

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, since the last report to Council. I hope you find the report of interest and I will be very happy to provide further information on any subject it covers.

TRADING STANDARDS

Public Accounts Committee Report

2. The Public Accounts Committee has published its report into 'Protecting Consumers – the system for enforcing consumer law'. The full report can be found at:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubacc/1468/1468.pdf

3. The five primary conclusions are:
 - Consumer protection arrangements are incoherent and fragmented, and the government has little control over resources.
 - The system for dealing with regional and national malpractices is inadequate, with limited support for tackling regional problems.
 - The service level available to residents varies across the country and is inadequate in some areas.
 - The powers and penalties available to enforcement bodies are too weak to address serious forms of harm.
 - The level of financial risk taken on by enforcement bodies may discourage them from pursuing complex and difficult investigations.
4. The Government's Consumer Law review will make a number of fundamental changes to the landscape, and promises to address the concerns raised. From April 2012, there will be a new national governance structure put in place to redirect central government spending in a coordinated manner to local Trading Standards Services. Confirmation of these arrangements are still to be notified.

Alcohol and Minors

5. Officers recently intercepted a man who having approached two children, purchased wine in an off-licence on their behalf. The two 15 year olds were escorted home by the Police, and family circumstance assessments undertaken to identify any 'at risk' issues, while the man was issued with an £80 penalty notice by the Police. Trading Standards were shocked to find an adult approaching young people in this manner, and will continue to work with the Police to eradicate such damaging behaviour and ensure robust action is taken against offenders.

Part Worn Tyre Safety Issues

6. Following intelligence to suggest safety concerns in this sector, the Service recently test purchased and assessed the safety of ten tyres from second hand tyre retailers. The most serious problem discovered was one tyre had undergone a temporary repair which also did not meet safety standards, while two tyres were not the correct size requested and would have failed a MOT test if fitted to a vehicle. None of the tyres purchased met labelling requirements in that they failed to display the required 'Part Worn' marking, whilst two tyres had not been balanced which could lead to uneven tyre wear, reducing tyre life. Investigations continue.

Fireworks

7. The service has undertaken a range of work to ensure firework safety recently including:
 - **Storage safety checks** - 97 firework premises were inspected, no major issues found.
 - **Test Purchases** - 2 out of the 6 premises tested sold fireworks to our young volunteer. Investigations continue.
 - **Mansfield Town Fireworks Display** – Trading Standards assisted Emergency Management colleagues in issuing a safety of sports ground certificate, by providing safe storage and transportation advice.
 - **Theft of fireworks** - following a theft in the County, we issued alerts to the public and colleagues.

Lorry Watch

8. The schemes in Papplewick, Coddington, Langar cum Barnstone and Cropwell Bishop continue to work well, attracting local support and media interest. Proposed further schemes are Ravenshead, Blidworth, Nuthall and Greasley and positive discussions continue with Parish Councils to roll these schemes out by March.

Business Support and Primary Authority

9. Trading Standards have now agreed their first joined-up Primary Authority arrangement for a food business with Rushcliffe Environmental Health. The partnership will offer better value and reduced burdens for the business, for example through moving to one annual inspection covering all regulatory matters.

Police National Computer (PNC) Direct Access

10. Following detailed training, and a satisfactory audit of terminal use and location, Trading Standards has now been given a secure terminal to directly access this system.

Sunday Market Raids

11. **Thoresby** - over 4,300 suspected counterfeit items were recently seized including music CD's, music MP3's, Wii games, and software. Two men were arrested and questioned. Investigations continue.

12. **Hucknall** - over 1,800 suspected counterfeit DVDs and CD's have been seized from 3 stalls at Hucknall market. Three individuals were arrested and bailed on the day. Investigations again continue.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Emergency response training for voluntary agencies

13. The annual emergency planning training event for voluntary agencies this year examined the planning and response to large scale public events and crowded places. The topic was especially pertinent in view of the many such events taking place in Nottinghamshire next year, including those associated with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Torch Relay. The objectives of the training included to provide volunteers with knowledge of their role in planning for large scale events and the response when tragedies occur. Speakers included Seamus Kelly, OBE, Deputy Chief Officer of St John Ambulance, whose wealth of experience includes planning for the Notting Hill Carnival, London Marathon, Princess Diana's Funeral, and the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The volunteers attending this year's event came from British Red Cross, St John Ambulance, Salvation Army, CRUSE Bereavement Care, RAYNET and the WRVS. The event was organised by emergency planning staff of the County Council together with those of Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Police, and St John Ambulance.

National TV Coverage of 4x4 Driver Training

14. The training arranged by the emergency planning team for volunteer 4x4 vehicle drivers has been an important element of our overall preparations for winter weather. Local media interest in the training led to it being featured on prime time national BBC breakfast television news. The three minute reported (shown three times during the morning) was devoted to how Nottinghamshire County Council is preparing to maintain critical services this winter. Film from last year's severe weather was used alongside scenes from the training this year, which took place at Bestwood Country Park. Interviews with the volunteer drivers illustrated the determination of social care staff to maintain services to the vulnerable whatever the weather. Our plans now take account of 12 vehicles to use immediately, plus an additional 15 volunteers and 8 vehicles to call on if necessary.

Business Continuity Planning for Industrial Action

15. The emergency planning team worked in support of all departments in making preparations for the business continuity of critical services during the industrial action on 30th November. Arrangements made for previous occasions were refreshed and developed into a specific contingency plan for this occasion, which was approved for use for by the Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board. The County Council Emergency Centre, in the basement at County Hall, was made operational during the day and coordinated our response to ensure the Council was able to provide essential services.

Events Safety

16. By utilising expertise gained through responsibility for Safety at Sports Grounds, the Emergency Planning Team is now leading on the Safety Advisory aspects for two high-profile events taking place in summer 2012. These are for the Nottinghamshire contribution to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons, on 4th June, and the Olympic Torch Relay as it passes through Nottinghamshire on 28th June.

17. The 4th June events will involve around 50 bonfire and church-top beacons being lit in the County, among some 2,012 nationally. An overall planning group is being led by the Chief Fire Officer for the County, and a sub group of this will provide safety advice and guidance to the beacon organisers. Later that same month, numerous local events are expected to cheer the Olympic flame through the County. The County Council is leading the multi-agency planning for this, and again a subgroup led by the emergency planning team has been established to advise on crowd safety and event management.

Recent Incidents

18. Existing Emergency Plans were used to good effect to responding to two recent incidents, one in Mapperley and other in Selston.

19. On Central Avenue, Mapperley Plains, a 100 metre cordon was established and properties were evacuated when Police discovered a variety of hazardous materials at a property. The Richard Herrod Leisure Centre was established as a 'place of safety' for evacuees, while Mapperley Plains Primary School evacuated to Mapperley Plains Social Club. Members of the Emergency Planning Manager team attended the Social Club and Police HQ, in support of the response. One evacuee was identified as being on the County Council's vulnerable list.

20. More than 50 people were evacuated from their homes in Selston during the early hours of Monday 24th October following a shed fire involving acetylene gas cylinders. The Fire Service established a 200m cordon and residents were cared for at a 'place of safety' established at Selston Leisure Centre.

REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES

External consultation on re-organisation of the Registration Service

21. A thorough consultation on proposed changes to the Registration Service has been undertaken. Initial consultation has been completed with staff, and the outcomes of this have informed the proposals detailed in a second stage consultation document that has been sent to customers and stakeholders, including all County Councillors. This consultation ran until 9th December 2011.

Wedding Fayre at Rushcliffe Register Office

22. On Saturday 12th November, Rushcliffe Register Office opened their doors to the public as they staged a Wedding Fayre for anyone thinking of getting married. Various local premises approved for civil marriages participated in the event, plus local businesses including florists, photographers and cake suppliers. A range of luxury vehicles parked outside, while musicians played and a catwalk-style bridal parade. Communications colleagues from County Hall worked with registrars to publicise the event through a dedicated web page, a banner outside West Bridgford library, coverage in local newspapers, advertising boards in the street, and a 5ft by 5ft advert in a wedding shop window. Interactive publicity was provided via facebook and twitter. The event was staged as part of marketing activities aimed at increasing the income generation capacity of the service.

'Tell Us Once'

23. The 'Tell us once' (TUO) service for Nottinghamshire was launched successfully on 3rd November. TUO is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) national initiative, designed to improve customer service by allowing a citizen, when registering a birth or death, to inform a number of central and local government departments on a single occasion. The Registration Service, as recipient of birth and death notifications during the registration process, will capture the customer's TUO information. The service is being delivered from within current staff resources.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

White Ribbon Campaign

24. On the 28th November 2011, South Nottinghamshire Academy in Radcliffe-on-Trent, became the first school in the country to be awarded the White Ribbon Gold Award for work to reduce Violence Against Women. The school has embraced a new approach to this issue involving teachers, pupils, parents and governors. The young people explored the issues of healthy relationships, domestic abuse and sexual violence in their lessons and in assemblies.

Anti- Social Behaviour

25. Increased funding has been made available for tackling anti-social behaviour through gating orders and continuing to keep the pressure on car cruisers, making it quite clear that they are unwelcome in Nottinghamshire. We need to act quickly at times and through this funding we will have the flexibility to do so.

26. Gating Order applications at Malthouse Close, Eastwood and Whitewater Road, Ollerton have now been approved by Rights of Way Committee and work will commence to put the gates in place to stop anti social behaviour blighting residents' lives.

Metal Theft

27. A joint operation to tackle scrap metal thefts took place in Newark on 15th September and a large quantity of stolen property was recovered from a local scrap dealer including lead from church roofs, railway track and heavy duty wire. Nottinghamshire Police is currently working with British Transport police to look at possible prosecutions under the Theft and Proceeds of Crime acts.

28. Since this event, two other yards have been raided by the police in the Newark area, with offences highlighted at all the locations. Nottinghamshire Police has since set up a team to deal with scrap metal crime and is gathering best practice on how to deal with the issues. However legislation around the yards is difficult to enforce and licenses cannot be removed. Therefore in the longer term, tougher legislation is needed and we hope that the private member's bill currently before Parliament will provide this.

Citizen's Panel

29. Questions on public confidence have been sent to the Citizens Panel, a questionnaire was distributed in October. Panel members were asked questions relating to their feelings about whether they feel safe walking alone in the day, walking alone at night and on their perception of ASB. The date when the results will be available will be late December/January and will feed into the County Strategic Assessment as well as into the local Community Safety Partnership plans.

COUNCILLOR MICK MURPHY
Cabinet Member for Community Safety

County Council/CC100