



Meeting	<b>County Council</b>	
Date	<b>29 June 2006</b>	agenda item number

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

- 1 I am very pleased to present my first report to the Council in my role as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Partnerships. Since being given this task I have been on a very steep learning curve and have been amazed at
- the range of services and functions that are included in the portfolio, both direct and indirect
  - the number of partners and stakeholders we are working with
  - the contribution the portfolio makes to the County Council's role both in local government and local governance, and
  - most importantly the value and support this provides to our communities.

### **Priorities**

2. To help focus our energies and maximise our achievements I think it is important that I identify my priorities across the portfolio for the coming year. Some of these I am clear on, whilst for others I am checking if the outcomes I would like to achieve and the differences I want to make are realistic.

Confirmed priority areas include:

- To continue to develop our activities to meet the main concerns of our communities:
  - 1) Anti Social Behaviour
  - 2) Alcohol misuse
  - 3) Health Inequalities
  - 4) Doorstep Crime/Distracted Burglary
- Leading the countywide Community Safety Board and ensuring it is the strategic focus for all such initiatives across Nottinghamshire.
- Acting as political champion for the Emergency Planning team's bid for Beacon Council Status.
- Enabling the plans for modernisation of our Registration Service.
- Through enhanced Community Engagement to develop the role of Councillors as Civic Leaders.
- To act as the County Council's Regulatory Champion.

3. Other areas where the feasibility is being considered include:
- Reducing Criminal Damage / Business Crime.
  - Improving coordinated representation of the County Council at District Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).
  - Developing Service Level Agreements to help enhance our commissioning role and ensure that the County Council obtains value for money from such activities.
  - Promoting awareness of the crime and disorder implications across all County Council services.

## **Community Safety**

### **Community Safety Board**

4. On the 15 June I chaired the Nottinghamshire Community Safety Board for the first time. The Board has an important agenda to address, covering issues such as Violent Crime, Safer Neighbourhoods and Business crime. I was very impressed with the whole range of organisations at the table and the energy and commitment they all showed. I am confident the Board will help us all build on the progress we are making.

### **Alcohol**

5. To ensure we obtain the most worthwhile outcomes from our consultancy project, commissioned by the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), an Alcohol Project Steering group is being established to monitor its progress. The aim is to utilise the projects findings to prompt central government into putting dedicated resources into alcohol work.
6. We continue to work in Partnership with the Police in the area of underage alcohol sales. Officers from Trading Standards target off sales premises whilst the Police target on sales premises. Recent test purchase programmes have supported the latest Home Office Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC), pre World Cup Campaign. Test purchases were made at premises across the County with a failure rate of around 10%. Pleasingly this rate is lower than previous exercises and the results in Rushcliffe were particularly positive with all attempts being refused. However these results are only a brief snapshot of the situation and our efforts are targeted at areas of concern in the local community. Hence my ongoing commitment to these activities.

### **Anti Social Behaviour**

7. A further reminder that our Anti Social Behaviour Seminar is taking place on July 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Rufford Suite. The Morning session is specifically targeted at us as Elected Members and will raise awareness of Anti Social Behaviour issues and highlight some of the work that is currently being undertaken to tackle them. We have all been invited and I am confident there will be a good attendance. The afternoon is mainly aimed at Anti Social Behaviour coordinators and will include workshops on specific issues such as alley gating, young people, alcohol and domestic violence.

### **Weapons**

8. Officers have recently been authorised under legislation covering the age controls on the purchase of knives. Currently this legislation prohibits the sale of such items to under 16s. A programme of test purchase exercises is being undertaken running alongside the Police National Knives Amnesty which will serve to heighten public and trader awareness. To date 5 purchases in the Mansfield area have been attempted resulting in two sales. Premises visited included Independent and National Chain stores. The type of knife purchased had been identified by the Police as a common weapon of choice by many juveniles. Whilst it is appreciated that the National Knives Amnesty has removed a number of weapons from circulation the “knife” culture remains an issue amongst the juvenile population. Targeted test purchase programmes, business advice and where appropriate enforcement action will assist in the reduction of access to such weapons. Test purchase programmes of age restricted products have now established themselves as a valuable tool in the County’s Anti Social Behaviour and crime reduction strategies. A full programme will continue throughout 2006/07

## **Safety Zone**

9. The latest Safety Zone took place at the end of May. This is a multi-agency educational event aimed at 9 to 10 year olds and links into the Citizenship Curriculum. Our Trading Standards Service and Road Safety Team were involved along with the Police, British Transport Police, Fire Service, St Johns Ambulance, District Nurses, East Midland Electricity and Severn Trent Water. This year the Trading Standards theme was “How Old Do You Have To Be?”. During these sessions the message around age restrictions was delivered using a quiz. As well as asking questions on the ages that certain items could be purchased, i.e. Fireworks 18, alcohol 18, children were asked to consider why there are age restrictions for some goods. I was fortunate to be able to call in at Safety Zone and was very impressed by it and the enthusiasm of the children taking part. The event is a valuable opportunity to provide “life skills” to children who would otherwise have little contact with the Services involved. A further 5 day event, “Making All Children Safe (MACS)” is scheduled for the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> July. This event at Retford Fire Station will be attended by approximately 600 children from the Bassetlaw area.

## **Partnerships**

### **Local Area Agreement (LAA) – Volunteering**

10. We are working with the voluntary sector to develop the new LAA stretch target around volunteering. A new organisation “Volunteering Notts” is being established which will lead the way on increasing the number of people carrying out voluntary work across the County. We will be establishing the baseline in October as part of the countywide Best Value Survey, and are aiming to increase the numbers by 3.5% over the three years of the LAA. Many County Council services are reliant on volunteers for their success, and so we will be working with colleagues across all departments.

## **Community Cohesion**

11. The community cohesion strategy is in its final stages of preparation and, following appropriate consultation and approval, it will be published over the summer. It has been developed by an interagency group, including some District Councils, the Police, the Inter Faith Network and voluntary & community sector groups. The group is now identifying community cohesion activities and projects across the

county for commissioning. The council's work with the Inter Faith Council has led to some inspiring developments, in particular the "Spiritual elders meet emerging visionaries", where about 100 people gathered at county hall. Older people paired up with younger people to discuss their own personal faith journeys, and the evening was judged to be a great success. We intend to carry out further work with the Inter Faith Council to build on this progress.

## **Community Development**

12. We are aiming to provide support to over 300 groups again this year, through community development support, small amounts of money, or through putting them in touch with wider networks of support and help. A survey of community groups we worked with last year showed that 88% feel that the performance and work of their group has been moderately or highly improved as a result of our interventions. The survey is based on one advised by the Government which will give us the opportunity to benchmark our services against other authorities.

## **Service Issues**

### **Emergency Planning**

13. Councillors Davison, Haynes and I joined officers from the Emergency Planning team at the Annual Conference of the Emergency Planning Society earlier this month at Edinburgh. The conference brought together Emergency Planners from around the country, and abroad, to share information and lessons in disaster management. Prominent among the topics discussed were the detailed lessons from the suicide bombings in London last year, and best practice in warning and informing the public. Work by our Emergency Planners was featured in the presentation by the Emergency Planning "Human Aspects Group" looking at crisis support for victims of disasters.
14. I was pleased to attend a recent "Emergency Planning training session" on 13th June, at Holme Pierrepont, where our Emergency Planning team were leading the event. This was aimed at raising the general awareness of Emergency Planning issues amongst our staff as well as our colleagues in the Emergency Services, health and neighbouring local authorities. I took the opportunity to speak with some of the delegates all of whom welcomed the event and were impressed and enthusiastic about this type of cross-service training. I would ask the Emergency Planning team to continue to develop and deliver these events in their programme of work for the future.

### **Registration Service**

15. The Registration service has now launched "Celebrate" The Essential Guide to planning a Wedding or Civil Partnership in Nottinghamshire. This has been produced in partnership with the publishers and at no cost to the County Council. Individual copies are being sent to all Councillors.
16. The Government have also announced they intend to push ahead with new governance arrangements for the Registration Service as outlined in its consultation paper "Registration Modernisation". Key aspects of the changes will be giving local authorities greater responsibility and accountability for the delivery of the local Registration Service. There are also a range of other proposals to

modernise civil registration. Nottinghamshire people use the Registration Service at critical times in their lives and it is important that we use the opportunity this chance gives us to build on our current services whilst ensuring they remain both efficient and personal.

## **Welfare Rights**

17. The activities of our Welfare Rights team continue to bring positive rewards and benefits to our communities. In 2005/6 it is estimated that their assistance helped gain over £6.5 million in additional benefits for people in Nottinghamshire. The training the team gave to other social care professionals and Welfare Rights advisers will have further increased the sum. Satisfaction levels remain high with 93% of customers being happy with the service they received.

## **Trading Standards Service**

### **Animal Health: Avian Flu**

18. Pleasingly the restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of Avian Flu have now been lifted and there have been no further cases of the disease confirmed. Despite this Trading Standards Staff are working closely with both Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the State Veterinary Service (SVS) on prevention and control measures. Public concern and vigilance is leading to a significant number of dead wild birds being reported. The SVS has requested assistance from Trading Standards Staff across the region to assist in the collection and transportation of dead wild birds for testing where a risk assessment concludes this necessary. We are participating in this scheme which will initially be funded as part of the Animal Health framework agreement.

### **Sunday Markets**

19. On 11 June I was able to join up with a Trading Standards team operating at a major Sunday Market in the north of the County. The team had a successful morning with the range of goods being seized covering “designer” clothing, World Cup souvenirs and unclassified DVD’s. Investigation into these matters is now ongoing. By removing these goods from the market place we are protecting consumers, legitimate industry and the vibrancy of our retail economy.
20. This visit followed on previous partnership work between Trading Standards and the Football Association, when a week earlier, around 300 counterfeit England replica football shirts were seized from another Sunday Market. Investigations into these matters are ongoing. In addition to protecting consumers, grass roots football also benefits as revenue received by the Football Association from the sale of genuine shirts goes back into the game at a junior level.

**Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS**