



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 5TH February 2004

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on various key achievements and issues relating to my portfolio since my last report to Council. A wide range of activities have taken place contributing to the strategic objectives of the Authority.

2. National Holocaust Memorial Day

- 2.1 To recognise the National Holocaust Memorial Day I attended a performance of music, poetry and prose presented by Nottinghamshire Education County Performers, at County Hall, hosted by the Chairman of the County Council.

3. English Heritage Commission Visit

- 3.1 English Heritage has a regular programme of holding its Commission meetings around their regions. They take the opportunity to combine those meetings with visits to sites, to meet staff, and invite some of their regional partners and colleagues to a congenial evening which help them to understand key issues and concerns and to understand something of our perceptions of English Heritage and its activities.

A recent visit of the East Midlands Region took place, where I met with Commissioners and senior staff to discuss a range of complex and technical matters and initiatives in which the County Council is involved with English Heritage.

4. County Dinner

- 4.1 The County Dinner is an important annual occasion for the County Council which I have the honour and pleasure to host. Important because, every year, we have the chance to meet and share a little time with some of our partners and friends from different walks of life in Nottinghamshire.

This year the County Dinner focused on 'Partnership' as a central theme for celebration, with a main aim to highlight a particular aspect of

partnership work in Nottinghamshire. In future years we hope to bring other partnership efforts into the limelight.

The Nottinghamshire Community Foundation was our chosen partnership for the County Dinner this year. Community Foundations are trusts that promote charitable giving and help to ensure that grants flow into the communities that need them most. The most successful Foundations have built-up endowments of many millions of pounds which can help local community, voluntary and charitable organisations. It was very pleasing and encouraging to hear about the Nottinghamshire Community Foundation and how it is trying to invest in Nottinghamshire's communities for the future.

5. County Councils Network (CCN) Annual Conference

- 5.1** 180 delegates, representing 34 County Councils, attended the event and were welcomed to Thoresby Hall, in Nottinghamshire, by Councillor Nick Skellett, Chairman of CCN. Councillor Reg Strauther, Chairman of the County Council, was then delighted to open the sixth annual conference.

The keynote speech was given by the Minister for Local and Regional Government, the Right Honourable Nick Raynsford MP, in which the main part of his speech outlined four key challenges for councils over the coming years: continuous improvement; achieving and maintaining a strong customer focus; ensuring that we deliver joined up services; and working in a cost effective way.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking, again, all the officers involved who helped to make this conference such a successful event for Nottinghamshire.

6. Beacon Status

- 6.1** I believe we are the only local authority in the country to be shortlisted for three applications for Beacon status in this current round. These are: Early Years and Childcare : the Sure Start Agenda, Better Local Public Transport and Services for Older People.

Nottinghamshire County Council has been awarded Beacon Council status for Removing Barriers to Work. As part of our Beacon year, we hosted an Open Day, held at Newstead, Nottinghamshire - produced a varied and interesting programme, aimed at sharing our best practice with authorities from across the country.

Deputy Leader attended the Open Day as I had been invited to attend the presentation to the Beacon Board, in London, in relation to Beacon Assessment - Services for Older People.

7. Warwick University

- 7.1** **Warwick Research Consortium Steering Committee**

A two-day event, of which I attended only on the first day, due to other important pending diary commitments.

The sessions covered on Day 1 were:

- The Local Government Modernisation Agenda - the context and an overview of its achievements;
- The LGMA - is it doing what it said on the tin?;
- Service delivery, performance improvement, freedoms and flexibilities;
- Parallel Workshop Sessions on Performance improvement and recovery, Local Public Service Agreements and Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Followed by the Consortium Annual General Meeting.

7.2 Warwick MPA Course

'US National and Local Governance in a Global Context and Public Policy and Management: A Comparative UK/USA Perspective'

Week One - US National and Local Governance in a Global Context

Objectives

The learning objectives of this module are four fold:

- i. to analyse and develop a critical perspective of the USA as a global power, to develop comparative understanding of the US as federal political system, and to address issues of power, leadership and public management in US local, federal and national policy;
- ii. to identify and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of the main policy-making institutions in the USA evident at local, national and global levels that interact or seek to engage with various international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations based in that country;
- iii. to provide a range of practical experiences through site visits, interviewing and essay/report-writing. Opportunity will be provided to accommodate the specific professional interests of individual participants;
- iv. to develop an awareness of some of the major policy debates in contemporary American politics.

Assessment

On return, a 3,000 word essay has to be written on the subject areas learnt and handed in for assessment by the 28th January 2004.

Week Two – Public Policy and Management: A Comparative UK/USA Perspective (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Boston)

Objectives

The learning objectives of this module are:

- i. to promote a critical understanding of the political economic and social context of state and local governance in the USA;
- ii. to set questions of strategy, leadership, management and public values in a cross-national comparative context;
- iii. to assess the extent and effectiveness of 'policy borrowing' between the UK and the USA in this field;
- iv. to bring Warwick MPA students into direct contact and dialogue with leading US teachers of public leadership and management, and with senior US managers in state and local government.

Assessment

On return, a 3,000 word essay has to be written on the subject areas learnt and handed in for assessment by the 11th March 2004.

8. East Midlands Regional Assembly

- 8.1** The Chief Executive and I met Nigel Rudd, Chief Executive of the Assembly. Nigel has been in post since August 2003 and there was a discussion about the future role and priorities of the Assembly.

9. Greater Nottingham Partnership (GNP)

- 9.1** I attend regular meetings of the Greater Nottingham Partnership - Company Board and Partnership.

One of the major projects recently discussed is 'Core Vision.' Nottingham is one of the eight 'Core Cities' in the United Kingdom and as such has direct links to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Core Cities Prospectus for Nottingham was launched in the summer 2003. Work is currently underway to build upon this to create a new strategic document for the whole of the Greater Nottingham area. It is the intention of GNP, together with the City to hold widespread consultation to give everyone a chance to put forward their views and comments. These will then be used to draw together a strategic vision and action plan to be agreed by all sectors and set real goals to improve the prosperity and well-being of Greater Nottingham.

- 10.** I have also been busy with regular Council business meetings relating mainly to Cabinet. Other meetings included routine meetings with the Chief Executive, Administration Committee, Pensions Committee, Broxtowe Members' Forum, Nottingham Development Enterprise (NDE), met with Members/officers - City and County regarding NET updates, routine meeting between Leaders/Chief Executives of the City and County and East Midlands Regional Assembly's Economic Review Group.

11. Young Potential

- 11.1** I have spent a fair amount of my own personal time supporting my own charity.
- 12.** My door is always open for colleagues to voice any queries/concerns they may have.

COUNCILLOR MICK WARNER
Leader of the County Council