

**CABINET - 10 FEBRUARY 2004**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**REVIEW OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL STRATEGY 2004-2009**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek Cabinet's endorsement for public consultation purposes of a draft revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy prepared by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership.

**Recommendation**

2. That the draft revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy (attached as Appendix A) be endorsed for public consultation purposes.

**Reason for Recommendation**

3. To enable a period of consultation on the draft Leicestershire Rural Strategy to commence.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

4. The Medium Term Corporate Strategy 'Improving Life in Leicestershire' states that the County Council will at all times "support effective partnerships to achieve real improvements in the way that services are delivered. We recognise that many other organisations deliver public services to the people who live and work in Leicestershire. A combined and co-ordinated approach will be required between all these agencies to tackle difficult issues concerning safer communities, health, education, transport, the environment and sustainable development."
5. The Leicestershire Community Strategy, produced by the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership identifies the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) as the lead body in delivering a number of actions affecting rural Leicestershire.

6. The previous version of the Leicestershire Rural Strategy, covering the period 2001-2006, was approved by the County Council at its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2001. The strategy was subsequently published by the LRP in July 2001.

### **Resources Implications**

5. There are no direct resource implications. The Rural Strategy will, however, set the policy framework within which the LRP will operate over the next five years. LRP project activity and funding allocations will be influenced by this strategic framework.
6. The County Council provides significant funding to support the work of the LRP and the allocation of this funding to projects and initiatives will be made within the policy framework provided by the Medium Term Corporate Strategy, the Leicestershire Community Strategy and the revised Rural Strategy

### **Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedure**

6. None.

#### Officers to Contact

Tom Purnell            email: [tpurnell@leics.gov.uk](mailto:tpurnell@leics.gov.uk)  
Tim Frenneaux        email: [tfrenneaux@leics.gov.uk](mailto:tfrenneaux@leics.gov.uk)

## **PART B**

### **Background**

7. Since 1993 the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP), with the considerable support of the County Council, has co-ordinated the activities of a number of agencies delivering services in rural Leicestershire. This co-ordination has taken place within the context provided by a Leicestershire Rural Strategy jointly prepared and agreed by the members of the LRP.
  8. The County Council has consistently taken the role of lead body for the LRP providing the LRP Chair (currently Mrs Pendleton CC) and financial and staffing resources to support LRP activity. This support is matched by funding from partners and other sources, including the Countryside Agency, emda and other local authorities.
  9. Since the current Strategy was prepared and approved there have been considerable changes to the policy and partnership context in Leicestershire. The Leicestershire LSP (LLSP) and seven district LSPs have been established, as has the emda-funded Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (LSEP). The LSPs have prepared, or are in the process of preparing, community strategies with the LSEP having put in place a sub-regional economic strategy. The LRP is well linked into these new partnership arrangements with the LRP Chair being a Board Member of the LLSP. In addition the LRP is recognised as a proven and effective delivery partner by the LSEP and is identified in community strategies as the lead body to deliver projects and actions affecting rural Leicestershire. These new arrangements have been taken into account in revising the Strategy.
- The draft revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy
10. The current Rural Strategy, published in July 2001, covers the period 2001 to 2006. The revised version of the Strategy (attached as Appendix A) rolls this forward to cover the period 2004 to 2009.
  11. Development of the revised Rural Strategy has been a collaborative process involving members of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) and a broad range of other partners involved in LRP related initiatives. The process has been led and managed by the County Council.
  12. Initial work on the draft Leicestershire Rural Strategy was started in June 2003 at an LRP Development Day and continued at the 2003 Rural Conference, when priorities and potential visions for the future of rural Leicestershire were discussed. Following this, a paper was prepared which summarised these discussions, and was a key input to a further Development Day held in November 2003, at which the final content of the draft Strategy was discussed.

13. On 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003, the strategic content of the draft Strategy was approved for consultation purposes by the LRP's Management Board. Since then contextual information, including a summary of national, regional and sub-regional policies affecting rural areas and a profile of rural Leicestershire, has been added.
14. It is intended that the consultation period on the draft Strategy will run from 16<sup>th</sup> February to 16<sup>th</sup> April. During this period the Strategy will be considered by Scrutiny Commission. Following the end of the consultation period, comments received will be considered and changes to the Strategy drafted for consideration by the LRP's Management Board (on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004), Cabinet (in June 2004) and the County Council (7<sup>th</sup> July 2004).