

Leicester  
City Council



Cabinet  
Council

21<sup>st</sup> June 2004  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2004

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2004 MAKING LEICESTER MORE ATTRACTIVE

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### Report of the Chief Executive

#### Purpose of Report

1. The Chief Executive's Annual Report is neither annual, nor is it a report in the normal sense. Its purpose is to: -
  - provide a periodical review of past achievement that gives an opportunity to recognise and thank Members and staff for their significant contribution to the success of the Council and the City;
  - acknowledge certain threats and dangers that need to be understood if the Council and its substantial resources are to be best placed to overcome the difficulties that all large enterprises must face;
  - seek political guidance on the key cross-service priorities for delivery in the coming year and beyond to give a focus for corporate effort and collaboration to drive forward the large and complex agenda encapsulated in the Corporate Plan.

#### Summary

2. This report is structured around the following themes: -
  - 2.1. The Council as community leader in the face of many national and international pressures.
  - 2.2. Achievements over the recent past which are significant across the whole Council.
  - 2.3. Challenges to complacency.
  - 2.4. Key cross-service priorities for the future. These are identified as making Leicester more attractive for our children, our communities and our investors.

2.5. Efficiency, improvement and values in a progressive business. This relates in particular to deliver progress and outcomes on performance management, alternative forms of management, efficiency reviews and Job Evaluation. Attention is also required to the core values of the Corporate Plan.

2.6 Conclusion.

### **Recommendations**

3. Members are asked to: -

- acknowledge the Council's achievements over the past year (paragraph 5);
- give guidance on the proposed key service priorities for delivery in the coming year (paragraphs 13-26) to ensure that the Council's corporate energy and plans fully reflect political priorities;
- give guidance on the priorities for improving organisational effectiveness (paragraphs 28-30)

### **Headline Financial and legal Implications**

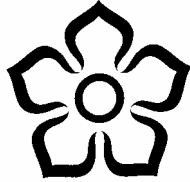
4. There are no direct implications.

### **Report Author**

5. Rodney Green, Chief Executive  
CXO/RG  
26.05.04

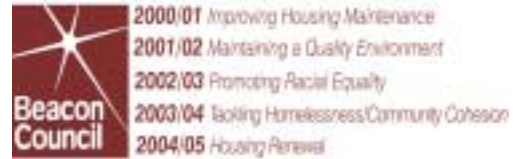
### **DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Reason</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	<b>Executive (Cabinet)</b>



Leicester  
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED



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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Report of the Chief Executive

#### INTRODUCTION

1. In May 2003 the Council formed its first Liberal Democrat/Conservative administration. A year later is an appropriate milestone to review Council progress and future direction. In November 2003 the Council approved the first statement of its Corporate Direction under new political leadership. Its fundamental drive is to ***make Leicester more attractive for our diverse communities to live, work and invest in.***
2. To be more attractive implies different things to different people. We need to invest significantly in raising achievement, safeguarding the public and creating a sense of well-being across all communities. The Corporate Plan makes it clear that this effort will focus particularly on educational standards and on improving our environment in local neighbourhoods and the city centre. This involves making all our schools good schools, our parks and open spaces welcoming and valued and our community cohesion real and embracing. This report draws attention to aspects of the Corporate Plan that require corporate prioritisation, acknowledging that other aspects will have received appropriate attention within Departmental Service Plans. It is not intended to overlook the day to day work of thousands of staff who have driven forward whole Council improvements – often under adverse financial and organisational pressures. The 6<sup>th</sup> Beacon Council Award is but one testimony to this effort. Thanks and credit are due to staff who have delivered measurable service improvement while reducing costs and professionally managing the transition to serve a new political administration. The Council's Best Practice Awards won by Housing Apprenticeships and by Litter Wardens are an example of the outstanding quality of work carried out by our most talented staff.

## **THE COUNCIL AS COMMUNITY LEADER**

3. The Council has many roles from the pedestrian to the philosophical. However, only one organisation in the city has the democratic legitimacy and critical mass to offer a way through the daunting issues facing contemporary society, particularly in cities. Over the next 10-20 years we face nationally many new realities. Some of them are fascinating, some ugly and most are unpredictable. They include: -
- EU enlargement offering increased mobility to 160 million new EU citizens;
  - widening gaps between the poor and the prosperous threatening social cohesion;
  - quality of life dilemmas associated with growing consumption of finite fossil fuels, transport congestion, noise and air pollution linked to a doubling of vehicle miles p.a;
  - evidence of climate change due to global warming;
  - rapid lifestyle changes with an anticipated increase of 75% in home internet access, and a requirement for 100% e-government transactions by 2005;
  - increasing international competitiveness for jobs, skills and investment. This is most acute in skills for new industries, in high capacity technologies and in competition with businesses located in low wage countries;
  - 56% rise in the proportion of older persons, and a 40% increase in the number of singles – together requiring 4 million new homes;
  - declining support for traditional democratic structures associated with low polling turnout, poor esteem for Councils and funding regimes that increasingly diminish local democratic freedom (e.g. capping, bidding for grants, direct community funding, quangos, hypothecation, only 20% of funding raised locally).
4. The local impact of pressures of these kinds are obvious and the challenge for delivery is immense. The role of Councillor as community leader to find a path through these new realities has never been more important.

## **COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE RECENT PAST**

5. In this context the recent achievements of the Council despite profound political and organisational changes have been substantial. They include: -
- setting a corporate direction for 2003-06 in a new Corporate Plan;
  - achieving a comprehensive performance assessment upgrading from Fair to Good with a particularly strong performance in adult and children's social care moving to 2 stars, GCSE improvements and legal and financial management;
  - Building Schools for the Future – one of only 14 Councils selected for up to £150m to modernise schools as centres of excellence at the heart of their community – and the only one in the Region;
  - £25m City Academy – awarded in principle for Eyres Monsell in partnership with the Church of England and David Samworth;
  - £10m new Primary school provision in Braunstone;
  - Leicester Federation of Children's Services – one of only 35 local authorities selected to develop a Children's Trust;
  - significant improvements in access to and participation in libraries;
  - modern and innovative £4m Multi-disciplinary Centre approved for the homeless;

- support for a new £30m Performing Arts and Convention Centre as a catalyst for a new Cultural Quarter;
  - restoration of New Walk - £2m investment on time and to budget;
  - revenue budget strategy 2004-7 with new investment in schools and environment;
  - 100,000 people drawn to Victoria Park to Radio 1's only One Big Sunday;
  - attendances rising for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running for the De Montfort Hall programme;
  - Park and Ride scheme approved in Leicester West to improve access;
  - new approaches being developed to neighbourhood improvement based on Area Committees and support for front-line Members;
  - launch of the BIFFA Waste Management initiative to improve recycling and reduce landfill costs and increased city centre cleanliness;
  - Braunstone Health and Social Care Centre commenced;
  - external accreditation won from LEXCEL (Legal Services), Investors in People, and EMAS – with increasing participation of schools;
  - Beacon Council Awards in Homelessness, and in Community Cohesion 2003 – and for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running, in Housing Renewal 2004 (only 2 other Councils have achieved success in each year of the scheme). Tribute is due to the Housing Service whose third Beacon award is unmatched by any other Council in the country.
6. These achievements are all the more impressive when it is realised that since Unitary Status in 1997 90% of other local authorities have received more favourable financial settlements from the government. The result is that the Council would be over £20m pa better off if it had received average funding increases. To maintain year on year improvements without such funding is a remarkable achievement by the whole Council.

### **CHALLENGES TO COMPLACENCY**

7. The picture is not all rosy. Many challenges face us and some are not as clearly understood as they need to be if our record of improvement and delivery is to be sustained over coming years.
8. For example, our progress is patchy. Our ability to set accurate targets and meet them is uneven. Not all services improved last year; transport (Roads Investment) and community housing (Private Sector Dwellings) declined. The national performance comparisons with other authorities sets higher standards every year: good performance last year may not be good next year. Moreover, Poor and Weak Authorities are making exceptional efforts to improve which may not be matched by the resolve of currently Good and Excellent Authorities. Some of our services, such as Education, face deep, historic problems of under-achievement and improvements there take 5-10 years to consolidate and become irreversible. It is also sobering to be reminded that service users typically change faster than organisations. Nowhere is this more true than in a city of such cultural diversity in which yesterday's concerns may no longer be central to maintaining the cohesion of new emerging communities.
9. More and more of the challenges we face we can no longer resolve on our own. We depend on partnership with other public, private, voluntary and faith agencies and yet we know that working across organisations with different priorities, different cultures and different systems is taxing for all concerned. Change often requires major

organisational reviews and more reviews seem inevitable following the government's Children's Bill, and the tax incentives that exist for alternative forms of management. Such reviews can drain staff of energy and morale in the short term, and turn us away from the outward focus that is crucial to meeting service users' needs.

10. The main national measure of our performance is the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Like all systems that seek to measure complex human performance it has its limitations. In order to respond to criticisms that it is too volatile in its conclusions, that it inadequately reflects local priorities and that it fails to grapple with cross-service issues such as community cohesion, the CPA will be re-engineered for 2005. Our route to excellence as measured by the CPA therefore becomes more unpredictable.
11. Despite the wholesale improvements across the Council since Unitary Status and since the serious issues set out in our first OFSTED report and in our first Social Care Inspection, the improvement agenda is a restless challenge. There is no room for complacency if we are to meet our aspirations to be increasingly attractive.

### **KEY CROSS-SERVICE PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

12. In 1996 the Council spent some £250m on District services. This year it will spend some £700m on all local government services. The whole of that expenditure is important, perhaps critical, to certain people in the city as the painful response to the recent budget round illustrated. Nevertheless, there are some issues on which the future peace and prosperity of the city particularly depend and without which the city will not become more attractive.
13. Our new Corporate Direction identifies two strategic objectives and nine priorities for the next few years. Many of the priorities are inter-dependent and our success in delivery will depend on the Council as a whole working together to support each other rather than relying on each Department achieving its own targets. To emphasise this desire to work more corporately I believe it would be useful to provide a focus on specific aspects of the Corporate Plan and encourage the organisation to work together on jointly achieving improvements. The 3 most important cross-service themes seem to be: -  
  
making Leicester more attractive for our children;  
making Leicester more attractive for all our communities;  
making Leicester more attractive to investors.
14. These themes will be used to develop our budget strategy, add focus to next year's service planning and will be used to assess our performance at the end of the year. This approach will help to embed the Corporate Plan in everything we do. It also anticipates the increasing national trend towards assessing Council performance by reference to cross-service and inter-agency collaboration. We are indebted to a range of city, sub regional and regional partners, not least EMDA, GOEM and EP for their contribution. EMDA has been particularly alert to the advantages of developing the 3-Cities agenda to benefit the whole region.

## Making Leicester more attractive for our children

15. We all want to build a city fit for our children. That city will need to offer rising educational standards and modern, exciting school curricula and buildings where quality and equality characterise teaching and learning. Our most vulnerable children will be protected and feel included in a broad range of opportunities for work and leisure. Their parents and carers will feel supported in their crucial role in children's lives making a reality of the notion of lifelong learning and support.
16. Key priorities for delivery include our response to the **Children Bill** and opportunities for our new Children's Trust – the **Leicester Federation of Children's Services**. The Government agrees with all agencies serving children that the lead role for these changes falls to Local Authorities, and this in itself is noteworthy. We need to focus on positive outcomes for children especially in preventative help for the most vulnerable around achievement, safeguarding and well-being. **Sure Start** has already proved a success on which further developments can be built. We also need to find new ways of working and developing staff to collaborate across health, social care, education, housing, police and other boundaries. The Government requires the appointment of a **Director of Children's Services** to coordinate and be accountable for all this in partnership with a **Children's Cabinet Member**. This will lead to a fundamental review of education and social services across the country.
17. These changes will have to be integrated with the major remodelling that may become possible through the **Building Schools for the Future** programme to equip our schools for the next century. This is potentially the largest transformation in secondary provision and practice since Victorian times. We will need to relate this investment to the emergence of **Extended Schools** and **Children's Centres**. Our **results at GCSE and at KS2** still need significant improvement, as does our performance on including children with **Special Educational Needs** and on supporting our **Looked After Children**. Nowhere is this more critical than in the west of the city where the **Leicester West Improvement Strategy** needs to elicit a concerted effort across all Departments with partners to bring about real change on the ground.

## Making Leicester more attractive for all our communities

18. The second priority concerns all our different communities of place, heritage and interest. Our children are growing up in Britain's most diverse city and this is a unique asset for us. But it is not without some tensions. Living together in harmony with family and neighbours is a priceless gift and Leicester has an exceptional reputation for its progress in fostering good community relations. But it cannot be taken for granted. Research in Leicester has shown high levels of communities continuing to live parallel lives with limited contact, insight or friendship across different communities. Some of the inner-city black and minority ethnic communities and outer white estates face poor levels of income, health and community safety that are destabilising. People with disabilities and a growing number of older persons aspire to better access and independence. The rising percentage of older persons requires new thinking around leisure and social care opportunities which we must begin to address. Young people present unique new realities that must be understood afresh in each generation.

19. Our key priorities for delivery include the new **Community Cohesion Strategy** endorsed by the Council and Leicester Partnership. This must now be given active expression in local neighbourhoods through the **Action Plan** with £700,000 new funding. The **Home Office Community Cohesion Pathfinder** is beginning to capture imaginative approaches which can be replicated across the city. The DCMS **£2m Creative Partnerships** programme will facilitate contact between young people and creative professionals to stimulate learning and cross-cultural contacts. These external projects need to be complemented by our own internal work as an employer by reaching level 3 of the **Equality Standards** by October 2004. We need to improve our housing stock to achieve our aim of a decent home for every person with **fewer empty homes**. Our target of 30% new housing being **affordable homes** needs energetic action with partners if we are to provide lower cost housing, for example, to key workers in health and education services. **Housing Benefit Administration** needs to perform at the top quartile after the disappointing computer setbacks we have experienced. The new **Document Image Processing Technology** is excellent and offers enormous scope to improve other services. Despite its teething problems, which are not unfamiliar to those willing to pioneer innovative ideas ahead of others, it should be developed further. Last year's problems meant that we dropped to one of the worst performers on housing benefit: next year we expect to be one of the best in the country. We should not be over-fearful of the risks involved in innovation. New ideas require a willingness to accept failure.
20. Local communities need local leadership and **Area Committees** are designed to give Elected Members a more prominent role in joining-up local delivery to meet local priorities. The emphasis on more local, more personalised policing is being focussed on key offenders and key locations. This needs all-agency support for the **Reassurance Policing Programme** to produce more confident communities free from the fear of crime. Local **Parks improvements** are also on stream and a major new environmental project needs to be bedded in to increase our **Recycling of waste** and minimise wasteful landfill charges. Inequalities in public health are also pronounced and there is a place for more public debate to achieve consensus around what should be done on **Smoking, Obesity and Oral Health** (fluoridation of water).
21. Our communities also need a more integrated approach to transport that promotes access to work and services. **Road Congestion, Traffic Accidents, Air Pollution** and lack of **Access to Public Transport or Safe Pedestrian Routes** all inhibit communities that want to be mobile and reach swiftly and safely their work, health centres, shops, leisure and friends. The **Leicester West Park and Ride** and **Traffic Calming Measures** need to be delivered despite the inevitable controversies that transport initiatives bring. Transport access is key to our whole-city regeneration and is closely linked to our third priority – regeneration.

### **Making Leicester more attractive to investors**

22. Leicester is overdue for a massive investment to regenerate its economic, social and environmental infrastructure. It has punched below its weight as a major British city for too long. 4,500 children with city post-code addresses are educated in County schools. Leicester needs to become more attractive to investors and those investors need to include ordinary people and families. Such development must serve the public interest by being sustainable, durable, imaginative and safely accessible to all communities. It



must promote community cohesion by releasing broader opportunities for cross-community engagement in cultural, faith and recreational activities. Creative diversity in film, theatre, dance, sports and food are some of the most tangible signs of vitality and connectedness amongst communities.

23. Early signs are that Leicester is on the threshold of a massive regeneration programme. Our key priorities for delivery will be to support the complex partnerships involved in securing world class developments. The following schemes all have a variety of implications for our property, planning, transport, legal and regeneration functions.
24. The Universities are investing **£400m in new student facilities** and the **Leicester Royal Infirmary £400m refurbishment** is the largest such scheme in the country. The **Shires £200m redevelopment** is due to bring the John Lewis Partnership to anchor our retail offer. **£80m** is being invested in **1000 new homes** on Bede Island South. The **Upperton Road Viaduct £19m road scheme** has been approved and the new **£4m Multi-disciplinary Centre** offers the prospect of the most comprehensive multi-agency provision for homeless people in the country. The **Braunstone Leisure Centre £10m** project is due for completion in Autumn 2004. The **Newarke Houses Museum** is due for a **£1m makeover** which will provide a historic site for the Royal Leicester Regiment collection. The **£50m Braunstone Community Association project** is on course to deliver major developments such as the Library, Social Care and Health Centre and new streets of affordable housing in Leicester's most deprived neighbourhood. The **St. Peter's Health Centre** redevelopment is a major new LIFT Partnership between Health and Social Care and of significant importance to achieving health gains in the city.
25. Yet all this may be seen as a minor part of the whole once the **LRC Masterplan** begins to deliver major schemes over the next decade. The **National Space Centre** is planning a major extension with new inter-active attractions to consolidate its position as a premier visitor destination. This will be the centre of the proposed **Science and Technology Park** designed to enhance our ability to attract and retain graduate skills in the city. The proposals to open up an unpolished jewel – **the Riverside** – will provide mixed development within easy reach of the city centre. The city centre **Retail Circuit** has been boosted by the John Lewis/Shires announcements and by a **£4m Liveability Fund Award** to improve the city centre. There are also other plans to create more original shopping opportunities in a larger, better defined area between the clock tower, the Shires and Fenwicks.
26. A major new **Office Core** is proposed around the railway station to attract quality jobs to a location within easy access of London, the North and the West Midlands. The Lyons Report proposes relocating 20,000+ civil servants out of London to cut costs and improve public policy formulation. The associated King Sturge property review singled out Leicester as the only city in the country to offer top quartile opportunities to the civil service on all 7 dimensions surveyed.
27. A **New Community** around a new **Cultural Quarter** is also proposed in the city centre. The first step is the **£5m Leicester Creative Business Depot** opening in June 2004 to provide work spaces for creative and cultural businesses, followed by the **£31m Performing Arts and Convention Centre** designed by the internationally acclaimed architect, Vinnoly – his first major project in Britain. New inner-city housing with access to education and health facilities are under consideration.

28. The prospects for Leicester are exceptional. They depend on bold leadership and effective partnership to give confidence to investors. We have a once in a generation opportunity and the City Council must play its full part. We therefore turn to consider the City Council's own organisational effectiveness.

## **EFFICIENCY, IMPROVEMENT AND VALUES IN A PROGRESSIVE BUSINESS**

### **(a) Organisational effectiveness**

29. Many people think of the Council as a wide collection of different services to the public. They overlook the fact that it is also a progressive business and the largest employer in the city with all the complexities and challenges associated with large organisations. As a democratic organisation it additionally faces unequalled exposure to public scrutiny and comment – not least from its own “non-executive Board” – the Councillors.
30. Its success as a well-managed organisation has been building over recent years with its Good Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) rating, its 6 Beacon Council awards, its Investors in People and EMAS accreditations and its positive Annual Reports from the District Auditor. Nonetheless there are 4 particular management challenges in the coming period to deliver improved organisational effectiveness: -
- 30.1 **Performance Management** is still uneven and the route to providing excellence across all services is not a short one. The Audit Commission's proposed revision of the CPA in 2005 also poses certain dilemmas. I therefore propose to bring a report to Members mapping out a route for achieving excellence in services. This is intended to clarify political and financial priorities. It should also give us a clear perspective on what matters most in Leicester, and when Members believe it would be appropriate to push for an Excellent rating under the particular definitions of the changing CPA. Our Staff Survey also reflected concerns about failure to deal adequately with a small number of poor performers who add to their colleagues' work pressures. This requires a change of attitude and a streamlining of current procedures.
- 30.2. **Alternative Forms of Management** have become an unavoidable issue for consideration. The Government has developed significant funding streams that depend upon embracing new forms of management that are wholly or partly at arms length from traditional democratic control of Councillors. These funding streams offer substantial investment opportunities and tax benefits which can be invested in improved services. They also raise important political, social and resource issues, sometimes over a 25 year period. We will need to explore these opportunities so as to give a clear and objective appraisal of the benefits and disbenefits for Leicester people. Along with the other kinds of major projects we are managing or supporting, there is increasing pressure to improve our Project Management standards and to assure ourselves that satisfactory arrangements are in place to deliver these demanding and volatile schemes. Three examples of alternative forms of management require particular care: -
- Building Schools for the Future, under which PFI will play a prominent role, and we are being encouraged by the Government to consider whether a joint venture company should play a role in the provision of some educational services;
  - Housing Stock Options Appraisal, an exercise we are obliged to undertake;

- Leisure and Culture Management, where opportunities for savings and investment, may arise from transferring services to a trust or other management vehicle.

30.3. **Efficiency and Effectiveness.** Everyone wants better management and less bureaucracy. Yet few people want less leadership and looser financial oversight. Thus the tussle between efficiency and effectiveness is worked out. We have grappled with our overheads in the Council over recent years and taken out £1m from the Chief Executive's/Town Clerk's Department. A further £1m of overheads are being taken out from the merger of Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal with Environment and Development. Members have commissioned strategic efficiency reviews in the 3 areas of high expenditure where significant yields seem possible: -

- Procurement;
- Property;
- Transport.

We are also working with central government on a Public Service Agreement where step improvements in delivering efficiencies and service outcomes lead to reward grants that can be invested in further efficiencies. Our drive to improve efficiency and effectiveness must be relentless as it reduces the pressure on Council Tax in the most highly geared Unitary Authority in the country. It also gives us scope to reinvest in continuous service improvement to meet the rising aspirations in society.

30.4. **Job Evaluation** is another key issue to be faced. National employers require an updating of job evaluation arrangements across the country to reflect widespread changes that have occurred in local government in recent years and to address equalities issues more effectively. This is a major challenge for our HR teams because of the fact that there will be winners and losers in what is already a demanding recruitment market. Cost implications are potentially significant.

## **b) Values and Culture**

31. Leadership and management in an organisation of 15,000 people does not consist of mechanical procedures and techniques. The biggest drivers, for good or ill, in organisations are to be found in their values and beliefs, and in their symbols and behaviours. This goes to the root of the real culture of the organisation, which may or may not be reflected in skilfully worded mission and policy statements. Another challenge for us is that the culture we create depends to some degree on the people we recruit, and much of our recruitment is from Leicester. Attitudinal research undertaken by Leicester Shire Promotions has pointed up a worrying lack of self-belief in the city. It may be related to a perception of half a century of decline from a position as Europe's top city in terms of household income. Evidence of detachment, lack of interest and a reluctance to embrace change evoke a picture of negativity and cynicism. By contrast, Mori Surveys have revealed some of the highest satisfaction ratings ever recorded amongst Asian communities with Council services. These factors play into the Council's culture and have been the subject of the recent Staff Survey which painted a mixed picture.

32. For these reasons it is essential that attention is given throughout the organisation to reforming the culture around the values expounded in the Corporate Plan: -

- ***building trust in pursuit of the public interest;***
- ***valuing staff in a fair working environment;***
- ***cultivating leadership with integrity;***
- ***delivering quality and exceeding expectations.***

Key priorities for delivery include the strong ***culture change programme*** being pioneered by some of the most creative leaders in the organisation. An energetic and responsive action plan needs to be drawn up around the ***Staff Survey***. Our communications, both internal and external, need to be repositioned around more strategic and proactive themes. We have a job to do in repairing morale amongst staff and partners following a difficult budget round. We need to build confidence in a future where successful delivery will dominate and collaborative advantage can flourish. This is vital for another reason. The lack of interest in democracy has been noted. Yet it falls to Councils to make the work of Councillor and Council officer as attractive as possible so more people become willing to invest their talents in their local Council. We need the ablest people to weigh up and then deliver the public interest. Our Political Conventions and Code of Conduct are not just rules and processes: they model our culture to the public and sharply impact on the respect in which we are all held. This has a direct bearing on our capacity to recruit and retain.

## **CONCLUSION**

33. We have a new Corporate Direction. It is being debated in team meetings, embedded in Business Plans and reflected upon by national leaders in our Cinquefoil Series of public seminars. Building on a record of `accredited achievement and rejecting any hint of complacency, our task is to make Leicester more attractive. In particular, we need to focus on making Leicester more attractive for our children whose childhood passes quickly and whose life chances are so easily damaged without proper support, guidance and opportunity. The cultural diversity of Leicester is an enviable distinctive that requires fostering if we are to achieve cohesion and affirmation between communities. We have a once in a generation opportunity to maximise economic, social and environmental regeneration if we can work with partners towards a sustainable future. The Council can play a central role in community leadership and professional facilitation if it maintains its commitment to secure efficiency, effectiveness and continuous service improvements. But the Council is a value driven organisation that exists to serve the public interest, not vested interests and partisan spirit.
34. A more attractive Leicester will attend to the human spirit in Leicester and stress the need for connectedness and compassion in communities that seek to provide increasingly equal opportunities. It will emphasise the importance of innovation and vitality in addressing the many new realities we are facing. An attractive Leicester will display confidence in its capacity to offer the hope of vibrant urban living based on a sustainable quality of life. High trust, high quality and high density point to a sustainable future of urban living. Our immediate priorities are to deliver these ambitions for our children, our diverse communities and everyone who is committed to investing in Leicester.

## **Report Author**

Rodney Green, Chief Executive

CX/RG 26.05.04.