

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN CULTURE & COMMUNITY

1. The report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the Culture and Community portfolio.

ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE

2. Through the external funding secured from the Skills Funding Agency, the Adult and Community Learning Service delivered learning opportunities to 8773 learners from across Nottinghamshire during the 2010-2011 academic year. Through engaging a wide range of delivery partners which include, schools, children's centres, libraries, FE Colleges, Community Colleges and community and voluntary groups, the Service exceeded its target for learners by over 1000.
3. Courses delivered include family learning activities some of which incorporate literacy and numeracy and also more general adult education courses, for example arts, digital and computing activities, languages and healthy lifestyle activities. 158 national qualifications in literacy & numeracy were achieved by learners engaged on family literacy and numeracy courses.
4. Over 320 venues were used to deliver 1640 classes across the County. 49% of learners came from the 150 most disadvantaged Super Output Areas (SOAs) areas in the County, 68% from the 250 most disadvantaged SOAs and 81% from the 350 most disadvantaged SOAs.
5. 93% of learners reported that their course met their expectations; 92% reported being more confident to learn in the future and 98% reported that they were treated with respect.
6. The above outcomes are a credit to all parties involved in the delivery of adult and community learning for people in Nottinghamshire.

LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND INFORMATION

Summer Reading Challenge 2011

7. At our September meeting I announced the launch of this year's Summer Reading Challenge - Circus Stars which ran over the summer in libraries. Children were challenged to read six books during their summer holiday and were given incentives to encourage them to complete the challenge. I am pleased to say that just under 9000 children took part in the challenge this year reading over 43,000 books. Of the children taking part 49% completed the challenge reading all 6 books.
8. Research has shown that the Summer Reading Challenge can contribute towards preventing the 'summer holiday dip' in reading motivation and attainment. It also shows that the Summer Reading Challenge boosts children's inclination to read at home and encourages them to talk about books with their families and friends.
9. 39 volunteers assisted library staff in running the challenge. Altogether they gave over 509 hours of their time.

Alan Ball Local History Award

10. I was pleased to attend the presentation of this Award at Nottinghamshire Archives on Wednesday 12 October 2011.
11. The object of the Award, administered by the Library Services Trust, is to encourage local history publishing by public libraries and local authorities.
12. For 2010 the Award was made to the Libraries, Archives & Information Service for *These Uncertain Tymes, Newark and the Civilian Experience of the Civil Wars 1640 – 1660* by Stuart Jennings.
13. The Award was presented by Mr Michael Saich, the Chairman of the Library Services Trust to the Chairman of the County Council before a group of invited guests.

Stone Age Nottinghamshire

14. I was also pleased to launch the latest Libraries and Archives publication at Creswell Crags Visitor Centre on Monday 31 October.
15. Stone Age Nottinghamshire has been written by David Budge and Chris Robinson and edited by Virginia Baddeley of Nottinghamshire County Council Conservation (Heritage) Team. It is the first in a series of popular guides to the archaeology of Nottinghamshire, to be produced in partnership between Libraries and Archives and the Conservation team

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES

Autumn events programme

16. This year's autumn lunchtime talk series is on the theme of photographic archives. In 'Smile Please! From Daguerreotype to Digital' Archivist Peter Lester explored different photographic techniques over the years. Nick Tomlinson investigated a range of photos which can be explored on the innovative web site picturethepast.org.uk in 'Picturing the Past in Nottinghamshire'. Local historian Peter Hammond looks at the history of family portraiture in Nottinghamshire in 'Portraits of the Past: Studio Photography in Nottinghamshire'. Finally in 'Nottinghamshire in Focus' Archivist Chris Weir will delve into the archives to highlight a selection of fascinating photos.
17. The programme also features monthly tours of the Archives, workshops on specific record sources and Archive skills workshops.

Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives

18. A successful open meeting was held on 28 September to gauge public support for a Friends organisation. This was very well attended by archive users and a small steering group will work on setting up a Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives over the next few months.

Evening for Owners of Archives

19. On 19 October an evening was held for individuals and organisations who had deposited or donated collections to Nottinghamshire Archives over the last year. During the evening visitors were provided with an introduction to the services offered by the Archives, given a behind the scenes tour to be shown where their archives are kept, shown the conservation section and viewed a document display.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local Broadband Plan

20. I am pleased to report that through the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme, Nottinghamshire has been indicatively allocated £4.25m to help 90% of Nottinghamshire households and businesses, which have been proven to receive standard broadband, to gain access to a superfast (25+ Megabits per second) broadband service by 2015. It is expected that the remaining 10% of households and businesses within these commercially hard to reach areas, will be connected to a service of at least 2 Megabits per second.
21. My Deputy Councillor Girling has had positive meetings with potential telecommunications providers and representatives from BDUK as part of finalising the Local Broadband Plan - which is planned for submission to BDUK in the Autumn.

Supporting Construction SMEs

22. I am pleased to share with you the results of a pilot project funded from our Economic Development budget, which is enabling Nottinghamshire small and medium sized construction companies to join the supply chain for large public sector construction contracts. Local company Firefly, and Scape, the managing agent for East Midlands Property Alliance (EMPA), have developed a database of local companies who can carry out work as subcontractors for large construction firms. Many small businesses initially fail to complete the registration process, and are therefore unable to be considered for the work.
23. Our intervention has enabled further development of the database and software, addressed individual accreditation shortfalls and common issues, and delivered appropriate training to address these issues. One of the most common reasons for failure to be accredited is not having a Health and Safety policy. By addressing this and other issues, more local small businesses are able to compete for work in the public sector. Over the three month period of the project, the number of Nottinghamshire suppliers accredited to work for main contractors has risen from 234 to 357, an increase of 52%.
24. Being supply chain ready also has a knock on effect for the Nottinghamshire economy, as these SMEs will also be able to pick up additional private sector contracts through their improved standards and accreditation. Nottinghamshire is leading the way in this development as the only Local Authority area supporting SMEs in this way.

Larger business engagement

25. Councillor Keith Girling, in his role as Business Engagement Champion, recently visited Bunches based in Newstead. Bunches is a family business which sells flowers and chocolates by post. The business has an annual turnover of over £7million and employs 45 people. The business has continued to grow year on year despite the recent economic downturn. The owner's mission is to be the number one household brand in flower delivery in the UK - it is currently ranked third. In 2010 Bunches won the Nottingham Post Nottinghamshire Company of The Year award which was jointly sponsored by Nottinghamshire County Council and KPMG.
26. On 26 October the Leader of the County Council, members of the Cabinet and the Chief Executive visited Biocity in Nottingham. BioCity Nottingham is one of Europe's largest bioscience incubators. Launched in 2003, the 129,000 sq ft award winning site currently hosts over 70 companies and 600 employees. BioCity provides a home for developing biotechnology and healthcare companies, with accommodation that is able to respond to a company's requirements by offering small highly flexible laboratory and office units, and grow-on space. Dr Glenn Crocker, the Chief Executive of BioCity, led a tour around the BioCity site and advised the Cabinet of the plans for the next phase of development.
27. The Cabinet will visit Synseal at Huthwaite on 1 December 2011. Synseal won the Nottingham Post Company of the Year Award 2011.

Business Engagement

28. I am pleased to report that the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group, which is chaired by Councillor Keith Girling, met at the Newark Beacon Innovation Centre on 26 September. The Group heard presentations from UK Trade and Investments' regional

director, Peter Hogarth and Maria Lyle of the BIS Local team. Peter advised the group of the wide range of support services available to local businesses wishing to develop international trade. Maria advised the group of the impending changes to the Government's business support services including Business Link. David Robinson of the D2N2LEP Board and the Chief Executive, Mick Burrows, attended the meeting to ensure that NBEG Group members were updated about D2N2LEP developments and to hear first hand what the issues facing local businesses are. The next meeting of NBEG will take place on 11 November 2011.

29. Councillor Keith Girling continues to engage with local businesses through his attendance at business networking meetings and events. Recently this has included attendance at the Newark Business Club, Worksop Business Club, No-Nonsense Networking, Gedling Business Partnership, North Notts Business Connections, Bingham Business Club, the First Enterprise Ethnic Business Awards and the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce's Nottinghamshire Business Awards.
30. Officers from the Economic Development team have been working closely with the Corporate Communications team to ensure that local businesses are aware of the County Council's Budget Conversation. Businesses are being encouraged to complete the online survey.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Guangxi Province, China

31. On 21 September, following an approach from UK Trade and Investment and British Sugar, the Chairman of the County Council hosted a reception for a delegation from the Guangxi Province in China. British Sugar has made significant investments in the Guangxi Province - since its first investment in 1995, the company has invested more than £110m in Guangxi and now operates 5 sugar mills producing more than 600,000 tonnes of sugar each year. British Sugar also has a production plant in Newark.
32. I attended this event and following an exchange of information about Nottinghamshire and Guangxi Province was pleased to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Nottinghamshire and the Guangxi Province.
33. China is the great economic success story of the past 30 years. Its economy continues to grow. Both UK and Chinese Governments place increasing importance on trade and investment between the two countries. There are undoubtedly significant opportunities for Nottinghamshire businesses to trade with China. The Economic Development team will work closely with UK Trade and Investment and the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce to explore opportunities for the development of trade between businesses based in Nottinghamshire and Guangxi.

Work Clubs

34. I am pleased to report that the roll out of Nottinghamshire Work Clubs is continuing successfully with work clubs now operating in Worksop, Sutton and Kirkby libraries. A new work club has been launched in Hawtonville, Newark operating out of the Bowbridge school, and Work Clubs are also planned for Arnold and Mansfield libraries. The work clubs were recently publicised on the Politics Show along with the jobs fair in Worksop which was organised by the Worksop work club.

35. To date more than 10 people have secured jobs following support from the work clubs. We rely on a core of experienced and committed volunteers to support our work clubs and I delighted that we have secured their support.

10th Anniversary of Mansfield iCentre

36. On 27 September, my Deputy Councillor Keith Girling attended a celebratory event to mark the 10th anniversary of the opening of Mansfield iCentre.
37. The iCentre is a joint venture between Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and EMDA. The County Council provided approximately one-third of the capital costs of construction. The centre opened in August 2001 with its first tenant admitted on September 17th. Since then, the centre has grown to 80% occupancy. Annual expenditure in running the centre has been covered by income generated, so that the centre operates at no cost to local taxpayers.
38. The centre is currently home to 29 tenant businesses, which benefit from excellent facilities including a high specification building, good IT facilities, access to meeting and conferencing facilities, and an on-site café and nursery.
39. This year, the iCentre experienced a change in management, with the start of an integrated management contract covering all three innovation centres in Nottinghamshire – the others are at Newark and Worksop. The new contract has the joint aim of seeking to streamline and improve the way the three centres are managed, and to drive the maximum economic benefit.
40. The tenth birthday celebration at the iCentre was organised by the new contractor, Oxford Innovation, and was attended by tenants past and present, Councillor Girling from Notts County Council, the Deputy Mayor of Mansfield District Council, and centre staff.

Making the Connection

41. I am pleased to report on a number of successful recruitment campaigns delivered through the Making the Connection project as follows:

(a) Care

Making the Connection (MtC) has been working with Crossroads Care, a healthcare provider covering the East Midlands, with private and public sector contracts including Nottinghamshire County Council. MtC worked with Crossroads to design a training programme to recruit more care workers to meet demand. Following four pre-employment courses for over 60 people, twelve people have so far gained employment. A health and social care Gateway for Ashley Care in Worksop has resulted in employment for 1 candidate to date, with interviews on going.

(b) Retail

The new ASDA store in Newark opens on 14 November 2011, with approximately 280 vacancies. MtC has been working closely with ASDA to ascertain their skill requirements, and provide training and support to clients through the recruitment process, which consisted of an initial on-line application, followed by a group activity

session and 1:1 interviews for successful candidates. A total of 86 clients completed the courses and news of the final employment outcomes is awaited.

MtC is also working on recruitment for the new Morrisons store in Kirkby in Ashfield, with forty people undertaking three weeks pre-employment training leading to a guaranteed interview.

(c) Warehousing and Distribution

MtC is working closely with Adecco, who recruit for the Currys / Dixons Distribution Centre, to fill additional vacancies in the run up to Christmas. MtC has funded 10 fork lift truck licences, with five people having already gained employment and a further group undertaking training. Another group is involved in customer service, health and safety, warehouse and retail awareness and employability skills training. All participants are guaranteed interviews.

(d) GOALS training

MtC staff have gained accreditation to deliver GOALS (Gaining Opportunities and Living Skills), a training course to improve confidence and motivation for people looking to return to work. MtC has already delivered one course to nine Beeston job club members, with other courses for young people and women over 50 to be delivered in the next few weeks in both the Beeston and Newark and Sherwood areas.

(e) Work Club support

MtC has been working closely with the new Work Clubs across the County, offering help with MtC opportunities, job searches, CV's, interview techniques, as well as the launch of new Work Clubs and the recent jobs fair in Worksop.

CONSERVATION

Local Nature Partnerships

42. My colleague, Councillor Richard Butler, and I can report that the bid for funding from DEFRA to undertake development work towards the formation of a 'Trent to Peak' Local Nature Partnership was re-submitted at the end of October. This was in response to feedback from DEFRA indicating that the original bid had a significant spatial overlap with another proposed Local Nature Partnership but that it would welcome a revised bid addressing this issue into the second round of funding.

Nature Improvement Areas

43. A Stage 1 bid was also submitted to DEFRA at the end of September for Sherwood to be recognised as one of twelve pilot Nature Improvement Areas nationally. The bid was led by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, and involved a wide range of partners working in the Sherwood area, including the County Council and Greenwood Community Forest. If successful, a Stage 2 bid will be invited, involving a more detailed business planning process.

Biodiversity Offsetting

44. An Expression of Interest was submitted to DEFRA for Nottinghamshire to act as one of four pilot areas for testing the concept of Biodiversity Offsetting introduced in the Natural Environment White Paper. The Expression of Interest was submitted by the County Council and supported in principle by all the planning authorities covering the northern part of Nottinghamshire.

Management of Local Wildlife Sites

45. I am pleased to report that the number of Local Wildlife Sites under positive conservation management in Nottinghamshire has increased. The County Council submits data to government for the Single Data List on the proportion of local sites where positive conservation management is being or has been implemented (formerly known as National Indicator 197). This data indicates that for the period 2010-11, 26.9% of the 1342 Local Wildlife Sites in Nottinghamshire (also known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) were under positive conservation management. This is an increase from 21.3% in 2009-10 and 19.6% in 2008-09.

Greenwood Community Tree Planting Grants

46. Greenwood Community Forest Partnership is again offering small grants and advice to community groups that wish to carry out tree planting projects. I am very pleased to report that grants of up to £250 are available to local groups and schools for tree planting within the districts of Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling and Mansfield.
47. For larger projects, the Greenwood team will also support applications to the national campaign, "Big Tree Plant", which can support up to 75% of the costs of community-led tree planting projects valued at up to £25,000 and for areas less than 0.5ha.
48. To be eligible for funding, trees must be planted in streets or public green places, there must be landowner agreement and the group must be able to ensure aftercare of the trees.

Nottinghamshire non-native species initiative

49. Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, supported by the County Council, is continuing its coordinating role in developing the Nottinghamshire Non-native Species Initiative. Surveys for Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam are beginning to establish the scale of the problems posed by these species within the county. Two pilot projects (on the River Leen and the River Maun) have been established this year to see how work can be developed, in partnership with local people, to help control Himalayan Balsam. I can report that there has been a lot of interest in this project from across the county.
50. The BAG is also supporting the volunteers working to establish the status of the native white-clawed crayfish population within Nottinghamshire. White-clawed crayfish is a rare species in England and its numbers are continuing to decline due to the spread of non-native invasive crayfish species such as the North American signal crayfish, which carry a 'crayfish plague' that is lethal to the native population.

Heritage Angel Awards

51. The English Heritage Angel Awards is a new scheme to celebrate the work of individuals and groups in saving significant historic places at risk of being lost.
52. There are four awards for:
 - The best rescue or repair of a place of worship
 - The best rescue of an industrial building or site
 - The best craftsmanship employed on a heritage rescue
 - The best rescue of any other entry on the Heritage at Risk register
53. Four individuals or groups were shortlisted in each category.
54. I am very pleased to report that the Bestwood Winding Engine Volunteer Group was shortlisted in the Industrial category alongside volunteers from Pleasley Colliery, North Leverton Windmill and the Brunel Goods Shed in Gloucestershire.

Kirkby Hardwick Excavation

55. My colleague, Councillor Richard Butler, and I are pleased to report that the County Council has been able to support local people in uncovering the history of the Manor House at Kirkby Hardwick between Kirkby and Sutton in Ashfield. The Manor House has a recorded history stretching back to the 13th century. Cardinal Wolsey stayed there for a night, shortly before his death in 1530 and it was garrisoned for Charles I soon after the attack on Newark Castle. In the 16th Century it was the home of the youngest son of Bess of Hardwick but was demolished by the Coal Board in 1966 to make way for the spoil from Summit Colliery.
56. An excavation in October, funded through the County Council's Local Improvement Scheme and supported by its Community Archaeologists, enabled volunteers of all ages to explore the different phases of building on the site and also to record the memories of people who lived in, or visited, the House prior to its demolition.

Civic Trust Awards

57. The County Council has continued to provide support to the promotion and assessment of the Civic Trust awards and the assessment of this year's Nottinghamshire submissions was carried out in October. Established in 1959, the Civic Trust Awards are one of the longest standing architectural and built environment awards in Europe. The Awards recognise the contribution of good design to the civic realm and over the past 52 years, over 6500 schemes have received such recognition.
58. I am pleased to report that one of the entries for this year's Awards is the Westfield Folk House scheme, which involved the modernisation of the youth centre facility alongside the extensive refurbishment of a listed building. Situated in Mansfield, the County and District Councils were joint stakeholders in the scheme, which involved a major new-build extension to the existing listed building. The design by Lewis Hickey Architects was led through consultation with user groups and supported by cross-departmental co-operation and guidance.

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATE SERVICE

Rufford Country Park

‘On the Home Front 1939-45’ - 10-11 September 2011

- 59. Organised by the Country Parks Service in association with Eventplan Ltd, this large and spectacular living history event at Rufford Abbey Country Park is now in its fifth year and appears more popular as ever.
- 60. The weekend attracted over 6,500 visitors, making it one of the busiest events in Rufford's annual calendar.
- 61. A full programme of period activities and living history displays ran from 11am to 4.30pm each day, ranging from a demonstration on how to put out incendiary devices to a “1940s wash day,” a speech by "Mr Churchill" and a display of 1940's fashion. The event was opened by the Chairman of the County Council.
- 62. The event ran very smoothly with many compliments being received from both the visitors and the event participants.

The Robin Hood Festival 2011

- 63. The Robin Hood Festival 2011 was the 27th year of this popular event, which is now the largest public celebration in the country of one of our iconic folk heroes.
- 64. The festival took place from Wednesday 10th to Sunday 14th August, in and around the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre.
- 65. Some 20,000 visitors attended over the five day period, enjoying a range of fun family activities ranging from medieval music and craft demonstrations to jugglers, jesters and skirmishing ‘outlaws.’ Highlight events were, as ever, the weekend falconry and jousting shows.
- 66. In-house commercial outlets at the Visitor Centre had a busy week, with sales during the event totalling over £125,000 - our best ever!
- 67. The actual festival planning, organisation and management of this major regional event was carried out by the on-site staff team, led by Sherwood Site Manager Izi Banton, with some external assistance this year from historical re-enactment events company EventPlan. Our grateful thanks go to them for the incredible amount of hard work that they put in - effectively cramming 7 days entertainment into 5 days.
- 68. Also this year, following the formation of the new Central Communications team, all marketing and promotion of the event transferred to the new expert team. The web pages promoting the event were redesigned and attracted a record number of ‘hits.’
- 69. The proposed dates for next year's Festival are Monday 13th to Sunday 19th August 2012.

New Plans for Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre

70. We have a new vision for the Centre which is: To create a new visitor attraction to promote and enhance the national and international reputation of Sherwood Forest, the legend of Robin Hood and the broader history and heritage of Nottinghamshire.
71. On 17th October, we opened a micro-site to invite expressions of interest from suitably experienced providers to become a concessionaire for the design, build, financing and operation of a new visitor centre/attraction at Sherwood Forest, in partnership with the County Council.
72. Our key business objectives which will guide the concession offer are summarised below:
- the creation of a new, exciting, innovative all weather, all year round visitor and tourist attraction that will:
 - increase visitor numbers (currently 360,000)
 - have a minimum life span of 25 years
 - have a landscape plan that is compatible with any building design
 - permit free access to the National Nature Reserve (NNR) through a safe road crossing
 - manage visitor impact on the habitat of the NNR
 - provide appropriate visitor information on the NNR, Sherwood Forest and Nottinghamshire
 - provide sufficient educational and learning facilities
 - provide sufficient car parking facilities and/or park and ride operations
 - ensure that environmental and sustainable good practice is followed during the design, development and operation of the centre.
 - ensure the site infrastructure can support increased visitor numbers
 - secure the involvement of partner agencies and organisations
 - provide facilities for NNR ranger and site management personnel and their equipment including communication facilities
 - reinvest a proportion of income to support NNR management
 - reduce the level of capital commitment required from the County Council.
73. There will be a six month process to secure a new development partner.

COUNCILLOR JOHN COTTEE
CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

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