



meeting	COUNTY COUNCIL	
date	13 September 2007	agenda item number

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Purpose of the Report

This report covers some of my key activities as Leader since the last County Council meeting during July, August and September.

### Meetings attended with the Chief Executive

- Continue to hold regular routine meetings with Deputy Leader and Chief Executive.
- East Midlands Counties Leaders' and Chief Executives' meeting – On 6 September 2007 Nottinghamshire hosted a meeting of the East Midlands' Counties Leaders' and Chief Executives'. The body meets on a quarterly basis to discuss issues of common interest to counties in the region. We took the opportunity to promote the Sherwood Living Legend, as colleagues are aware, to our County colleagues in order to gain their support for the bid that will go to the public for voting in December. In the afternoon, following the regular meeting of East Midlands' Counties Leaders' and Chief Executives', the County also hosted a meeting of principal authorities to discuss the implications for principal authorities of the Government's Sub National Review that was published in July 2007.
- Out and About visit to the Assessment and Care Management Team in Newark.

### Meetings between Leaders and Chief Executives of Nottinghamshire County Council and Districts

Meetings with District Councils are ongoing, so would be happy to hear from other Members about major items that might be raised in these meetings.

### Routine meetings with Corporate Communications

The Deputy Leader and I continue to hold fortnightly meetings with a representative from Corporate Communications and other relevant officers – 'Communication Portfolio update meetings', where current and forthcoming areas of interest are discussed.

## **On-air with Councillor Jon Collins from Nottingham City Council – phone-in – BBC Radio Nottingham**

Councillor Jon Collins and myself were on-air, for approximately half an hour, when members of the public telephoned and asked questions which caused them concern.

### **Role of Frontline Councillors – Focus Groups**

As the first part of this project a series of four focus groups with staff and councillors have been designed to investigate the frontline roles of councillors and the communication, information and support offered currently along with suggestions of how the current situation can be improved and changed for the better.

It is envisaged that the sessions will take two hours to give everyone chance to take part in the discussion.

The sessions will start with an introduction, outlining the context and content of the focus group as well as introducing the facilitators and any housekeeping.

This will be followed by the creation of a mind map entitled “Roles of the councillor in the frontline – communication, information and support”. Participants will be encouraged to focus on recent history and the present time and describe the good and the not so good, about how we as a council support, communicate with and inform councillors to aid them in fulfilling their various roles in the frontline. Participants will then be invited to vote upon the key issues from your point of view.

With the mind map as a backdrop and useful reference point, participants will then be invited to imagine that Nottinghamshire County Council is an authority of excellence with regard to supporting councillors in the frontline. They will be encouraged to enter into discussions about how we can enhance upon the good that we currently do and innovate new practice to better meet councillors’ needs. They will be asked to consider what the positive drivers and challenges to change might be in relation to changing the status quo for the better, if indeed they feel it needs to change.

On the basis of the information we have received so far, it is intended to implement a rolling programme of nine additional focus groups – from 29 October to 13 November. All outcomes will be included in a report and sent to all councillors, chief officers and all staff who took part in the event.

### **Business Improvement Board meeting**

Welcomed two new members, who were appointed over the summer and discussed the Board’s work for the coming year.

## **Community Strategy Programme Member Reference Group**

On 25 July I attended a meeting of the Community Strategy Reference Group along with some Cabinet colleagues. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the council's Community Strategy Programme with Mick Burrows, Strategic Director Communities.

## **East Midlands Regional Assembly meeting**

Jane Todd, Regional Director of GOEM gave a presentation on the sub-National Review, followed by a long discussion.

## **Nottinghamshire Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting**

I Chaired the meeting of the Nottinghamshire Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting, held at County Hall on 3 August. This Board is the executive of the Nottinghamshire Partnership. The agenda included discussions on the new Local Area Agreement, proposals for distribution of its reward grant and establishing three working groups, with partners, to take this work forward.

## **Regional Local Area Agreement Roadshow**

A Regional Local Area Agreements (LAAs) Roadshow, organised by the Government Office for the East Midlands was held on 20 July at the East Midlands Conference Centre and was attended by approximately 150 regional stakeholders.

The main purpose of the event was to take forward issues raised at an earlier event and to update partners on the further developments of next generation LAAs. Speakers included representatives from the Government Office, Audit Commission, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire County Councils.

My door is always open. So please feel free to contact me with ideas/proposals/issues at any time.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID KIRKHAM**  
**Leader of the County Council**