

## **5 : CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS**

### **A LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

- 1 I am pleased to be able to report that, in line with the County Council's Local Performance Plan, a draft Public Service Agreement (PSA) was submitted to the Government on 3 September 2001. In order to meet the Government's deadline, and following consultation with Group Leaders, I agreed the submission under the urgency procedures.
- 2 A local PSA is an arrangement between Government and the County Council whereby the Council commits itself to delivering a higher level of service, in some twelve key priority areas, over a three year period, than would have been deliverable without the PSA.
- 3 In return the Government offers pump priming of up to, in the case of Buckinghamshire, some £1.2m, a Performance Related Grant of up to 2.5% of the net budget of the County and District authorities committed to the PSA, as well as a willingness to discuss and negotiate relaxations of "red tape" bureaucratic processes and other constraints which otherwise inhibit the ability of better outcomes for the community we serve, being achievable.
- 4 I am delighted to report that the submission has been drafted in consultation and with the full support of our four District Councils and other partner agencies. Buckinghamshire County Council is the first county to submit a PSA in partnership with its District colleagues. As a result, subject to final negotiations, the Performance related grant will take account of all five authorities budget levels, and therefore our partner district councils will benefit financially directly from our partnership working arrangements.
- 5 The target areas chosen for the submission reflect the priorities previously identified by the Bucks Partnership for Action and will directly support improved service delivery for the local community. The areas covered include educational achievement at GCSE for all Year 11 pupils, and specifically for children leaving

public care, housing, adoption, road safety, bus punctuality, reduction in vehicle crime, increased participation in drug treatment programmes and an improvement in cost efficiency in excess of the 2% Best Value requirement.

- 6 Over the next six weeks the Council will be in negotiations directly with Government departments seeking to agree on the measures by which success will be evaluated, the level of "stretch" to be achieved and the freedoms and flexibilities to be offered.
- 7 As a result of these negotiations it is anticipated that there will be further changes to the draft.
- 8 It is the intention of Government and ourselves that we be in a position to sign the final agreement in November of this autumn. The agreement will run to 31 March 2005, the performance related grant being payable in the financial years 2004/05 (subject to interim targets being met), the balance to be paid over 2005/06 and 2006/07.

**DAVID SHAKESPEARE  
LEADER**