

meeting	COUNTY COUNCIL		
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REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO MARCH 2011

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

Animal Disease Prevention

2. In one of the most distressing incidents we have ever dealt with, officers discovered over 60 deceased animals in various degrees of decomposition at a farm. Living animals were found moving amongst the dead, some feeding off carcasses. Officers worked with the farmer to ensure disease control and disposal tasks were undertaken properly. Investigations continue into the cause of death, and criminal proceedings may well follow.
3. A Police tip-off revealed what appears to be an illegal slaughter premise. Controls on meat for human consumption and animal by-products disposal require slaughter houses and slaughter men to be licensed and have safeguards in place. Investigations with Environmental Health colleagues continue.

Protecting Vulnerable Consumers

4. We are working with the Police to identify a criminal who extorted £16,000 from a woman in her late 70's by falsely claiming there was extensive winter damage to her roof, and that he had undertaken repair work which he had not. Adult Care Team colleagues are providing ongoing support to the woman.

5. We helped a disabled resident who discovered the price for a fitted kitchen had jumped from £7,000 to £19,000. Investigations established that the consumer's signature had been forged on a credit agreement, while a second one had not been properly executed. These rendered the contract unenforceable, and we were able to make sure the consumer did not have to pay for the kitchen.
6. Organised criminals conducting bogus property repairs will take victims to banks to withdraw cash. We have recently been raising awareness of the issues in Banks, Building Societies, and Post Offices. Staff we have worked with report being more able to intervene to protect vulnerable customers that may be being exploited by such doorstep criminals.
7. Officers have delivered training to care staff at the Willow Wood Day Service on Doorstep crime, scams and Buy With Confidence. It is hoped the staff will continue to reinforce key prevention messages with our vulnerable service users.

Big Society – Lorry Watch

8. Following the success of the pilot in Papplewick and Linby, the Service has been responding to information suggesting that other areas experiencing nuisance and safety issues associated with heavy goods vehicles breaching weight limits. Officers are currently investigating breaches following enforcement days undertaken in Langar cum Barnstone and Coddington to assess the extent of the problems.
9. The Service has developed a community lorry watch reporting webpage on our internet site for people to report heavy goods vehicles travelling on weight restricted roads. Once launched, the intelligence gathered from local observers will be used to direct enforcement activity.

Regional Operations Unit (“Scambusters”)

10. There has been a significant increase in the number of enquiries received concerning the sale of mobility aids. Our unit's current work includes:
 - An investigation into someone passing himself off to scooters owners as the legitimate supplier, and telling them the scooter needs a service to maintain its warranty. The service is usually poor, with many left in a dangerous state. Some have been taken away and not returned.
 - A further trader is being investigated for non-supply of goods and supplying inferior, and second hand items. One instance involves the sale of a stair lift which was not only unnecessary but unusable.
11. The Service plans to use the opportunity afforded by upcoming prosecutions in this area to maximise publicity to educate potential victims and their carers.

Court Action

12. A recent 3 day Crown Court Trial relating to the sale of counterfeit goods has been avoided as the defendant pleaded guilty following our legal arguments. Sentencing has been adjourned to 13th May 2011. A financial investigation is now underway to determine the level of financial gain made by the individual.

Primary Authority

13. We recently delivered two seminars to businesses with regards to support we will offer under Primary Authority Partnerships. The scheme allows Trading Standards to offer advice and support on a cost recovery basis. Although we have yet to formally sign up any businesses, we have firm commitments from a number that they will be doing so.
14. Some large businesses have expressed an interest in comprehensive Primary Authority Partnerships which would include advice on Environmental Health and Fire Safety legislation. Exploratory discussions are taking place with authorities who offer such partnerships, and with Environmental Health and Fire Service colleagues.

Consumer Law Landscape Review

15. The Government's Consumer Landscape Review identified Citizen's Advice and Trading Standards Services at the centre of their plans for a better model for protecting consumers. Under the review, the Government propose that Trading Standards Services take over national enforcement roles currently undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), and intend to redirect central spending to support this.
16. Early indications are that a 'Scambuster Plus' model will be adopted, where each regional team would take a lead on (and the funding for) one of the OFT's current roles. Because of the authority's role in hosting the East Midlands Team, the County Council will play a full role in shaping the proposals.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Incidents

17. Emergency plans for the safety and welfare of people evacuated from their homes during emergencies have been invoked for use in two recent incidents, both involving a fire. In early April a fire at the old Sherwood Hall School, Forest Town, Mansfield, led to the evacuation of local people to the nearby Ravensdale Pub. This was designated as a 'Place of Safety' and was attended by a County Council emergency planning officer. Evacuees were provided with refreshments by the landlord of the pub, while the emergency planning team liaised with Mansfield District Council and NHS Nottinghamshire County to support evacuee's needs. Procedures were activated to identify vulnerable people in the affected streets. Mansfield District Council commissioned air tests and dust sampling, and appointed

specialist contractors to deal with the possible release of Asbestos fibres into the atmosphere.

18. A fire in outbuildings at Nursery Drive, Carlton, on 13th April, led to the evacuation of approximately 170 residents into the nearby Richard Herrod Leisure Centre. The Centre is a designated Rest Centre for emergencies; however the scale of this incident required activation only of arrangements for a 'Place of Safety'. A County Council emergency planning officer attended the incident, and called in resources from the WRVS and British Red Cross as well as from other County Council departments. County Councillor John Clarke was present at the leisure centre, and information was passed to the local members Councillors Creamer and Pulk.

Fuel Supply Contingency Planning

19. Although the risk of disruption to UK fuel supplies has receded in recent weeks, planning work has continued to ensure that critical County Council services will have priority for fuel in the event of any fuel supply difficulties. In particular, surveys have been completed on all of the designated filling stations across the County that would be used to maintain supply to the emergency services and other critical public services, including those of the County Council. Work will continue to further develop and test the emergency plans for continued supply.

REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES

New Governance Annual Performance Report

20. This year's report on the local discharge of registration services has been completed and returned to the General Register Office (GRO). The review takes place as part of the 'new governance' framework, and is returned each year with the registration Service Delivery Plan for the year ahead. 'New Governance' arrangements started in Nottinghamshire on 1st July 2009, and require the service to meet a national Code of Practice and national standards. The scheme enables the service to implement local ways of working based on a national Good Practice Guide.
21. The annual report detailed successful performance against the national standards for the timescales for key events, such as percentage of births registered within 42% (national standard 98%, Nottinghamshire 100%). All statutory functions had been carried out in line with the Good Practice Guide. The service was also able to report that the proposed Nationality Checking Services had received Cabinet approval, and that the 'Tell us once' service will be implemented from September. A GRO audit of registration stock storage gave rise to positive feedback, with only minor issues identified for possible improvements.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Domestic Violence Scrutiny

22. The County Council Overview and Scrutiny Report on Domestic Violence was published in April. The report highlights the vital work taking place on this issue including important work to safeguard children affected by domestic violence. The recommendations are supported in principle, however, some cannot be fully met at the present time with existing resources. Since this is a truly cross-cutting issue, several of the recommendations also have implications for Children's and Adult services. Responses are now being sought from the corresponding portfolio holders. I am working with Cabinet Members and a full response will be available next month.

Anti Social Behaviour

23. Dragons Den phase 2 reached its climax on May 17th with the final being won by Holgate School, Hucknall. The County Youth Service are going to be supporting the delivery of the project, using park based events they already have in their calendar to promote the message of older and young people understanding each other better.
24. The Tilley Award, which focuses on partnership based problem solving, is a national event with high profile media coverage for the winners. The police in Nottinghamshire are keen to put in Tilley applications across the force this year.
25. Police in Ashfield and Mansfield have requested that Dragons Den is put forward. An application is now being drafted by the Community Safety Team with the police. Proposals are being drafted for other initiatives to go forward from other parts of the county.

Pintail Close Car Cruising

26. A developing problem around car cruising in Netherfield has been experienced by the local community over the last few months. I was involved in a very positive site meeting at Pintail Close, Netherfield, on 7th April, when a number of potential initiatives were discussed with colleagues, and I can report that Highways have agreed to work with the Community Safety Team to look at the feasibility of putting traffic calming measures in place. These will greatly reduce the attractiveness of Pintail Close for car cruising.

COUNCILLOR MICK MURPHY
Cabinet Member for Community Safety

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