

## **B REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER**

### **Best Value Review of Trading Standards**

- 1 The Best Value Review of Trading Standards was completed earlier this year and I approved the resulting improvement plan in May 2001.
- 2 Following this the Best Value Inspectorate carried out an inspection of the service and the review in June 2001 and their interim challenge raised a number of issues to which the Chief Officer has responded, and we await the draft final report. In the meantime action is being taken to implement the Improvement Plan and, whilst progress in some areas has been affected by staff involvement in the foot and mouth arrangements, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and I will receive regular reports on progress.

### **Emergency Planning**

- 3 The Best Value Inspectorate visited the Unit from 20-24 August to inspect the Joint Best Value review of Emergency Planning. This review was pioneering in that it was undertaken jointly with the four District Councils in Buckinghamshire and is, we believe, the first such joint review in the country, a style of review that the government is encouraging other authorities to embark upon.
- 4 The Inspectorate's interim feedback was given on 10 September. The service appears to have been positively regarded. However, we again await the draft report, which is expected in late October/early November, when the authority will be invited to comment further.

### **Leader + European Funding initiative**

- 5 I am pleased to announce the submission of a Buckinghamshire County Council led funding application to the Leader + European Community Initiative Funding Programme. Leader + is essentially a funding programme for local rural development and the submission concentrates on activities and initiatives within the northern part of the County. The bid has been made possible due to recent changes in the rules of the Funding Programme to enable any rural area meeting

the eligibility criteria to make an application and this has provided the County Council with the opportunity to access previously untapped funds from Europe.

- 6 The main aim of the bid is to promote and develop local initiatives in North Buckinghamshire particularly those that celebrate the unique qualities contained within this part of the County. In particular the project will part fund initiatives that:
  - develop a strong community spirit based around a shared understanding of local environment and heritage
  - identify new sustainable economic potential based on the cultural heritage on this part of the County and develop improved information and access to services to help realise the increased opportunities
  - to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural environment
  - develop a strong identity for the community and local economy
- 7 Leader + could provide up to £800,000 over a maximum of 6 years for initiatives in North Buckinghamshire if the application is successful. This amount will have to be matched by the same amount from other funding sources.

**BILL CHAPPLE  
DEPUTY LEADER**