



Meeting	<b>County Council</b>	
Date	<b>18 May 2006</b>	agenda item number

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS**

1 I am very pleased to present my 8<sup>th</sup> report to the County Council as Cabinet member for Community Safety and Partnerships. I hope all County Councillors find the topics covered to be of interest. The wide range of issues being addressed reflects what has been a very active year as portfolio holder.

**Community Safety**

**Alcohol**

2. Anti social behaviour and crime arising from the misuse of alcohol continues to be a major source of concerns to our communities. That is why we are continuing to address the problem on a number of fronts. These include the development of Alcohol Awareness initiatives across the County. This work will be undertaken in partnership with the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and will include a baseline assessment exercise of the challenges to be met.

**Underage Sales**

3. The Easter holidays saw another programme of alcohol test purchases across the County. In all 40 test purchases attempts were made and 9 sales took place. A more localised breakdown of these is;

Bassetlaw:	6 attempts	1 sale
Gedling:	2 attempts	1 sale
Rushcliffe:	2 attempts	1 sale
Ashfield:	7 attempts	0 sales
Newark and Sherwood:	8 attempts	3 sales
Broxtowe:	6 attempts	3 sales
Mansfield:	9 attempts	0 sales

4. The high number of purchases made is disappointing and unfortunately continues to justify the resources Trading Standards and the Police put into this important area. Each sale is now being investigated and appropriate enforcement action will follow.

5. Test purchasing is just one of the enforcement actions we are taking with the promotion of Proof of Age Card and Retailer Training Schemes being further initiatives. I also hope that publicity generated by all these actions will act as a further deterrent to licensees and sellers.

6. Our enforcement activity of underage sales continues to end up in the Courts. In the latest prosecution the licensee of an Eastwood store pleaded guilty to selling to someone under 18 and was fined £300 with the County Council being awarded £200 in costs.
7. I am also pleased to confirm that we are participants in the latest Home Office Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign. This will be a pre World Cup Campaign. A national campaign which the Home Office are organising regionally and is being delivered by local authorities. The campaign will again focus on underage test purchases both on and off sales.

### **Anti Social Behaviour**

8. On this key issue of concern to our communities we are working on the development of an Anti-Social Behaviour Information Officer. This post will be funded in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police and will be crucial in successfully raising awareness of anti social behaviour across the County.
9. On 3 July we are hosting an Anti Social Behaviour Seminar at County Hall for Councillors and partners to help tackle the challenge of anti social behaviour across Nottinghamshire. All elected members are invited to attend.
10. A further conference is also being planned for July to increase community safety on public transport.

### **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)**

11. At our last meeting I reported that I was engaged on a second round of meetings with each of our CDRP's across the County. I am now pleased to report successful negotiations with each of them to identify future priorities and responsibilities, through to 2008, to tackle Anti Social Behaviour across the County in a targeted and responsive way which meets local needs and also ensures countywide coordination.

### **Weapons**

12. We are continuing to raise the profile of the risks of underage youngsters being able to purchase a range of weapons, including knives. I am very pleased to be able to report that I've had a very positive response from Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State at the Home Office, on the suggestions we made relating to the Sale of Weapons. Many of these are being included in the Violent Crimes Reduction Bill and some are still being considered further. Overall she expressed her thanks for our engagement on these important issues.
13. I have also approved the authorisation of officers in Trading Standards to enforce the legislation covering the age controls on knives, knife blades, razor blades, axes, swords and other bladed articles. We will now include them in our test purchasing programme which will commence as part of our support for the national knives amnesty which starts later this month.

### **Health Inequalities**

14. I am very pleased to confirm that County Hall is now 100% smoke-free and negotiations are advancing to roll this out across all our properties. We have also been successful in identifying clear targets for health inequality issues in the Healthy Communities and Older People's block of the Local Area Agreements. Our

officers have also helped in the development of Avoidable Injuries Groups in every District in the County.

### **Obesity Strategy**

15. We are currently preparing a Delivery Plan which sets out how the widely recognised problem of obesity will be tackled by the Council. It summarises current work and sets out future actions to be taken. The plan also incorporates strategies set out in the "Choosing Health" White Paper, the Nottinghamshire Obesity Strategy and regional public health strategic documents. The plan is being prepared in consultation with partners.

### **Domestic Violence**

16. All our secondary schools are being offered a free package of resources and training to support them in delivering sessions focussing on domestic violence and bullying. In addition I am pleased to see the inclusion of several targets aimed at our ability to identify and support children and young people living with domestic violence in the Children and Young People's Plan.

### **Rogue Traders**

17. The 26<sup>th</sup> April saw the launch of Operation Rogue Trader, a partnership between Trading Standards, Police, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Revenue and Customs. The exercise was a coordinated day of action to raise the profile of efforts to reduce and frustrate those involved in "door step crime" and "distraction burglary." During the day checks were made on known and suspicious vehicles in the County and also on known individuals and hot-spot areas. A positive outcome of the day was the sharing of intelligence between all parties involved.
18. I think the day helped to send out a strong no nonsense message to anyone involved in criminal activity of this nature around the County. Sadly the level of complaints still being received by Consumer Direct: East Midlands justifies efforts of this nature which I am committed to continuing as part of our effort to protect the most vulnerable consumers in our communities.
19. I have previously reported on our "infomercials" through Trading Standards: East Midlands warning about doorstep crime which were broadcast by SAGA radio. We have now linked in with hospital radios across the region to broaden the message through them.
20. In a further development we are working with Ashfield Homes to reduce doorstep crime to over 2,500 older and vulnerable people in their properties. In this partnership Trading Standards will provide guidance, support and training to Ashfield Homes employees regarding doorstep crime activities. Key benefits from the partnership will include establishing an effective warning system, educating their vulnerable tenants and sharing intelligence. If this scheme is successful we will be looking to extend it to other District Council Housing Services within the County.
21. Our Community Plays on Doorstep Crime continue to be well received by audiences across the County. I was recently able to go to plays in my community and judge how well they went down. If you know of a suitable group who would like to host the plays please let me know.

## **Intelligence Led Enforcement**

22. A key theme driving improved targeting across regulatory services is the increased use of intelligence led enforcement. The wealth of data available from Consumer Direct locally regionally and nationally is proving a valuable resource to Trading Standards and will help them target high risk traders both in terms of goods and services and trading practices.
23. It is also pleasing that the regional partnership Trading Standards: East Midlands has obtained funding for a two year period to employ a Regional Intelligence Coordinator. This will not only help us on using the Trading Standards data but also to more effectively link into the range of organisations in the Government Agency Intelligence Network.

## **Avian Flu and Human Influenza Pandemic**

24. Our officers continue to prepare for any potential outbreaks of Avian Flu and/or a Human Influenza Pandemic. Clearly the confirmed cases of Avian Flu in Norfolk have raised the profile of this matter again. Our Trading Standards Animal Health and Welfare Team are in close contact with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the State Veterinary Service, whilst nationally the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Standards (LACORS) is ensuring we are informed of all current developments.

## **Partnerships**

### **Community Engagement**

25. Over the last year the Community Engagement Teams have supported over 500 Community Group and 200 of these have been helped with funding applications. A further 40 groups supporting minorities, isolated and vulnerable communities have been assisted. Almost 150 Community Festivals and events have been supported along with a further 60 Community Safety and 80 Health events. Our teams have worked with nearly 60 schools and help communities across the County deliver 48 environmental projects.

### **Partnerships and Community Engagements**

26. Increasingly everything we do is in partnership with others, and community engagement is no exception. Community engagement is at the top of the government's agenda, and so most of our partners and the district Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) are now developing their own draft community engagement strategies. The Police and the County Council have been leading a wide group of partners (including the Crown Prosecution Service, Magistrates, probation and the Prison service, amongst others) to develop a countywide community engagement framework. A countywide 'Stronger Communities' conference is planned for September to bring it all together.

### **Volunteering**

27. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) has provided us with an opportunity to work very closely with the voluntary sector on increasing the number of people who do voluntary work across the county. The LAA identifies volunteering as a 'stretch target'. This means that if we are successful in meeting the targets over the next three years, there will be a substantial reward grant. The work is being led by a new organisation called Volunteering Notts who will improve volunteering activities and opportunities across the County; and will be working closely with the County

Council on the areas where we want or need volunteers, such as Sports, Arts, School Governors, friends of Parks, and many others. The LAA also has a focus on young people and older people volunteering, and we expect the new Employee Volunteering Scheme, once it's set up, to play a big part too.

## **Service Issues**

### **Emergency Planning**

28. I am very pleased to see that Emergency Planning has been included in the latest round of Beacon Council themes. I am supporting our officers with their plans to submit a bid for Beacon Council status under this theme. Entry into the scheme will give the Emergency Planning Team a valuable insight into their performance and a strong basis upon which to plan future service improvements. Success in our application would bring the further benefits of increased staff morale, plus a modest financial reward.
29. Practical exercises play a key role in preparing for emergencies. Recent activities have included participation in an emergency simulation exercise for Trent Bridge Cricket Ground. The exercise was part of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) national programme of exercises ahead of the summer's international cricket tours to England, which includes visits to Trent Bridge by Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

### **Nuclear Free Futures**

30. On 30 June the County Council will be hosting a Seminar covering "Changing the Climate: Local Leadership on National Energy Policy." The seminar will draw delegates to Nottinghamshire from all over the UK to discuss this important subject which will impact on all of us.

### **Youth Offending Service**

31. The Youth Offending Service has continued to develop its range of provision specifically aimed at preventing children entering the youth justice system at a later stage. Among the many schemes the Service is now running is a 'siblings and children's project.' Evidence indicates that young people are far more likely to be involved in crime if someone in their family is also involved. Using both youth offending and Probation Service data the service is now identifying and targeting children in these two groups and creating a package of interventions designed to steer them anyway from these activities.
32. In addition to this project the Service has furthered its partnership work with Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and is using monies from the Youth Justice Board to employ a Psychiatric Nurse to assist in the emotional well being of children who are at risk of offending. Evidence has shown that the emotional health of some children is very poor. It is hoped that this new initiative will assist in the overall target of reducing youth crime.

### **Welfare Rights**

33. On Thursday 11 May I presented certificates to a group of 14 volunteer advisors who have achieved Open College Network (OCN) qualification levels one and two in the Basic Advice Work Skills course at a ceremony hosted by our Welfare Rights Service. I am very proud that we are able to offer such a great opportunity for volunteer advisors. Not only will this help improve their skills and therefore the service which is offered to the public but it is also giving advisors a chance to gain

valuable qualifications. The success of these course has been exemplified by the impressive statistics and the really positive comments made by people taking part.

## **Trading Standards Service**

### The Hong Kong Cat!

34. Our Animal Health and Welfare responsibilities continue to give us some interesting and thankfully isolated incidents. Officers were recently called out to a trading estate in Kirkby in Ashfield where a cat was found in a container from Hong Kong. It had survived in the container for over 3 weeks, seemingly on cardboard and condensation. The cat is now in quarantine.

### Trading Standards Prosecutions

35. The motor trade continues to be an ongoing area of concern to consumers and recent prosecutions reflect this. In one case a Sutton motor trader was fined £100 with a further award of costs and compensation of £147 in relation to a false statement in relation to supplying and fitting an engine. A Worksop dealer was also convicted of supplying two cars with false odometer readings. One showed 82,000 miles when it had travelled over 131,000 and the other whilst showing 47,000 had travelled over 155,000! Total fines of £1000 were imposed; with costs of £775 also the trader was also ordered to pay compensation of £2,500 to the consumers involved.

## **Conclusion**

36. This report marks the first year of the Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio. In preparing it I feel it shows again the importance of the wide range of functions the Portfolio covers, the value they are to our communities, and also the achievements and progress we have made. To highlight this further we have prepared an Annual Report which gives these achievements the profile they deserve. The report will be trailed through a paper introduction and will be fully available on the Internet. This will ensure the widest coverage possible in an economic and modern style.

**Councillor Joyce Bosnjak**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS**