

## LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

SHADOW BOARD 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2002

### THE LEICESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

#### REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

##### Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership of progress in developing the Leicestershire Community Strategy, to agree the approach to involving partner organisations and to consider the proposals for consultation.

##### Background

2. The Local Government Act 2000 introduces a power for local authorities to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and a new duty to prepare community strategies to fulfil this role. The community strategy must be:
  - developed and delivered in partnership with other organisations;
  - a shared statement of the priorities for an area, including actions to be taken to improve the quality of life in the area;
  - a common and co-ordinated approach to meeting local needs; and
  - an output of the community planning process. Community planning brings together organisations and communities to identify, prioritise and deliver action. It provides the opportunity for different organisations to work together to achieve more for local people.
3. The Leader of the County Council, Mr. Barber, outlined Leicestershire County Council's position on local strategic partnerships and community strategies in September last year. He:
  - proposed to begin drafting the Community Strategy;
  - stressed that discussions with partners about the Community Strategy are required before final decisions are made;
  - suggested that the draft Community Strategy should be published for consultation in the summer of 2002; and
  - highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Leicestershire Community Strategy and district Community Strategies are complementary.

##### Developing the Community Strategy

4. Initial work has been undertaken to develop a framework for a draft Community Strategy for Leicestershire. Without input from the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership (LLSP), it is emphasised that this work has concentrated, so far, on the input that Leicestershire County

Council can make. It is based on the County Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy and the Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03. *The County Council has undertaken this work only to start off a debate and process about the Community Strategy. It is not in this sense a formal recommendation, but an aid and illustration.*

5. The working draft Community Strategy, attached as Appendix 1, illustrates the suggested style and format. It comprises nine chapters based on the objectives set out in the County Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy. Each chapter includes:
  - A summary of main points drawing from the results of numerous consultation exercises undertaken by the County Council, both corporately and by departments;
  - Statistics setting out the situation in Leicestershire building a image of how the County compares to other local authorities and the national picture; and
  - Action points for the LLSP to undertake, so far derived from the County Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Plan.
6. Work on the Community Strategy has to date concentrated on bringing together the results of key consultation exercises undertaken by the County Council and drawing upon the Medium Term Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Plan. The content is therefore not yet comprehensive.
7. To achieve a more comprehensive Strategy, the next stage is to involve other partners, in particular the organisations of the LLSP. It is suggested that this involvement will take place primarily through informal discussions to allow information relating to the various organisations' consultation exercises, priorities and perspectives to be fed into the working draft Community Strategy. Further input is under consideration from within the County Council. It is envisaged that these discussions will take place over the next 6 weeks.

#### Consulting on the Community Strategy

8. An important and recognised component of preparing the community strategy is the involvement of Leicestershire people in its preparation. The community strategy should play a pivotal role in identifying local needs and priorities and, following on from this, in focusing the efforts of relevant organisations towards tackling the issues facing the local community, many of which will cut across traditional organisational boundaries.
9. A two stage process of consultation is proposed. The first will involve verifying the summary of consultation (ie. the first section of each chapter) to ensure that the key issues extracted from previous consultation exercises are consistent with the issues that the people of Leicestershire consider are important. The second will involve consulting on the action

points (ie. the third section of each chapter) identified by partners to ensure these are consistent with the issues identified as priorities by the people of Leicestershire.

10. Consultation on the draft community strategy is proposed to take place in summer 2002. There is a wide range of different techniques available for identifying the views of local people, ranging from traditional customer surveys to more innovative approaches such as citizens' juries, citizens' panels and focus groups. A key factor influencing the effectiveness of any consultation process is ensuring that the techniques chosen are appropriate. It is proposed that a variety of different consultation techniques should be used for the two stages in developing the community strategy rather than carrying out one single consultation method. There is an opportunity to try different consultation techniques and to assess how effective they are. The following are being considered:

- One day citizens' jury or focus group for each of the two stages of consultation using the same group of people. There is potential to make links to the young persons citizens' jury;
- Use of leaflets, press releases and other local media coverage;
- Coverage in Leicestershire Matters and other partner publications;
- Publicise through the County Council and partner websites, giving an opportunity for on-line responses;
- Telephone hotline to give people the opportunity to respond by telephone;
- Consultation with parish councils and where possible link into parish council and other community magazines
- Consultation with local consultation groups such as 'live' village appraisal and parish plan groups either individually or through a seminar event;
- Make use of events and activities taking place during the consultation period such as the twice yearly business survey, citizens' panel, village appraisal/design statement launches or events at Country Parks.

#### Future Timetable

11. The following timetable is proposed:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Mid July 02         | Complete process of adding partners' perspectives and priorities into the Community Strategy |
| August/September 02 | Stage 1 consultation   |
| November 02         | Stage 2 consultation   |
| Spring 03           | Publish 'final' Community Strategy   |

### Recommendations

12. It is recommended that this meeting:

- i. considers the process of involving partners during the next stage of developing the Community Strategy; and
- ii. considers the two stage approach to consulting the general public on the Community Strategy.

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## Appendix 1: Working Draft Community Strategy

### CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

**The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Green areas to be preserved.

Previously developed land to be developed before greenfield sites.

**In Leicestershire:**

42% of new housing has been built on brownfield land in recent years. This compares to a national average of xx%. The target for the East Midlands is 60%.

By 2002, the Shire Grants scheme has committed £418,000 towards 250 projects to help local communities influence priorities for improving their environment.

**We will:**

**Be committed to ensuring that the best of Leicestershire and its heritage is protected and enhanced and the worst is improved.**

**Set limits on the amount of new greenfield land that should be developed for employment and housing.**

**Continue to support the National Forest and other woodland areas.**

**Build on the existing success of the SHIRE grants scheme.**

**KEY TO 'WE WILL' SECTION:**

**BOLD TYPE - MEDIUM TERM CORPORATE STRATEGY EXTRACT**

**ITALIC TYPE - BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN**

**NORMAL TYPE - BABS1 AND CRIME & DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS 2002-2005**

## IMPROVING OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM

### **The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Bus services to be improved.

Safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

More awareness raising of the extent to which traffic is predicted to grow and the impact it could have, particularly on increased congestion.

### **In Leicestershire:**

In rural Leicestershire 27% of people have access to an hourly bus service. (Best Value Review of Public Transport Services). This compares to xxx nationwide.

In 2001/02 for every 100, 000 people there were 46 people killed or seriously injured on Leicestershire's roads. This is lower than the national average. (BVPP 2002/03).

Around 50 schools and 19 major employers are committed to adopting a travel plan. (BVPP 2002/03).

### **We will:**

**Improve countywide bus services to give better access to employment and services.** Our aim is that 95% of people will have direct access to an hourly bus service, or better.

**Improve road safety and implement programmes to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads, particularly children and other vulnerable road users, including making greater use of road safety cameras and a pilot programme of 20 mph zones outside schools.**

**Encourage and support the development and implementation of employer and school travel plans, including adopting an Employer Travel Plan for County Hall.**

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## WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES

| <b>The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:</b>  | <b>In Leicestershire</b>  | <b>We will:</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| Accessible and visible services.   | 63% of citizens are satisfied with the overall service of the County Council.   | <b>Pursue improved joint arrangements for consultation with local communities so that the views of local people play an important role in decision making.</b> |
| Services to be provided by traditional methods as well as electronic methods.  | 33% of buildings open to the public are suitable for and accessible to disabled people (BVPP).                                    | <b>Ask people about their preferred ways of accessing different services.</b>  |
| People to be given a sense of empowerment.   | 33% of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery are enabled for electronic delivery (BVPP). | <b>Introduce new and improved arrangements to co-ordinate service delivery with other agencies and councils.</b>   |
| Local councils to be more approachable.  | Xx post offices closed during 2001 xx (Your Guide evaluation report PIU Report).  | <i>Review the range of service and contact points throughout the County with the aim of developing a co-ordinated approach.</i>                                |
| Increased co-ordination between those providing services.  |   | <b>Establish at least two projects using post offices as access points.</b>  |
| More services to be provided within communities by making better use of post offices, libraries, village shops, mobile services and pooling/grouping services. |   |  |

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## PROMOTING ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

**The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

More small starter units and more flexible lease terms.

More diversification of businesses and farms in rural areas.

**In Leicestershire:**

There was an unemployment rate of 2.2% in March 2002 compared to the East Midlands rate of 3.1%.

**We will:**

**Work to help maintain the unemployment rate for the county below the region's average.**

*Develop an improvement Plan with the Learning and skills Council to enhance the quality of training provided to participants and employers.*

The gap between low business confidence in manufacturing and the more optimistic outlook of the service sector is growing.

A drop of 12,500 people employed in the Textile & Clothing industry in the next 10 years to 2010 is forecast.

**Provide managed workspaces, commercial units and serviced land to assist local companies.**

The majority of exporters continue to be manufacturing firms but the increase in exports is slowing.

**Support businesses that diversify economic activity in sectors such as traditional manufacturing and farming.**

## **MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER**

### **The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Services to be provided in safe and well-lit locations.

Burglary from the home, domestic violence, violent crime and theft from and of vehicles to be addressed, in particular.

Less crime carried out by young people.

### **In Leicestershire:**

The mean age for offenders is 16.3.

Over the last three years:

- The number of burglaries from dwellings have remained steady
- The number of thefts from and of vehicles have decreased slightly
- The number of violent crimes have also decreased, but there was a slight increase over the last year

Only 42.6% of domestic violence incidents and 23% of 'crime because of ethnicity' were reported.

Criminal damage was the offence most often committed by males (16%) followed by assault (15%) and other theft (13%). Other theft accounted for 60% of female crimes and assault accounted for 28%.

### **We will:**

**Work with others to co-ordinate action on a range of personal safety initiatives, including racial harassment and domestic violence.**

**Work with others to continuously improve the personal safety of Leicestershire people and increase responsive police presence, particularly in rural areas.**

**Participate in initiatives to promote safety in and around people's homes.**

**Help to prevent and reduce the risk of offending by children and young people.**

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## ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### **The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Training for both older and younger people.

To continue the rate of progress and achievement of all Leicestershire pupils.

The Local Education Authority to provide a co-ordinated approach.

To raise standards and increase the rate of progress of pupils with emotional behavioural difficulties.

### **In Leicestershire:**

The number of enrolments on local authority adult education courses is more than twice that of the best performing 25% of local authorities.

In Summer 2001 Leicestershire scored 89% in Key Stage 1 and 80% in Key Stage 2 matching that achieved by the best 25% of our OFSTED neighbours.

For unauthorised absence, primary schools are in the best 25% of local authorities' but secondary schools are below average.

In 2001, the specialist Teaching Services have supported over 1,700 children with special educational needs in a variety of early years settings, schools and colleges.

### **We will:**

**Work with governing bodies and diocesan authorities to ensure that school facilities are available to all.**

**Aim to improve results at all four key stages to place Leicestershire in the top 25% of English counties by 2005.**

**Move towards a common first time admissions policy in the County.**

**Improve opportunities for, and raise the educational attainment of, children looked after by the County Council & other vulnerable children.**

**Continue to develop and implement policies for children with special educational needs.**

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## **SUPPORTING CULTURE AND LEISURE**

### **The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Better public and visitor facilities.

Libraries to be open on Sundays.

Libraries to have more choice of books, videos and CDs.

More events and activities held at libraries.

The importance of Public Arts to be recognised.

### **In Leicestershire:**

*There are 3000km of public rights of way for walkers, with 500 km available for cyclists and horse riders.*

**Maintain and improve the network of Rights of Way in Leicestershire.**  
**Ensure that the significant majority of Rights of Way are easy to use by 2005.**

**Safeguard and develop our country parks and establish Bosworth Battlefield as a foremost visitor attraction.**

**Improve access to libraries and the quality of library services.**

**Support the development of theatre and arts in the County's market towns and other areas of the County.**

*In 2000/01 83% of the Rights of Way were easy to use. Overall, 51% of rights of way are signposted where that leave a road compared to a (national?) average of 73%.*

*Country parks are visited by 1.5 million visitors annually.*

*There are 52 libraries and 7 mobile libraries and the number of items (books and other materials) have increased.*

*34 libraries (XX%) meet the recommended minimum opening hours.*

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## **MEETING HEALTH AND CARE NEEDS**

### **The People of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

Services targeted at disadvantaged young people.

Improved care services for elderly people.

### **In Leicestershire:**

Children looked after by the County Council have a higher prevalence of homelessness, health problems, teenage pregnancy, offending behaviour and perform poorly in education.

Services aimed at supporting elderly people at home.

### **We will:**

Improve opportunities for, and raise the educational attainment of, children looked after by the County Council and other vulnerable children.

Work with the national health service and others to develop prevention and rehabilitation services to help older people and people with disabilities to live as independently as possible.

Work in co-operation with private and voluntary sector providers to improve the quality, accessibility, affordability and consistency of home care services, including the community meals and laundry services.

5,500 people in Leicestershire aged 65 or over are helped to live at home.

2,400 people are supported in residential and nursing home care.

2.5 out of every 1000 adults with learning disabilities are helped to live at home.

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## **MANAGING WASTE EFFECTIVELY**

**The people of Leicestershire have told us they would like:**

**More to be spent on recycling.**

**In Leicestershire:**

Over 300,000 tonnes of waste is disposed of each year. Of this, 80% of household waste is landfilled, 7% is re-cycled and 8% composted. This compares to national averages of 85%, 7% and 5%.

**We will:**

**Reduce the amount of waste going into landfill.**

**Improve Civic Amenity Sites to ensure that they contribute to recycling targets including pursuing the replacement or refurbishment of those at Sileby and Loughborough.**

**Work with District Councils to finalise a Household Waste Management Strategy and to develop new recycling facilities.**

**Continue to support household composting and other initiatives, including the National Awareness campaign.**

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