

report



meeting	County Council		
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REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

1. I am very pleased to present my report to Council as the Community Safety Portfolio Holder on the varied activities that have taken place within it. I hope you find the report of interest and will be very happy to provide further information on any subject it covers.

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Extending Smokefree Environments in Nottinghamshire

2. The Nottinghamshire Tobacco Alliance, supported by the Healthier Communities Service, is currently launching its smokefree environments programme. This is aimed at encouraging smokers in Nottinghamshire to limit the danger of domestic fires caused by smoking and the effect of second hand smoke on others, particularly children and young people.
3. Smoking materials continue to pose a serious problem across the County, causing 8% of all accidental domestic fires between 2004 and 2009. In 2009 of five domestic fire fatalities, three were caused by smoking materials. The programme will be piloted in homes in Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Ashfield and also in cars in Bassetlaw. An action plan is currently being put in place alongside a task and finish group to implement the programme.

Home Safety Equipment Scheme

4. The Healthier Communities Service is providing a contribution of £15,000 (alongside a further £72,000 from other agencies) to support the provision of home safety equipment in Mansfield and Ashfield, to low income families with children under the age of two.

5. Childhood accidents are the highest cause of death in children under the age of five, and Nottinghamshire has higher numbers of childhood injuries compared to the national average. The funding will enable 166 needy families (83 in each of the two Districts) to be afforded the assistance of home safety equipment such as safety gates, fireguards, smoke alarms and window catches.

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Tackling Violence in Nottinghamshire

6. We are fully aware of the damaging effect violence can have on the people of Nottinghamshire and the reputation of our County. Working together we are determined to reduce violent crime. We are well placed to do this, through our lead role on the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and through the work we do with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across the County.
7. On behalf of the Safer Nottinghamshire Board we held a seminar in December to look at how we can all work together better to tackle violence in the county, learning from local and national good practice.
8. Over 50 delegates attended, including representatives from the Police, District Councils, County Council, the Health Service and the Government Office for the East Midlands. Delegates fed back that the seminar had been very useful in better equipping them to find local solutions to local problems, maximise the impact of resources and improve their existing action plans.
9. Going forward the impact of the action plans will be closely monitored and regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant and focussed on those areas where violence is, or is at risk of becoming, a problem.

Parish Event

10. On Thursday 10th December, the County Council hosted an event led by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Cutts, where all town and parish council chairs were invited to discuss practical new ways to work together. Around a hundred parish and town councils were represented.
11. An open discussion took place where it was agreed that the County Council would look at how it could support those parish and town councils who wish to take on responsibility for services such as grass cutting or verge maintenance. Other issues discussed included community safety,

anti social behaviour and improving consultation between the County Council and parish Councils to help meet community needs. An overall summary of the discussion and the actions agreed will be circulated to all parish and town Councils.

Dragon's Den

12. I would like to congratulate all the young people who took part in the Dragon's Den initiative on their creative and innovative ideas. Students at Quarrydale School and Sutton Centre Community College in Sutton-in-Ashfield, were given a challenge to identify a problem concerning anti social behaviour in their area and then develop proposals to address the issue.
13. The grand final of the competition was an excellent event with four projects from the two schools being considered. The projects were presented to a judging panel, mirroring the format of the popular BBC series 'Dragon's Den'. The panel was made up of various partners of the Ashfield Partnership Against Crime. All four projects identified some interesting ideas as to where activities could be located but all had a common theme of providing a varied set of activities – from X Box to beauty and fashion workshops to sport.
14. The winning entry, from Quarrydale School, focused on the Stanton Hill area which is a known anti social behaviour hot spot, but also offered links to another centre in the Skegby area, another anti social behaviour hot spot. This proposal also had the advantage of offering sessions for different age groups.
15. This event has shown how important it is to listen to, and consult with young people when planning activities for them. All the presentations identified 'nothing to do' as an issue for young people. This perception is a concern and highlights how vital it is for partners to work together with young people to address this issue.

TRADING STANDARDS

Ashfield Alcohol Action

16. I am pleased to provide an update on the alcohol initiative undertaken during December. Our trading standards officers worked closely with police officers to carry out a series of high visibility visits to off-licenses in Ashfield. A total of 68 visits were made by 7 trading standards and 5 police officers.

17. Our officers presented a business information pack to the retailers, and provided short reminder and advice sessions about the issue of young people and alcohol, and what practical steps retailers can take to reduce the amount of alcohol coming into the hands of underage persons. The visits were carried out late on a Friday afternoon so the messages were fresh in retailers' minds for the weekend. It was also an opportunity for retailers to talk about the specific problems they are experiencing in their area and officers were able to offer support.
18. The business information pack contained information about the law regarding the sale of alcohol, along with practical advice on what procedures can be put in place to minimise the sale of alcohol to young persons. Material for staff training was also included in the pack, one part of this being a hard hitting DVD.
19. This work will provide a sound foundation for future enforcement work, and I know from speaking with people that it has been well received by the local community.

Education Initiatives

20. Officers made presentations at four pre-retirement courses in the late autumn. The courses were run by the Pre-Retirement Council and agencies presented information on topics of interest to people in preparation for their retirement. Trading Standards offered advice on our statutory rights when shopping on the internet, and how to enforce them.
21. Trading Standards also took part in 3 multi-agency days at Alderman White School, Chilwell, where over 300 pupils in years 7 to 9 attended sessions. The aim of the event was to provide information on different life-skills, safety topics and health issues. The students learnt about some of the dangers of counterfeit goods, their consumer rights when shopping, and where they can go for help and advice. The event was organised by the Police, and a range of other agencies also attended, including our Road Safety Team, the Fire Service, Nottingham City Transport, East Midlands Ambulance and the Nottinghamshire Primary Care Trust.
22. **Prosecutions Update:**
 - A Humberside company and its managing director both pleaded guilty to a number of charges relating to the transportation of pigs from Humberside to a slaughterhouse at Clipstone. He was fined £750 and ordered to pay costs of £500. The company was fined £1000, and ordered to pay costs of £539.

- A Mansfield man pleaded guilty to 11 charges relating to the sale and possession for sale of counterfeit DVD films which were seized from his stall at Botany Avenue Car Boot Sale at Mansfield. These offences put him in breach of a 36 week suspended prison sentence imposed in December 2008. His suspended prison sentence was increased to a 72 week suspended sentence.

Fraud Case Makes First Appearance Before Nottingham Crown Court

23. During December, seven defendants appeared before Nottingham Crown Court, facing indictments of conspiracy to commit fraud. This has been a lengthy and complex investigation carried out by Trading Standards, and this appearance marks the first step in the hearing process. The indictments relate to the activities of a business involved in damp proofing. The County Council is alleging that the defendants conspired to commit fraud against elderly and vulnerable consumers not only in Nottinghamshire, but across the region.
24. During this first hearing at Crown Court, one of the defendants pleaded guilty, and we will now progress the financial investigation against him (see below). The remaining six defendants who all pleaded not guilty will appear before the Crown Court for trial in June this year, and I will provide you with a full update then.

Proceeds Of Crime

25. The defendant who pleaded guilty in the case detailed above had \$11,900 US dollars (approximately £7,000) seized from him as part of the investigation. Following his guilty plea, we will now try to prove that this money, along with any other identified assets, should be considered as being the 'benefit' from his crime. We will request the Court to confiscate this money, together with requesting appropriate compensation for any relevant victims identified. This will be determined at the conclusion of the criminal case.

Incentivisation Receipts

26. A total of just over £17k has now been received by the County Council from the Home Office incentivisation scheme. This will be used to fund further training for our Accredited Financial Investigator, and the remainder will be spent in accordance with Home Office guidance to fund local crime fighting priorities for the benefit of the community.

My Visit To Trading Standards

27. On the 13th January, I was pleased to have the opportunity to spend the day with our Trading Standards officers, where I was able to see first hand the diverse range of roles they perform and how these safeguard our communities from a range of threats to health, safety and financial wellbeing. I will provide colleagues with a more detailed written update in my next portfolio report.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

28. The heavy snowfall and sub-zero temperatures that persisted from 5th January until the middle of the month stretched the County Council's capacity to maintain services as normal. The Emergency Planning Team supported the work of the Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board to coordinate the overall County Council response to the impact of the conditions. Through this mechanism, County Council departments succeeded in maintaining critical services during very difficult circumstances. Where it was necessary to reduce any service, this was published promptly. The experience of rare and unusual situations is a valuable opportunity to learn lessons that will help the County Council to be better prepared for future events. The key learning points emerging from early reflections on this experience have been captured by the Emergency Planning Team, and will be fed into debriefing events within departments, corporately and via external bodies such as the Local Resilience Forum and the Government Office for the East Midlands.
29. Emergency Plans to cope with widespread flooding across Nottinghamshire were tested in a major exercise in December last year. Exercise "Diamond 2" brought together senior figures from all key agencies for a full-day event designed to test strategic and tactical decision making in response to an evolving flood scenario.
30. A particularly important feature of the event was that it was held at the Local Resilience Forums' Multi-agency Command Centre within Highfield Fire Station. This provided a realistic opportunity to evaluate the plan to use this facility to coordinate the response to any type of emergency. An immediate debrief was held at the end of the event to capture important lessons learned. These will now be evaluated to provide further enhancements to the relevant emergency plans.
31. I am delighted to report that work on our national Beacon legacy project to develop community resilience through schools has now resumed following its temporary suspension during the height of the influenza pandemic work. The project is in collaboration with colleagues from Children and

Young People's Department, Essex County Council, the Cabinet Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. A key feature of the project involves the creation and promulgation of three key pieces of guidance. Crucially, these have now commenced a phased consultation process with schools and education professionals. The outcomes from this work will be shared with all schools in the country.

REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES

32. Registrars across the county are now preparing to implement the relevant aspects of new legislation affecting the Registration Service. The Coroners and Justice Bill and the Welfare Reform Bill have now received Royal Assent, and each contain provisions which affect how the registration service is delivered to the public.
33. The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 includes changes to the death certification process which mean that registrars will have a duty to refer deaths to the Coroner or Medical Examiner if new issues are raised by an informant at the time of registration. The Welfare Reform Act 2009 includes changes intended to ensure that unmarried fathers are recorded in the birth register. It is anticipated that the new provisions will be brought into force by Commencement Orders in the near future.

COUNCILLOR MICK MURPHY
Cabinet Member for Community Safety