

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Council

**Date of Committee** 20 March 2007

**Report Title** Annual Report of the Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment

**Summary** The report sets out the activities of the Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment over the last year.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** No.

**Background papers** None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** Details to be specified

- Other Committees  .....
- Local Member(s)  N/A
- Other Elected Members  .....
- Cabinet Member  .....
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  .....
- Finance  .....
- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

**Council - 20 March 2007.**

**Annual Report of the Cabinet portfolio holder for  
Environment**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and  
Development**

**Recommendation**

That the Council receive the report from Councillor Martin Heatley, the Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment.

**1.0 Introduction**

Leaders Liaison Group has been looking at ways of allowing a wider range of discussion at Council and ways on informing members of developments across the Council's services and has concluded that one way of doing this is to have Cabinet members report on the development of policies and activities within their portfolio, alongside the annual reports from overview and scrutiny committees. This will provide an opportunity for members to question both Cabinet portfolio holders and Chairs of overview and scrutiny committees on issues within their remits.

As this is the first meeting at which this approach has been taken, the process will be reviewed in the light of feedback from members.

**2.0 Programme of reporting**

The current programme for reporting is set out below for information. It has been designed so that Cabinet portfolio holder reports are presented alongside relevant overview and scrutiny committee.

15 May Children, Young People & Families and Schools Cabinet portfolio holders  
Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 June Health Cabinet portfolio holder  
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 17 July Adult, Health and Community Cabinet portfolio holder  
Adult, Health and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 11 Sept Resources and Performance and Development Cabinet  
portfolio holders
- Resources, Performance and Development Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee.
- 30 October Economic Development Cabinet portfolio holder  
Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### **3.0 Recommendation**

The Council is invited to receive the report from the Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment, as appended.

DAVID CARTER  
Strategic Director of  
Performance and  
Development  
Shire Hall  
Warwick  
8 March 2007

## Annual Report of Councillor Martin Heatley, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment

### Recommendation

That Council receives the report.

### 1. Background

This is the annual report of my activities over the past 12 months, undertaken as portfolio holder for the Environment. The portfolio covers a cross section of areas including highways, public transport, waste management, road safety, environmental services, sustainability, small holdings and rural estates.

Although the majority of work undertaken within the environment portfolio naturally falls within the work of the Environment and Economy Directorate, increasingly issues around sustainability and the environment of Warwickshire are cross cutting and require a cross Directorate and cross portfolio response demonstrated by the success of projects such as the Eco-Schools programme.

The Environment and Economy Directorate employs approximately 850 full and part time staff ranging from structural engineers to countryside rangers. The Directorate has a net revenue budget of £55m and by attracting external funding and generating income, has a total spend of £90m.

I would like to thank all the officers who have assisted me with my portfolio work over the past 12 months and pay tribute to their hard work. This has been rewarded with the environment element of the recent CPA assessments receiving 4 stars, including trading standards.

### 2. Key Achievements from the past year

The range of work that my portfolio has covered this year has been wide ranging, but the key areas of work and achievements are shown below.

Warwickshire submitted its second Local Transport Plan to government on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. A Delivery Report on the outcomes achieved over the five years of the first LTP was submitted to government on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006. In December the government assessed our performance as 'Good' for LTP2 and 'Very Good' for delivery of the first LTP. Highlights

of this assessment were road maintenance achieving a score of 14 out of 15 (93%) and that of our performance in road safety achieving top marks.

## 2.1 Highways

We have undertaken a number of major schemes in the past 12 months including:

- Barford By-pass
- Coleshill Parkway
- Stratford Park & Ride
- the preparatory work for Rugby Western Relief Road, and
- the Leamington Urban Management Programme (LUMP) which will be brought in within the revised budget.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> February I was delighted to become the first person to drive the length of the newly constructed section of the Barford By-pass, which was not due to be completed until July 2007.

A range of highway maintenance activities have been carried out to maintain and improve the condition of the network and to improve the levels of public satisfaction. The normal allocations allowed:-

- Principal Road Carriageways – 4km of surfacing and 35km of surface dressing
- Non Principal road Carriageways – 40km of surfacing and 170km of surface dressing
- Footways – 200km of surfacing
- Street Lighting – Replacing some 400 old columns and upgrading an additional 700 lanterns

In addition an extra £1.5 million Capital allowance has allowed schemes to be carried out throughout the County based on the priorities of the Area Committees.

The innovative contract with Carillion is beginning to show savings which has allowed additional work to be carried out during the year. Progress with the resolution of past contract issues was reviewed by the Environment O and S committee in September where a request was made for a further report in 12 months.

The addition of £2m to the Capital budget will enable us to deal with the ongoing pressures faced by the Directorate with 'C' & 'D' class road and footway maintenance, street light column replacement and paving replacement.

## 2.2 Road Safety

Work on improving the safety of Warwickshire roads continues in numerous ways. Our 2006 road casualty figures show that Warwickshire have achieved the government's targets for 2010 to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured five years early. The number of people seriously injured or killed has fallen from 638 in 2000, when the targets were introduced, to 406 in 2005.

Over 16,000 motorists have now attended Speed Awareness workshops, designed to change driver attitudes to speeding and help Warwickshire drivers be safer drivers. At a regional level, Warwickshire Casualty Reduction Partnership has worked with others to produce a series of campaigns aimed at drivers specifically aged 25 to 34.

In addition:

- We provided cycle training for 3,500 children
- We provided 'KerbSafe' (practical pedestrian training at the kerbside) for 1,000 five and six year old children
- Some 16,000 children took part in our annual school's Road Safety Quiz.
- 2,500 children about to transfer to secondary school attended the 'Live and Dangerous' road safety event at Gaydon
- Some 1,700 children attended the multi-agency 'Crucial Crew' safety event at the NAC Stoneleigh which the Road Safety Unit co-ordinates.

## 2.3 Public Transport

We have introduced a free county-wide bus pass for the elderly and disabled in partnership with our Districts and Borough councils.

Public satisfaction amongst passengers travelling in Warwickshire has increased, helped by an extensive marketing campaign to raise the profile of public transport services in Warwickshire. Improvements to services have been made in both the north and the south of the County.

The new Coleshill Parkway station has resulted in an increased and enhanced bus provision in North Warwickshire, including the provision of seven new vehicles branded in our "County Links" livery. The south of the County has benefited from a partnership between the County and Stratford District Council enabling the introduction of a demand responsive community transport scheme.

De-criminalisation of parking has now been successfully rolled out in Stratford and Rugby. Warwick will be delivered in 2007 with the remaining areas following.

## 2.4 Environmental services and Sustainability

The Environment and Economy Directorate have successfully achieved certification to the international environmental Management standards ISO14001, with work already underway to achieve this in other County Council Directorates. The implementation of ISO14001, an international standard for organisations, means that the Council is now recognised as being able to demonstrate its commitment to being environmentally responsible.

Some 142 schools are actively working in the Eco-Schools programme, with 44% of those already having achieved awards, surpassing all of our original targets. In addition, in November 2006 Warwickshire County Council was awarded a 'Green Apple' award for our environmental successes in the field of EcoSchools, and was named the 'Green Champions' in the category of 'Education and Training'.

The Warwickshire Climate Change Strategy was successfully launched in July 2006 by Jonathan Porritt. A range of projects have been identified as part of this work including the introduction of bio-fuel and wind turbine projects.

The 'Switch It Off' campaign ran from the 30<sup>th</sup> October until 3<sup>rd</sup> November across Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Coventry. The culmination of the week saw Central Networks monitor electricity consumption between 4:30pm and 6:30pm, a period when usage is normally at its peak. Over the week consumption fell across the region by 8%, and on Friday afternoon, usage was equal to that of the previous Sunday, a time when consumption is traditionally low. This project cost each of the local authorities involved £5,000 along with contributions from local partners, a testimony to the hard work of those involved in the project from across the region.

Household waste in Warwickshire reduced by 0.23% from 2004/05 to 2005/06, whilst municipal waste was reduced by 0.47% over the same period. Recycling rates in Warwickshire continue to improve, but still vary greatly between districts. Over 40% of waste was recycled in Stratford on Avon District area, whilst Rugby achieved a rate of 22%. The agreement of a Warwickshire wide Waste Strategy with the five Districts and Boroughs, produced by the Warwickshire Waste Partnership, sets out our vision for the next 15 years in this crucial area.

## 2.5 Smallholdings and Rural Affairs

The Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan (CAROWIP) was approved by Council and took effect from 1 April 2006 and a sister plan to the Local Transport Plan. It sets out our approach to managing our countryside assets and improving access to



the countryside, and in conjunction with events such as the Walking Festivals, is key to the development of this part of my portfolio.

The Smallholdings Team has achieved capital receipt sales for three properties, two in Dunchurch and one in Lower Tysoe. Planning permission was granted by Stratford on Avon District Council and construction has begun for the new farmhouse at Camperdown Farm to support the two hundred cow dairy unit. Three major farm waste slurry schemes have been completed with three further planned for the forthcoming financial year.

Following Cabinet approval in April 2006, the electrical renewal programme has begun in both the North and South at the agreed budget of £100,000 per annum for a three year programme. Within the current financial year, sixteen holdings in total have had the works completed. Three new livestock buildings have been erected and planning permission is in place for a further four buildings in the next financial year.

The Single Farm Payment Scheme applications are being completed by the Smallholdings Section annually with a 91% uptake from tenants. A good number of tenants are entered for Environmental Management at Entry Level and four sites have been identified for Higher Level Stewardship subject to approval from Natural England.

Excellent partnership work is underway to address the challenges of Gypsy and Traveller issues in the county, including site refurbishment and management, developing a consistent, firm but fair approach to managing Unauthorised Encampments, securing understanding of public sector responsibilities, and promoting understanding of Gypsy and Traveller culture.

We have also begun work with other organisations and partners to develop a consistent strategy for the delivery of services in rural parts of the county, and have recently set up a Member taskforce to help in establishing the priorities.

### **3. Partnership Working and Portfolio Learning Activities**

Partnership working continues to be key to the success of officer and Member work within my portfolio and this is reflected in the volume of work with external stakeholders. The Economy and Environment Directorate continues to have active partnerships with a range of companies and organisations including AWM, Arup and Carillion. A 'Quality Partnership' with the rail industry, the first in the country, has been established to ensure best value is achieved from joint investment.

Over the past 12 months I have represented the County Council on a number of external events and have made visits to learn of best practice in other areas that might be brought back and used in Warwickshire. Visits have included a materials recycling facility in Frog Island, CEMEX and Shropshire County Council, who shared with me their experiences in establishing a strategic waste partnership.

In my role as Portfolio Holder for Environment, I represent Warwickshire County Council on Warwickshire Waste Partnership as Chairman, which I believe has an important year ahead of it if we are to establish the most effective form of waste collection and disposal for Warwickshire.

#### **4. Challenges, Issues and Ambitions**

Nationally, environmental issues are gaining increasing public, political and media attention, and it is vital that this passion continues to be harnessed to good effect.

The Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', sets out the clear and important role that local government has to play in achieving sustainable development and combating climate change. It provides us with opportunities not only to improve our own environmental performance but also show leadership to our communities in this area.

The inclusion of £500,000 in the 2007/08 Capital budget for climate change projects will make a substantial impact in our work in this area. The Warwickshire Climate Change Action Plan will continue to be monitored and built upon and amended to take into account the changing strategic context, locally and nationally. The first Partnership report is due in July 2007. The success of the 'Switch It Off' campaign must also be built upon this year.

The coming year will also see us establishing closer and better working relationships with the District and Borough councils and I look forward to seeing how this can improve the service provision and efficiency of services covered by the Environment portfolio.

Within tight financial constraints we must continue to explore better and more efficient ways to deliver the services within my portfolio. The portfolio includes some key projects and aims for the coming year, which will continue to build upon the successes of this year. These include:

1. Waste reduction and disposal will continue to be one of the key challenges facing the Authority, but the work of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership already provides us with sound foundations on which to build. We are planning to increase recycling and

composting rates to over 35% over the next few years in order to comply with EU landfill diversion targets for biodegradable waste. The Council has and will continue to be proactive in introducing schemes to reduce the amount of waste that it produces and improve our own recycling levels. The work of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership is crucial to the continuing reductions in Warwickshire's waste production and maximisation of recycling. We have made improvements in this area, but we must build upon these successes and be ambitious for the future, if we are to continue to improve the environment of Warwickshire and avoid the costs associated with missing these targets. As a result of a recent Warwickshire Waste Partnership meeting, 4 of the 5 districts are joining with Warwickshire County Council to carry out a joint feasibility study into the creation of a joint waste partnership company.

2. Over the past year a Waste Minimisation Strategy has been developed that provides a framework for how the Warwickshire Waste Partnership intends to tackle waste minimisation in Warwickshire over the next 8 years. This strategy is presently out for public consultation and will sit alongside the Municipal Waste Management Strategy (MWMS) adopted by the Warwickshire Waste Partnership in October 2005.
3. To deliver the LTP2 strategy and to improve on our "very good" assessment on delivery of LTP1.
4. Highways maintenance and improvement continue to be key areas of concern for residents of Warwickshire and the inclusion of £2million in the all-party budget for highways maintenance, improvement and safety will help this process.
5. Reducing congestion levels around our towns and villages and improving the quality and access of public transport will continue to be key challenges for the portfolio. The bus strategy within the Local Transport Plan aims to increase the quality of existing bus services and ultimately make public transport a more attractive alternative to the car. In the coming year we will continue to work in partnership with Warwickshire's Districts and Boroughs towards the new nationwide concessionary travel scheme, set to be introduced in April 2008. By 2008 we will work with partners and operators to increase the number of low floor easy access buses to 75%, and will use Section 106 developer funding contributions to introduce new and improve existing bus services in rugby and Stratford.
6. We are developing a new Speed Management Strategy. Many Members have traffic speed issues in their divisions so we want to ensure that every Member has the opportunity take part in producing the strategy. We held an initial workshop in September

which every Member was invited to attend together with representatives of District and Local Councils and the Police. We have now produced the first draft of a strategy and invited the five Area Committees to comment on it. These comments will then be considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee before the resulting revised draft is submitted to Cabinet for approval.

7. A Rural Strategy Working group has been established comprising of members from the overview and scrutiny committees, which will be working over the summer with officers from the Environment and Economy directorate to finalise a rural strategy.
8. We have been working with our partners over the past year in developing the Local Area Agreement and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their time and effort in developing this work. The partnership has been very successful across all areas, but I am very pleased to say that we have been able to include an extra block in the LAA covering the very important subject "Climate Change and Environment". The work of this block will start to have a major influence in supporting a number of countywide strategies that have been developed with partners. These range from our Waste to Climate Change strategies.

Councillor Martin Heatley  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment