

## **REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

### **KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, since the last report to Council. I hope you find the report of interest and I will be very happy to provide further information on any subject it covers.

#### **TRADING STANDARDS**

##### **Counterfeit Alcohol**

2. In the run-up to Christmas, officers undertook further checks on eleven premises. Duty evaded alcohol was found in two shops. Local publicity included items on East Midlands Today, and Capital Radio.
3. Over the New-Year, the Council received national media coverage regarding our work, including pieces by The Guardian, The Mirror, The Telegraph, and Channel 4. Further pieces using a Nottinghamshire photo appeared in a number of regional publications, from Jersey in the South, to County Durham in the North.
4. Prosecution reports have now been completed and are currently being considered against three of the premises where counterfeit and illicit alcohol was found earlier in the autumn.

##### **Alcohol and Minors**

5. The Service is working with partners to secure funding to use the 'D-Vibe' data gathering tool. This will enable information to be collected from young people on alcohol, tobacco, solvent and drug use, as well as data on their home environment. The system will allow agencies to measure the success of tactics, for example those used to reduce the availability of alcohol, to control drink fuelled Anti-Social Behaviour, and also to explore levels of domestic violence experienced in the home.
6. An underage test purchase exercise was carried out near to Christmas to ascertain the level of compliance in six new premises, including those which had received support from the Service. I am pleased to report that no sales were made.

## **Part Worn Tyre Safety Issues**

7. Investigations into the breaches uncovered during our second-hand tyre safety exercise continue. The proprietors of a business that supplied a tyre with an unsafe repair have now been formally interviewed and a report for consideration on what action to take is being finalised.
8. Officers will shortly revisit all the other nine premises who supplied tyres to advise on safety procedures and examine trade practices. From what is learnt here, officers will then decide on the most effective approach to ensure compliance across the trade sector in the County.

## **Electric Blanket Testing**

9. The Service will be providing an opportunity in January for older and vulnerable adults to have their electric blankets tested to ensure they are safe to use. A limited number of replacement blankets will be available when the blankets are found to need replacing, with '50%-off' vouchers available if/when the replacement blankets are all handed out.
10. Four days of testing have been organised, a day each in Broxtowe, Sutton in Ashfield, Mansfield and Retford – appointments will be used to maximise the number tested in the available time. The Service is currently promoting the testing, and working with social care and health colleagues to ensure those not living in proximity to the sites have opportunity to have theirs tested.

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable People**

11. Two recent cases highlight the depths that criminals continue to plumb to exploit our residents:
  - The family of a Vascular Dementia sufferer reported multiple transactions totalling over £6,000 being taken from her bank account, with her having little or no knowledge. Despite being made aware of the person's vulnerability, a £1,500 cash withdrawal was made at her bank, the older adult having been taken there. Investigations discovered regular visits by a "healthcare practitioner", and the resident believing she was receiving skin cancer treatment. Work is continuing with the bank and the Police.
  - A daughter of an older person with Alzheimer made contact following the bank asking security questions regarding £1,800 of payments to a trader. The resident recalls receiving a telephone call from a person she believed to be a Doctor, offering arthritis medication - the "medication" was rosehip and pomegranate extract tablets. Trading Standards pursued the trader and obtained a £1,650 refund.
12. Work is ongoing to brief and share information with occupational therapists in respect of issues which are regularly encountered with mobility companies, such as mis-selling of wheelchairs, mobility scooters or beds where equipment is not appropriate or not needed, and excessive prices. Most recently staff have delivered sessions for occupational therapists in Broxtowe.

## **Sunday Market Counterfeit Goods Seizures**

13. **Thoresby** – following the seizure of counterfeit discs, forensic examination of exhibits has revealed further evidence. Having been re-interviewed, a file is currently being compiled for consideration as to what action to take.
14. **Hucknall** – prosecution reports have recently been finalised into two potential defendants. A decision as to what action to be taken will be taken imminently.

## **Illicit Tobacco**

15. The investigation following our seizure of 20,000 packets of counterfeit/illicit cigarettes and 10kg of tobacco continues. Officers are currently investigating a number of further leads that have emerged during the investigation.
16. Trading Standards is also developing the picture on other suppliers, piecing it together from intelligence from various sources. We have been liaising with the Police and HMR&C, and anticipate carrying out more joint enforcement operations in the near future.

## **Business Support and Primary Authority**

17. Trading Standards has now entered its first joined-up Primary Authority arrangement with Rushcliffe Environmental Health to provide tailor-made support to a food manufacturer. A press launch is being arranged, with a factory tour and photo-call for the relevant Cabinet Members for both authorities.

## **Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) Training for Primary Authority Officers**

18. The Service is hosting an LBRO national training event on 26<sup>th</sup> January for Trading Standards Officers who manage Primary Authority Partnerships. The aim of the course is to help partnership managers ensure that the partnership delivers real and measurable benefits for both the local authority and the business partner.

## **Lorry Watch.**

19. The Scheme in Ravenshead is to be launched in January. Arrangements have also been made to attend Bingham Town Council's meeting to discuss the possible introduction of a scheme.
20. Two exercises were carried out in Papplewick recently to establish the impact of the Forest Road closure. Investigations are ongoing into 26 vehicles that were observed potentially breaking the restriction during those exercises.

## **Legal Update**

21. The Nottinghamshire farmer prosecuted for multiple animal by-products and animal welfare offences appeared in court on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January. Having pleaded guilty to 12 offences, the Magistrates believed the matter so serious to send him to Crown Court for sentencing.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

### **Major Incident Plans for Nottingham Forest and Trent Bridge Cricket Ground**

22. The Emergency Planning Team has completed revisions of the Major Incident Plans for two major sporting venues in the County; Trent Bridge Cricket Ground and the City Ground, home of Nottingham Forest Football Club. These plans are produced by the County Council, in consultation with the Safety Advisory Groups, the emergency services, the borough council and the ground safety officers and management of the clubs involved. The plans address topics such as the command and control of the incident response, evacuation arrangements, emergency services rendezvous points, site access and traffic management, as well as the training and exercise schedules that are in place to support the plans.

### **Incidents**

23. During December, the Emergency Planning Team assisted Adult Social Care colleagues in the evacuation of a respite centre following a power failure. Residents from a centre for people with learning disabilities were provided with bed spaces elsewhere in the county or were collected by their families. During these operations, the Emergency Planning team provided additional temporary lighting and arranged additional transport from St John Ambulance, who deployed three vehicles. One Emergency Planning Officer was deployed to the centre to deliver equipment and provide practical assistance as necessary.

## **REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES**

### **Sherwood Forest Ceremonies**

24. A licence to hold civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies has been given to the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre. Couples wishing to follow in the footsteps of Robin Hood and Maid Marion are now able to book their ceremonies, and the first ceremony will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The ceremonies will be held indoors, in the Oak Room, and couples may then have their photographs at the Major Oak. The first couple who have booked with us have agreed to feature in a social media activity on facebook which will help to promote the service to others. The public will be able to follow their journey and experience of getting married in Nottinghamshire. The couple will be renewing their vows in the outdoor theatre in front of all their guests, which will test our plans for future Register Office and outdoor ceremony packages.

### **Civil Partnerships in Religious Premises**

25. The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 came into effect on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December. These allow civil partnership ceremonies to be conducted in places of worship in England and Wales. The Registration Services' role is to approve the premises. Nationally, the leaders of Liberal Judaism, the Quakers and the Unitarians have all expressed interest in holding ceremonies. The procedure and basis on which approvals will be granted will be broadly the same as that which currently applies to secular premises. Once approved, the premises will be included in the list of approved venues for civil partnerships, indicating that they are a religious premise. Civil partnerships were introduced in 2005 to give couples the same legal protection as if they were married. In 2010, there were 6,385 civil partnerships formed in the UK.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

### **Workshop on ASB and Social Housing**

26. A meeting with Registered Social Landlords and other partners to discuss anti social behaviour is set for Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January at County Hall. It will provide an opportunity to develop a better and closer dialogue with public housing providers, specifically focusing on how we can deal more effectively as a partnership with anti social behaviour by tenants.

### **Holocaust Day**

27. Holocaust Day falls on 27<sup>th</sup> January this year and a special event has been organized by the Holocaust Centre. The Chairman of the County Council has been invited and it is hoped that he will attend. Guests attending the ceremony will include survivors of the Holocaust and there will be special presentations from pupils of Nottinghamshire schools.

### **Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Performance and Strategy Group**

28. The first meeting of a new Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Performance and Strategy Group took place on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The agenda included a set of Draft Terms of Reference along with a structure showing the linkages between this and other groups. The Group will also review progress against the Safer Nottinghamshire Board (SNB) Domestic Violence Strategic Framework. The membership of the new Group is quite broad to cover the cross cutting nature of this issue.

### **Domestic Violence Campaign**

29. The Council's Community Safety Team is supporting the SNB Champion for Domestic Violence, John Robinson (Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council), in working with the Evening Post to agree a major campaign, which will continue for a year. The campaign would be looking to recruit 100,000 men to take a pledge on not committing, condoning or remaining silent on domestic violence. There would be a major event held in the Market Square. Nottingham Forest will be fully involved through their Communities Programme. It was also hoped that some local personalities would be helping front the campaign.
30. The Campaign will be a major piece of work for the new Performance and Strategy Group to deliver once the Campaign is launched on Valentine's Day 2012.

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centre**

31. The Community Safety Budget supports the Nottinghamshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre (known as SARC) where victims of rape and sexual assault are able to report their experiences and undergo forensic examination in a safe and supportive environment. The Nottinghamshire SARC has been operating now for 4 years. Crimes of sexual violence carry a low prosecution rate - about 10% of reported incidents because these offences are difficult to report, and difficult to prove in court. However, the SARC makes prosecution easier for both victims, Police and Courts to achieve.

32. One hundred women and two men from Nottinghamshire accessed the services of the SARC in the first six months of this financial year. This is a 20% increase on the same period in 2009-10. Rape and sexual assault prosecutions rates are improving as a result of the work of SARC and Nottinghamshire Police.

**COUNCILLOR MICK MURPHY**  
**Cabinet Member for Community Safety**

County Council/CC102