

Report



meeting

COUNTY COUNCIL

date

13th December 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 November and December.

Meetings attended with the Chief Executive

- Continue to hold regular routine meetings with Deputy Leader and Chief Executive.
- East Midlands Leaders' and Chief Executives' meeting.
- BEL event.

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

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

Recently met with Broxtowe and Newark and Sherwood District Councils, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottingham City Council.

Routine meetings with Corporate Communications

The Deputy Leader and I continue to hold fortnightly meetings with a representative from the Nottingham Evening Post and Corporate Communications, where current and forthcoming areas of interest are discussed.

- Also, continue to hold fortnightly Communication Portfolio update meetings with the Deputy Leader and officers.
- Meet regularly with a representative from the CHAD, where current and forthcoming areas of interest are discussed.

On-air with Councillor Mike Edwards from Nottingham City Council – phone-in – BBC Radio Nottingham

Councillor Mike Edwards from Nottingham City Council and myself were on-air, for approximately half an hour, when members of the public telephoned and asked questions which caused them concern.

Visit to Residential Homes

Councillors Michael Storey, Alan Rhodes and myself along with the relevant officers are in the process of visiting residential homes as part of the Residential Homes' Survey – main purpose of the visits was to consult on the proposed changes to services for older people across the County.

New Local Government Network Regional Seminar

The New Local Government Network held a regional seminar at County Hall on 30 November. The seminar was entitled "Delivering across borders: Implementing the sub-national review". It was attended by Gillian Merron MP, the Regional Minister for the East Midlands, as well as around 20 senior level politicians and officers from local government and public sector regional bodies. I was asked to speak on practical policies for economic growth and so spoke about how we have been very flexible in our approach to economic development to try to deliver the best outcomes for towns and local communities across Nottinghamshire.

LSP Peer Review

This Autumn the eight local strategic partnerships (LSP) within the Nottinghamshire County area are participating in peer challenges designed to assess their current operation and to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The LSP have requested these peer challenges and asked for them to be conducted by a partnership formed by SOLACE Enterprise, IDeA and Warwick Business School.

An important part of the peer challenge process is hearing the views of partners and participants – various questions were provided for comment.

CCN Annual Conference

The 2007 CCN Annual Conference marked ten years of CCN Conferences. The Conference this year was held at Shrigley Hall in Cheshire on 12 and 13 November.

The theme of this year's Conference was 'A New Localism – Redefining Local Government.' The Conference gave delegates the opportunity to consider the role of local authorities as described by the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears; 'those who hold the ring of local democratic accountability – listening to the community and working with local partners to meet their needs.'

As in previous years, in addition to the speaker and plenary sessions there were a number of workshops led by CCN Member Authorities, which provided the opportunity to share best practice.

Service, March Past and Reception for 2nd Battalion Mercian Regt. (Worcs. and Sherwood Foresters)

Members and officers of both Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council together with the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Buchanan, High Sheriff and Lady and Sir Dennis Pettitt, Honorary Alderman attended a service, march past and a reception at the Council House, where the City Chairman did a short speech followed by presentation of medals and freedom of the City Scroll presentation.

Beacon Bid for the 'Improving Accessibility' theme

Nottinghamshire County Council in partnership with Nottingham City Council have been successfully short-listed for Beacon Council status in the theme '*Improving Accessibility*.' On Wednesday 21 November, I was involved in a visit from an assessment panel of the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA). The visit gave the assessment panel the opportunity to:

- see the key elements of practice and factors underpinning our success in enabling people to reach jobs and essential services;
- hear about our commitment to share our lessons with others; and
- meet front-line staff, senior officers, elected members, service users and partners in order to explore issues in an open and honest manner.

It is a significant achievement to reach this stage and provides recognition of the partnership work to improve accessibility as demonstrated in the Greater Nottingham and North Nottinghamshire Accessibility Strategies, part of the Local Transport Plans. The next stage involves a presentation to the assessment panel in London on 9 January 2008. The successful Beacon authorities will be announced in March 2008.

Nottinghamshire LSP Board

I have chaired two meetings of the Nottinghamshire Local Strategic Partnership Board, held on 2 November and 7 December. In particular the Board has been discussing the new Local Area Agreement and what should form part of the 35 targets we have been asked to select. Governance issues have also been discussed and the Board agreed to extend its membership to include the Deputy Leader of the County Council and the 7 District Leaders. The Governance Working Group, which I also chair, is continuing its review of governance arrangements and will be considering whether additional partners need to be invited to join the Board.

Nottinghamshire LSP Peer Challenge

The Nottinghamshire Local Strategic Partnership was subject to a peer challenge between 20 and 22 November. This involved an external team, put together by SOLACE and the Improvement and Development Agency, visiting the county to

interview a wide range of partners about the operation and achievements of the county LSP. Each district LSP is participating in a peer challenge as well. As Chair of the Nottinghamshire LSP Board, I was interviewed by members of the Peer Challenge. I then attended an initial feedback session on 22nd November where the challenge team shared their initial findings. It is pleasing that the team found many things that are working well with the LSP as well as making helpful recommendations for future development. The report on the Nottinghamshire LSP should be available by the end of the year and a composite report on all the county and district LSPs is due in February 2008. Both reports will be made available to Members.

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