

LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – 11TH DECEMBER 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

THE DRAFT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy issued for public consultation by Leicestershire Together.

Background

2. Leicestershire Together is the Local Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire and is charged with preparing a Sustainable Community Strategy for Leicestershire. Leicestershire Together is a 'Partnership of Partnerships' for the County and provides an over-arching framework within which other thematic and area-based partnerships operate. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) will be the key delivery framework for the strategy and will be negotiated with Government by April and signed off by June 2008.
3. The Sustainable Community Strategy is open for public consultation until 16th January 2008. The full document is available on the partnership website at <http://www.leicestershiretogether.org>.

The Draft Strategy

4. Attached as an Appendix is the Draft Vision and the Cleaner-Greener sections of the draft document.

Comments

5. It is suggested that the following comments be considered for forwarding to Leicestershire Together:
"That the Leicestershire Local Access Forum:
 - Welcomes the recognition of the importance of Green Infrastructure and the intended outcome of increased resident satisfaction with the built environment and improved green infrastructure;
 - Suggests that greater recognition be placed on the contribution that Rights of Way and Greenspaces can play in providing an element of an integrated approach to improving wellbeing for the people of Leicestershire; and
 - Proposes that programmes of improved green infrastructure standards should be included within the Leicestershire Together Board's programmes of implementation for the Sustainable Community Strategy."

Draft Vision

We have developed a new draft vision which sets out what we want Leicestershire to be like in 2026.

In 2026, Leicestershire will be made up of thriving, sustainable, safe and secure communities and be recognised locally, regionally and nationally, for:

- The strength of social capital in its towns, villages and suburbs where;
 - people support the City's ambition to make Leicester the most cohesive city in Britain.
 - strong elected parish councils and community organisations work together to empower and engage local people to shape the future of their settlements.
 - people have pride in the social diversity of their towns, rate their physical environment highly and have a clear understanding of the role they play in providing employment and services.

- Its engaged, informed and optimistic people who;
 - look to the future and recognise the needs of future generations.
 - actively engage in the life of their communities.
 - seek to protect vulnerable people within their communities and support them to live independent lives.
 - respect the needs of different social groups and accept social diversity and new people in their place or community.
 - take responsibility for their own physical and mental well being whatever their age.
 - as children, benefit from the 'Good to Great' programme and our top class Universities to get the most from their education and want to put something back into Leicestershire.
 - feel safe in their communities without the fear of crime.
 - adapt to change through life long learning.
 - have equal opportunities for long and health lives.
 - are able to secure accommodation that meets their housing needs.
 - are generally satisfied with the public services they receive.

- A strong (Leicester and Leicestershire) economy that plays to its strengths including its location, culture, specialist products and services, tourism and environment, and has:
 - developed successful business clusters and attracted new business to the sub region.
 - developed and attracted higher levels of skills that match business requirements.
 - maintained high employment levels.
 - seen Loughborough achieve its full potential as a major economic and cultural centre in the heart of the 3 cities sub region.
 - ensured that transport nodes including East Midlands Airport, Leicester and Midlands Parkway stations and M1 Junction 21 are linked to business growth.
 - entrepreneurial businesses in rural areas trading in strong local supply chains and networks and supported by high quality IT.
 - enough to offer to persuade many graduates from our Universities to stay in Leicestershire.
 - a clear identity and quality products that make people want to visit for at least a few days.

- Its attractiveness as a place to live and work because:
 - of its countryside where food production and environmental quality are balanced ensuring
 - parks and rights of way are well used for leisure and exercise.
 - farms are diverse and profitable and well run.
 - tree cover is increased on the eastern side of the County.
 - habitats are protected and new habitats retain and encourage bio-diversity.
 - its main attractions - like the National Forest Visitor Centre, Conkers, Foxton Locks, Bosworth Battlefield and Snibston Museum - are managed as centres for understanding of Leicestershire's history and culture.
 - its National Forest is fully planted and supports leisure, tourism and local employment.
 - steps have been taken to protect places along the M1 corridor from noise or other pollution.
 - town centres, urban parks and streets are places where people of all ages can enjoy a high quality environment free from traffic, litter, dirt, anti social behaviour and unnecessary traffic.
 - there are excellent transportation networks which make getting about easy.

- A full contribution to a sustainable future for the world because:
 - waste generated and landfilled is minimised, most waste is recycled and some waste provides renewable energy.
 - there are attractive opportunities to use foot, cycling and public transport for most journeys, including park and ride facilities ringing Leicester.
 - major new development and all public buildings achieve the highest environmental standards.

- High quality, responsive, efficient and accessible public services:
 - which are accessible to all, personalised and offer choice and control to customers.
 - where the quality and cost balance is one that most local people support.
 - where the service is more important than the agency or agencies that provide it.
 - where a range of health provision is available, mostly in locally delivered community services and facilities.
 - where schooling is second to none, which reduces levels of crime and tackles problems caused by alcohol and drugs.
 - provide the infrastructure needed to support new development.

CLEANER AND GREENER

The Cleaner and Greener section of the evidence base highlights key issues in making Leicestershire a cleaner, greener and better place to live, particularly those which offer an opportunity for intervention.

Green Infrastructure – the network of multi-functional greenspaces and natural elements such as waterways, gardens, woodlands, cycleways, green corridors (including the Rights of Way network), street trees and open countryside that intersperse and connect our towns and villages.

Biodiversity –the historical management of land within Leicestershire has led to a loss of natural and semi-natural habitats and their associated species. which means that Leicestershire is one of the 'poorest' counties in terms of the biodiversity it

supports and its biodiversity is continuing to decline. The geo-diversity of Leicestershire is very special and needs to be protected.

Mineral Resources –Leicestershire has extensive mineral resources including igneous rock and fire clay. The mineral workings in Leicestershire are of national importance and essential for meeting local and regional community needs but there is a conflict between ensuring continuity of supply and the environmental consequences of extraction

Water – water quality is generally good or fair in Leicestershire. The County is covered by a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone which means that farmers need to reduce the amount of nitrates lost from their land into the water. There is significant pressure on surface water resources in summer and the efficient use and conservation of water resources is therefore essential. However, in recent years flooding of low-lying areas and town centres (through overwhelmed drainage systems) has also become an issue of increasing concern.

Waste – 4.8 million tonnes of waste are generated in Leicestershire per year and the amount of waste produced and this is increasing. The way in which waste is managed has significant implications for the environment. The Waste Management Strategy identifies three key areas – waste prevention and re-use, recycling and composting.

Quality Built Environment - How we design and maintain our urban, suburban and village environments has a significant impact on people's sense of place, quality of life and how communities function.

A well-designed built environment contributes to a wide range of benefits such as improved public health, reduced carbon emissions or reduced levels of crime.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT:

ENABLE (Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire) is the lead strategic partnership for this theme. ENABLE is a countywide forum for the protection and enhancement of the environment whose mission is "To unite Leicestershire for the protection and enhancement of the environment". The partnership aims to create, enable and promote action and to help prioritise issues and monitor environmental change in the County. ENABLE have recently developed a draft Leicestershire Together Declaration on Climate Change for the Board.

PRIORITY OUTCOMES:

OUTCOME: Reduce Leicestershire's contribution to Climate Change

Sub Outcomes:

- CO2 emissions in public sector operations and estates are reduced
- Enhanced energy efficiency of buildings through implementing higher than minimum statutory standards
- Improved resource efficiency

OUTCOME: Leicestershire has high resilience to the effects of Climate Change

Sub Outcomes:

- Resilience and adaptation plans for Leicestershire are prepared and resourced

OUTCOME: Less waste is produced and a reduced proportion of this goes to landfill.

Sub Outcomes:

- Reduced waste creation;
- Increased reuse of items that can be put to good use;
- Increase recycling and composting of waste
- A waste infrastructure which improves the treatment of residual waste to reduce our reliance on landfill and minimise the environmental impact of waste disposal; and
- An effective means of commissioning and decommissioning any necessary landfill sites with due regard for environmental concerns.

OUTCOME: Increased resident satisfaction with the built environment and improved green infrastructure

Sub Outcomes:

- New development, including housing, is accompanied by high quality green infrastructure
- Improved green infrastructure and better access to this
- Improved street and environmental cleanliness and maintenance i.e. fly-tipping, graffiti and littering
- Improved air quality (see Transport section)

OUTCOME: An enhanced natural environment with improved protection

Sub Outcomes:

- Improved local biodiversity and natural habitats;
- Improved supply of minerals to satisfy society's needs, balanced against protection of the environment and the impact on local residents; and
- Local communities use, understand and appreciate the natural and historic environment.