire Magistrates Courts Committee. Handles minor civil cases and preliminary hearings.