

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY**

### **REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 4 NOVEMBER TO 15 DECEMBER 2011**

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio. This report reflects the wide range of initiatives being undertaken, all of which help improve and enhance the quality of life for Nottinghamshire people.

#### **Libraries, Archives and Information Publications**

##### **Readers' Day**

2. Readers' Day, the 8<sup>th</sup> Joint annual event with Nottingham City, took place on 5 November. It was a resounding success, attracting over 150 readers. This year we worked with Vintage Publishing who brought with them some first-class authors, including David Lodge, and gave a fascinating insight into the publishing world. We also worked with local publishers Five Leaves and local booksellers the Bookcase at Lowdham. Feedback was excellent with everyone saying they had enjoyed the day and would attend similar events in the future.

##### **Summer Reading Challenge Celebration Event**

3. On 1 November at County Hall the Library Service celebrated the achievements of children who participated in this year's Summer Reading Challenge "Circus Stars". Over 8950 children in Nottinghamshire took part and over 4350 children (49%) completed the challenge and read six books over the summer.
4. A lucky dip draw was set up across libraries in Nottinghamshire for children who had completed the challenge. One winner from each of the libraries in the south of the county were invited to the celebration along with their families.
5. Children received a certificate recognising their achievement from the Chairman and watched a performance from children's poet David Harmer.
6. The contribution made by volunteers recruited to assist running the challenge was also recognised. Their involvement provided invaluable support to library staff and expanded the Library Service's capacity to spend time with children talking about their reading. This year 39 volunteers were recruited and worked for 509 hours over the 6 week school holiday.

7. Both children and volunteers enjoyed the event. Feedback received has been very positive; one parent wrote to say, "Emilia really enjoyed the evening, thank you so much for organising it. She didn't stop talking about it for days. It was great to hear about the number of children who registered for the challenge and I am sure hearing Dave Harmer reciting his poetry in such an exiting way also encouraged those there to read more".
8. A celebration event was also held at Worksop Library on 6th November for children and volunteers representing libraries in the north of the county.

### **A Grisly History of Nottinghamshire in 10 Spine-Chilling Chapters**

9. On 16 November the Vice Chairman of the County Council, Councillor Carol Pepper launched the County Councils first local history book for children. The book has been written by children's author Michael Cox and illustrated by Clive Goddard. The launch took place at Arnold Library with Year 6 Pupils from Robert Mellors School.
10. *A Grisly History of Nottinghamshire in 10 Spine-Chilling Chapters* is aimed at children aged 10-14. It introduces the history of the county to them in ten grisly and humorous chapters.

## **Nottinghamshire Archives**

### **Survey of Visitors to British Archives**

11. In the 2011 Survey of Visitors to British Archives, run by the Public Services Quality Group of the Archives and Records Association, Nottinghamshire Archives received a 97% very good or good public satisfaction rating. There was also a significant increase in the very good rating from 57.6% in last survey in 2009 to 66% in 2011.
12. Across the country 11,051 questionnaires were returned on 125 archive repositories. In the fourteen categories of the survey Nottinghamshire Archives is now rated above average in ten categories nationally.
13. In looking at areas requiring improvement 62% did not think any change was required which is a considerable increase over the 49% in 2009. The most important area requiring improvement is now considered to be visitor facilities which are below both the national and regional average reflecting that after eighteen years the building is showing its age and its facilities are being surpassed by new record offices being built elsewhere in the country. It is hoped to reverse this trend in a proposed capital development of the Archives building.
14. The survey shows that most visitors to Archives contribute to the local economy by eating locally or taking the opportunity to go shopping but there has been a decline in visitors paying for overnight accommodation perhaps reflecting the time of year of the survey which this year took place in February.
15. 78% of visitors use the Archives for leisure purposes, principally family history. Whilst 70% of users are over the age of 55, there has been an increase from 0.6% in 2009 to 7% in visitors under 25, following initiatives to develop a younger audience, such as the young person's competition reported below.

16. The Archives will use the survey to continually improve the service but it also included many favourable comments such as:
17. 'Excellent service. It is essential that we have access to our past, and the Nottinghamshire Archives do an excellent job of providing it. Having used the service as a degree level student, and for family research, I have never found the service lacking.'
18. 'The quality and design of the building make it very 'user friendly' – the space available is utilised in a sensible and considered fashion to give easy access to the fiche readers and other equipment. The records available for public access are always kept neat, tidy and in order by the search room staff which is not always the case in other archives. The staff themselves are both knowledgeable and helpful and always maintain a relaxed and friendly atmosphere which makes every visit an enjoyable one.'
19. 'In the many years I have been using these archives I have found them to be in the top five of the most helpful and friendly I have visited. Parking is off the road & access is user friendly for the disabled. Nothing is too much trouble for the staff and their range & depth of knowledge is very much above average.'

### **On the Trail**

20. On 28 November I was very pleased to present the prizes to the award winners in Nottinghamshire Archives latest competition for young people. The competition encouraged young people, divided into four categories, to use the resources of the Archives and Library service to create heritage trails around their villages, in their towns or on a themed topic. The winners of the competition illustrated the creativity and awareness that our young people have for Nottinghamshire and the value they place on the County and City's Heritage.
21. The prizes were generously donated by Nottinghamshire Local History Association and after receiving their awards the young people and their family's toured the archives and saw where their Trails would be preserved for posterity as part of the county's documentary heritage.

### **Adult and Community Learning Service**

22. During October, the Adult and Community Learning Service worked with its partners to take part in the national campaign 'Black History Month'. The celebrations events aimed to raise awareness of Black History, Culture and Heritage and promote the positive contributions to British Society. Eleven African Drumming and African Jewellery making workshops were delivered at Children's Centres or Libraries in Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Broxtowe and Gedling, with a total of 75 adults taking part. As a result of the sessions, a follow-on course in African drumming is being planned at Killisick Children's Centre.

## **National Watersports Centre – Activity Update**

### **23. Red Bull Rapids**

The first ever Red Bull Rapids took place on Sunday 25th September at the National Watersports Centre. The competition challenged the clever and courageous to design and build their very own home made boat. 24 crews' piloted crafts ranging from a Lego inspired boat to a giant rubber duck down 500metres of grade 3 rapids – 600 people attended the event.

### **24. Spooky Sprint**

Over 500 runners who took part in the Halloween themed run, in the dark, at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham. Running 10k, 5k or the kid's fun run to raise funds which will support work to find a cure and improve life for everyone living with Parkinson's.

### **25. Fresher's Week**

The size of the student market has grown rapidly in the UK over recent years. Although students do have a restricted budget many are living away from home and are therefore making independent choices. The average student spends £874 each year on out of home entertainment making the student market a lucrative one. University students make an ideal target market for internet-based companies as all students are comfortable using the internet, going online at least once a week, although usually every day. With this in mind the centre decided to host a stall at both Nottingham University & Nottingham Trent University during fresher's week providing the centre with 3500 new email contacts. The opportunity was used to promote the centre to the new and existing local community, spreading the word that the centre is accessible and available to the student population.

## **Economic Development**

### **Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan**

26. I am delighted to report that the Nottinghamshire Local Broadband Plan has been finalised. The promised £4.25m of Government investment has been matched by Nottinghamshire County Council, its local authority partners and (expectantly) European funds. Full Cabinet approval to permit the submission of the Plan to BDUK (the government arm administering the Nottinghamshire allocation) is being sought at 15 December meeting.
27. This ambitious Plan, targeted at a third of Nottinghamshire, will ensure that better broadband is experienced by every Nottinghamshire citizen and business. A future-proof superfast broadband service will be accessible to over 3297 additional business delivery points and over 65,657 residential delivery points in Nottinghamshire County. Local control will be maintained by Nottinghamshire County Council but with the full involvement of partners and communities.
28. The Local Broadband Plan will ensure that decisive action takes place now to ensure that Nottinghamshire can compete on a level playing field with other UK digitally enhanced

areas, so that new markets for indigenous businesses can be provided and new jobs created for local people.

### **Larger business engagement**

29. On 1 December the Leader of the County Council, members of the Cabinet and Councillor Keith Girling visited Synseal Limited in Huthwaite. Established in Nottinghamshire over 30 years ago, Synseal manufactures PVC-u profile, conservatory roofs, portal frames and vertical sliding windows and supplies these across the UK to window and conservatory fabricators / installers. All operations are located in one 35 acre site in Huthwaite.
30. The business, which has an annual turnover in excess of £75 million and employs over 500 local people, won the Nottingham Post Company of the Year award 2011 (this award was jointly sponsored by Nottinghamshire County Council and KPMG).
31. The business has grown despite being in an industry sector which could be classified as 'mature and declining' to become one of the most successful businesses in its sector in terms of profitability and growth in the last decade. The Chief Executive has plans to further develop / grow the business through acquisitions and new innovative product development and by continually investing in plant and equipment and infrastructure.
32. A programme of five visits to larger employers is being developed for 2012. The first of these visits will be to British Sugar in Newark on 19 January 2012.

### **Making the Connection project closure**

33. I regret to announce that, following an in-depth review, the decision has been made to close the Making the Connection (MtC) project. The project has been part of Nottinghamshire County Council since March 2009, when it was transferred from the Alliance SSP, and has been funded partly through EMDA funding. Unfortunately, due to external funding pressures, we cannot continue to sustain the project and the difficult decision has been taken to discontinue it from March 2012. I would like to thank the MtC staff for all their excellent work with both employers and local people. We intend to continue to build on the best practice examples and lessons learned from the MtC approach and take these forward wherever possible.

### **2012 Olympics and Paralympics**

34. As we move towards 2012 and the Olympics and Paralympics a number of strands of work are developing in support of the sports development network across the County. The Council is leading programmes on.

### **Sport Makers**

35. This is a national project that will use the pull of London 2012 to recruit, train and deploy 40,000 new sports volunteers aged 16 years and over to make sport happen across the country. The aim of the project is that volunteers will have a positive and inspiring introduction to the world of sport volunteering. In Nottinghamshire there is a target of recruiting and training over 1000 new volunteers, deploying around 800 of these, and

retaining approximately 400 of the 800. The programme was launched in October and will run for 18 months.

### **Shining Stars Grant Scheme**

36. The aim of the Shining Stars fund is to support talented athletes who are currently performing at international level within their sports. The fund will help to ensure that Nottinghamshire sportsmen and women from sports within the Olympic, Paralympics or Commonwealth Games will have the best opportunity to succeed in their quest for international honours. Successful applicants receive an award of up to £2,500 a year to help provide support with the considerable costs that an elite athlete will incur, such as travel, training, accommodation, competition fees and equipment, specialist coaching. Currently 25 athletes receive Shining Stars funding.

### **Championing Notts Sports** *(Awarded the London 2012 Inspire Mark)*

37. Nottinghamshire has a history of hosting world class national and international events. It is also the home to world class community sport. Together, these things mean that that Nottinghamshire needs enthusiastic volunteers to help make sure events run smoothly. The Championing Notts Sports Volunteering (CNSV) programme provides exciting opportunities to be a part of these major events and sporting opportunities. The programme enables volunteers to;

- Take part in a wide variety of major sports events throughout the year.
- Become involved in local sport.
- Receive rewards and recognition based on the number of hours they have volunteered for.
- Make a difference and a positive contribution to our events programme and local community sport.
- Develop new skills and meet new people.
- Gain experience which will aid selection for Volunteering at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

### **Talented Coaches Programme** *(Awarded the London 2012 Inspire Mark):*

38. This programme is designed to push coaches forward to achieve higher level qualifications and to be part of the overall objective of increasing the quality of coaching throughout Nottinghamshire. Over the next 12 months coaches on the programme will have access to workshops, bursaries and mentoring from current high performance coaches active in Nottinghamshire.

### **Inspire Mark**

39. As well as receiving Inspire Mark for three of its own projects the Council's sports development team is coordinating applications from non-commercial organisations who are delivering projects and events genuinely inspired by the 2012 games. The Inspire Mark is awarded to specific projects and events which are:

- Genuinely inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games.
- Well planned and managed.

- Fully funded from non-commercial sources and with no commercial association.
- Innovative and inspiring.
- Likely to achieve at least one of Nottinghamshire's key sports development outcomes (for example, increased participation in grass roots sports)

40. Currently 24 projects have been awarded the Inspire Mark in Nottinghamshire and a further 10 are awaiting approval.

#### **National Water Sports Centre (NWSC) - International Team Hosting activity**

41. Driven by the specialist nature of the facilities available, the NWSC is the only facility in Nottinghamshire that has secured international teams for training activity. During 2010/11 both the Japanese and Chinese Olympic rowing teams trained on the 2000m-Regatta Lake and the Russian Slalom Canoeing team had 2 separate 3-week training camps.
42. The Centre is currently in negotiation with Canoe Slalom teams from China and the Ukraine and it is anticipated that demand will increase in the immediate run up to the games when teams will be looking for a holding base prior to entering the Olympic Village.

#### **Olympic Torch Relay**

43. The national Torch Relay will be travelling through Nottinghamshire on 28 June 2012. The Council was very active in the early discussions and preparation of information to The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) to help them determine potential landmarks to visit as the torch passes through the County. It is only in the last few weeks that a clearer picture has begun to emerge with the announcement of the communities that will be included in the relay. The County Council is required to play a key role in respect of highways management, security and venue management when the final announcements are made. Specifically, the County Council has been asked to:
- Assist with the Relay by maintaining an overview of activities within Nottinghamshire
  - Coordinate countywide services to support the Relay (particularly highways and emergency planning)
  - Communicate with district authorities, advising how they can become involved.
  - Coordinate information for the local resilience forum and any other countywide stakeholder that has statutory responsibilities.
44. A countywide stakeholder group organised by the Council is in place to ensure the safe passage of the torch through Nottinghamshire and to encourage community participation on the day.

## **Conservation**

### **Biodiversity Offsetting**

45. I am very pleased to report, with my colleague Councillor Richard Butler, that Nottinghamshire has been selected as one of six national pilot areas for the Government's proposed Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme. The concept of Biodiversity Offsetting was introduced in the recent Natural Environment White Paper and the pilot will involve testing how the Scheme would work, in partnership with a number of the District Councils and other organisations in the north of the County.

### **SITA Funding**

46. I am also pleased to report that the County Council has been successful in obtaining £65,748 from the SITA Trust. The funding is for habitat management and enhancement works at 18 sites across Rushcliffe and southern Newark and Sherwood, to benefit the Grizzled Skipper butterfly (a national conservation priority species). The project will be delivered by the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG), and co-ordinated by the BAG project officer, whose post is hosted by the County Council. The project is set to run for two years, and will seek to involve local people in surveys for the butterfly during the summer, and in clearing scrub from grasslands during the winter.

### **Nature Improvement Areas**

47. DEFRA received 76 bids in Stage 1 of the competition to be recognised as one of 12 Nature Improvement Areas across the country, of which 20 were short-listed for Stage 2. One of the short-listed projects, the Humberhead Levels, covers part of north Nottinghamshire. The Stage 1 bid for Sherwood, led by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust was, unfortunately, unsuccessful and bids for the Erewash Valley and Magnesian Limestone grasslands, which cover parts of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, also did not get through to the second round. All of these partnerships are, however, continuing to work together to seek alternative funding sources for the projects contained in their NIA bids.

### **River Leen Green Infrastructure project**

48. I can report that we are continuing to advise and support the River Leen Green Infrastructure projects, run jointly between the County Council and Ashfield District Council. This has involved providing advice for habitat improvements on the County Council's sites at Farleys Way (next to the Hucknall Bypass) and at Bestwood Country Park, aimed at benefiting water voles and white-clawed crayfish. The River Leen projects, along with a project in the Erewash Valley, successfully bid for over £950,000 of funding over three years through the Strategic Green Infrastructure partnership for Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. The projects will enhance biodiversity, access and information and connect green spaces.

### **Independent Panel on Forestry**

49. I am very pleased to report that the Independent Panel on Forestry visited Nottinghamshire on 7 November as one of a small number of information gathering visits



across the country. The Panel has been established to advise the Government on a new approach to forestry policy in England. Members are drawn from forestry, access and community organisations and from public, private and third sector. The Panel wanted to find out more about community forestry at an informal meeting with representatives from organisations including Greenwood Community Forest and the County Council held at Rufford Country Park. Panel members appeared to have a good understanding of the value and successes of Community Forests such as Greenwood and much of the discussion revolved around how to better make the case for support and recognition at a national level.

50. After the discussion, representatives of various community organisations joined the group to chat to Panel members over lunch. This was followed by site visits to two local woodland sites. Ollerton Pit Wood provided an opportunity to talk about the involvement of local volunteers whilst Manton Pit Wood led to a discussion about tackling anti social behaviour.
51. The Panel is expected to make its final recommendations to Government in the Spring.

### **Trent Vale Landscape Partnership**

52. Nottinghamshire County Council is a member of the Trent Vale Landscape Partnership (TVLP), which brings together a number of different organisations to focus on the habitats and heritage of the River Trent and its surrounding landscape from Newark to Gainsborough. The three-year programme which runs up to December 2012, will invest up to £2.6 million in the area, largely thanks to a grant of £1.6m from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
53. On 12 November, TVLP organised a seminar to consider the “Future of Trent Vale”. Over 80 people from partner organisations and local community groups gathered at Beckingham’s Old Willow Works, the restoration of which has itself been a flagship project for the partnership. Members of the Conservation team helped to facilitate group discussions and participants considered a range of ideas for new projects that could be taken forward.

### **Heritage at Risk**

54. I am pleased to report, with my colleague Councillor Richard Butler, that the County Council’s Local Improvement Scheme is continuing to support local people in restoring their heritage assets. Nottinghamshire once had around 300 dovecotes and many of the surviving examples are listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments. Work has recently been completed on the restoration of and improved access to the circular dovecote at Sibthorpe, a Grade I listed building and scheduled ancient monument which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century and is the tallest in the county. The medieval listed dovecote at Thoroton has been re-thatched and work is also underway on the unusual, free-standing mud dovecote at Flintham.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN COTTEE**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY**