



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 7 SEPTEMBER 2011

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Scrutiny Commission's views on the proposed Environment Strategy Review.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The current Environment Strategy was approved, following reports by a Scrutiny Review Panel, at a meeting of the County Council in March 2009. The Action Plan element was subsequently reviewed and approved by Cabinet in February 2010.
3. The Strategy is to be considered by the Cabinet, alongside any views of the Commission, at its meeting on 13 September, prior to approval by the Full County Council at its meeting on 28 September.

Background

4. The current Environment Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in February 2010 and runs until 2020. The Strategy sets out the actions the County Council needs to take to continue to ensure good internal practices and that it can continue to deliver improving environmental performance. As such it is largely internally focused. The necessary external focus is provided by the Sustainable Community Strategy produced by Leicestershire Together. It is proposed to replace the current Environment Strategy and Action Plan with a revised Environment Strategy.
5. The reasons that a review of the Environment Strategy is needed now are to:
 - (a) Provide community leadership and to show that we have "our own house in order";
 - (b) Support the outcomes of the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy;

- (c) Improve our resource efficiency and deliver cost savings wherever possible, particularly in the light of the revised Carbon Reduction Commitment – Energy Efficiency Scheme;
- (d) Reflect the wishes of our staff – in 2010 only 70% agreed with the statement “I believe that the Council is doing enough to reduce its impact on the environment”;
- (e) Fulfil our commitment as a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change;
- (f) Respond to the Government’s agenda for local authorities to improve their environmental performance and comply with environmental legislation;
- (g) Ensure that the strategy meets the requirements of BS14001 to allow business units to apply for accreditation under the Environmental Management System Standard.

Background Papers

- 6. Report to the Budget and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2011 – Benchmarking Leicestershire County Council’s Environmental Performance

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 7. None.

Officer to contact

Peter Williams, Head of Environmental Management
Tel: 0116 305 7080
Email: peter.williams@leics.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix – The Environment Strategy

Impact Assessments:

Equal Opportunities Implications

- 8. The reviewed Environment Strategy will allow all staff to play their part in improving environmental performance of the County Council. The greater prominence of the 7 Ways to Go Green will be important in highlighting the expectations of the Authority in how all staff approach their employment with the County Council.

9. It should be noted that many of the actions in the strategy will also help the delivery of many other objectives of the County Council, but which because of the environmental and internal focus, cannot be dwelled upon within the document. These include cost savings, efficiencies, benefits for human health and improved resilience.

Environmental Impact

10. Implementation of the Environment Strategy will allow the positive impact of the County Council's operations on the environment to be maximised and the negative impacts to be minimised.

Risk Assessment

11. Implementation of the Environment Strategy will reduce the risks of lack of compliance of statutory environmental standards and consequential reputational damage being incurred by the County Council.
12. The principal risk at present in delivering the strategy concerns the 30% reduction of carbon emissions by 2013-14. This is because of a combination of factors that include: the ambitious nature of the target, the investments necessary to help meet the target, and the continuing changes in the incentives regimes which create uncertainty about appropriate technologies. However, it is clear that the target is still appropriate as achieving the target will help: mitigate our contributions to climate change, reduce energy bills, reduce the payments we will need to make under the Carbon Reduction Commitment – Energy Efficiency Scheme, reduce waste and allow resources that would otherwise be used on energy purchases to be deployed to help meet County Council objectives.