

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to my portfolio.

#### **Visits to Children's Centres in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe**

2. I was visiting centres in Rushcliffe on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 when the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Autumn Statement that the dualling of the A453 would be fast-tracked. This breaking news story created immediate media demands and somewhat truncated my tour that day, but on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 it was my pleasure to resume and complete this programme of visits in Rushcliffe.
3. My visits to all areas of the county have confirmed my view that our children's centres are an immensely valuable resource to the people they serve and should be foremost on the list of critical provision we need to protect. This council administration will ensure the continuation of these services.

#### **Visit to British Sugar**

4. Continuing our programme of visits to leading local companies who make a major contribution to the local economy, I joined Cabinet colleagues on 19<sup>th</sup> January for a tour of British Sugar's factory on Muskham Road in Newark. The visit was hosted by Robert (Bob) Howe, Factory Manager.

#### **Notts County Football Club 150<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebrations**

5. On 19<sup>th</sup> January it was my pleasure to attend a Civic Reception at Nottingham Council House, organised by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> year of Notts County, the oldest football league club in the world. The club's directors, management and players were all present, with representation also from the Football Association and the Football League. Brian Mawhinney made a speech.
6. Nottinghamshire County Council will be playing its own part in celebrating this special anniversary. We will be engaging in a "black and white" week later this year where we will be printing as much County Council literature as possible in the famous magpie colours.

### **Chinese New Year Celebration**

7. On 20<sup>th</sup> January I attended a reception hosted by the Chairman of the County Council to celebrate Chinese New Year 2012, the Year of the Dragon. The event was organised jointly by the County Council and the Nottinghamshire Chinese Welfare Society, which provides daily support to Chinese people in Nottinghamshire.
8. With guests from the local Chinese community, we were treated to an extravaganza of Chinese-style entertainment to celebrate the occasion, including an origami demonstration by Bonnie Chan, a paper cutting demonstration by Isabel Fok and a finale of lion dancing.

### **Captain Harry Churchill Beet VC**

9. On 29<sup>th</sup> January I attended the Dedication Service of a memorial plaque to Bingham-born Captain Harry Churchill Beet, who was awarded the Victoria Cross when serving as a Corporal during the Boer War with the Derbyshire Regiment, later known as The Sherwood Foresters. During fierce fighting troops were told to retreat, but Corporal Beet came across a wounded soldier. He stayed with him, tended to his wounds and dragged the wounded man under cover until dusk, when a medical officer came to their aid.
10. The service was held at Bingham Church and began with the British Legion and ATC Standards being paraded in, accompanied by a procession of church officials and the choir. Reverend David Harper conducted the service.

### **Visit by Ministers**

11. On 9<sup>th</sup> February I made my office and the Rufford Suite available as a venue for Board Members from the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Board to meet with Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation & Cities, who was visiting the Nottinghamshire area accompanied by Mark Prisk MP, Minister for Business & Enterprise.
12. As part of National Apprenticeship Week, John Hayes MP in his capacity as Minister for Further Education, Skills & Lifelong Learning, visited South Notts College. He highlighted the Government's commitment to increasing the number of young people and businesses choosing apprenticeships.

### **Visit to Willow Wood Day Services Centre**

13. On 14<sup>th</sup> February I was pleased to visit the newly-refurbished Willow Wood Day Services Centre in Sutton-in-Ashfield. Willow Wood is one of 13 Nottinghamshire centres benefiting from the County Council's drive to modernise day services and provide high quality multi-purpose service bases.
14. During my visit I enjoyed the opportunity to meet service users and staff and see for myself the superb facilities now on offer.

15. All of the council's retained day service premises are being made available for community, voluntary and external organisations to utilise during evenings, weekends and other times when the buildings are not being used for day service provision.

### **Nottinghamshire Sports Awards**

16. Nottinghamshire County Council held a glittering ceremony at the Becket School in West Bridgford to celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> Nottinghamshire Sports Awards on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February. I was delighted to attend and support the event, further details of which can be found in the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture & Community.
17. I would like to thank and give credit to our Sports Development Team, who put a tremendous amount of work into ensuring the success of this important annual celebration of sporting excellence.

### **New Archdeacon of Newark**

18. I was present to witness a new Archdeacon of Newark being installed at a service at Southwell Minster on 19<sup>th</sup> February.
19. The Reverend Canon David Picken was officially welcomed into his new role by the Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham and other clergy, colleagues and friends during a special service of Evensong also attended by some 30 schoolchildren from Kneesall Church of England Primary School.

### **D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Board meeting**

20. On 20<sup>th</sup> February I attended a D2N2 LEP Board meeting at the headquarters of Speedo on the NG2 Business Park. Edward Twiddy, Civil Servant for BIS was present.
21. Items on the agenda included a report from the Regional Director of UK Trade & Industry on UKTI's new priorities and funding to support increased international trade and export; an update on developments at the Enterprise Zone at Boots and on Growing Places Fund investment.

### **Nottinghamshire Enterprise Zone**

22. On 28<sup>th</sup> February I joined our Chief Executive, Mick Burrows at a meeting to discuss the progress of the Nottinghamshire Enterprise Zone with Alliance Boots directors Toon Clerckx and Mark Chivers at the Boots offices.
23. Nottinghamshire County Council is a strong supporter of Alliance Boots' plans for the redevelopment of their Beeston site.
24. The County Council's lobbying for improvements to the A453, including our own financial contribution, will benefit Boots' core business and also make the Enterprise Zone more attractive to new investors.

### **West Bridgford Library Turf Cutting Ceremony**

25. Construction work is now underway on Nottinghamshire County Council's new £5.3m West Bridgford Library and Young People's Centre. On 1<sup>st</sup> March, I was delighted to attend a turf cutting ceremony to celebrate the early stages of this major capital project. There was extra significance to the ceremony as it took place on World Book Day – designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading.
26. A new youth centre and library is planned on the current site in Central Avenue, West Bridgford, scheduled for opening in spring 2013. The plans will see the historic 1936 frontage of the existing library site retained and the rest of the site developed with a sleek new building.
27. The West Bridgford Library development is the latest in the county council's plan to continue to invest, develop and remodel its existing libraries. We intend to continue serving traditional library users whilst reaching out to new audiences through digital services.

### **Official Opening of Ryton Park Primary School**

28. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March I was delighted to attend the official opening by the Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council of the new £9 million Ryton Park Primary School.
29. 475 primary-aged children moved into the new County Council-designed school at Sparken Hill in Worksop at the start of the academic year. Until last September, the school operated from three different buildings across two separate sites more than a mile apart. The new school brings pupils and staff together in one building.
30. Ryton Park includes the Cherubs Day Nursery and in January 2009 increased its intake significantly by taking in pupils from Manton Primary School, which had closed. Since that expansion the council has been working towards building this new accommodation.

### **Women's World Day of Prayer**

31. Also on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, in keeping with last year, I attended a service at West Bridgford Baptist Church marking the Women's World Day of Prayer. This is a global, ecumenical movement of informed prayer and prayerful action. It is organised and led by Christian women who call the faithful together on the first Friday in March each year to observe a common day of prayer.

### **Meeting at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals Trust**

32. On 8<sup>th</sup> March I travelled to Doncaster Royal Infirmary for a meeting with the Doncaster & Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

### **Joint Leadership and Core City Board**

33. On 12<sup>th</sup> March I visited Nottingham City Council's Loxley House headquarters with Chief Executive, Mick Burrows for a meeting of the Joint Leadership and Core City Board.
34. Items under discussion included a presentation from the Science & Technology Advisory Council, an update on the progress of Nottinghamshire's Broadband Plan, an update on the progress of the D2N2 LEP and verbal updates on the Nottingham City Economic Growth Plan and the Nottinghamshire Enterprise Zone.

### **Health & Wellbeing Board Network**

35. On 14<sup>th</sup> March I attended a networking event at County Hall designed to promote the role of the Health & Wellbeing Board and explain its functions and support structures.
36. The aim was to involve a wider set of stakeholders in the functioning of the board to enable effective commissioning across health and local government. There was an opportunity for the Chairman of the (shadow) Health & Wellbeing Board, Councillor Martin Suthers to outline the first version of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy for 2012-13, with emphasis being placed on the need for an outcomes-based approach. Comments were invited on the strategy from stakeholders.

### **Visit to Romo Fabrics**

37. Again in the spirit of recognising and promoting leading local companies, on 19<sup>th</sup> March I joined Cabinet colleagues for a tour of Romo Fabrics on Lowmoor Road in Kirkby-in-Ashfield.
38. The business was established in 1902 by Robert Mould, who gave his name to the company. It started as a small-scale furniture manufacturing business and by the 1930s had become a wholesaler to the upholstery industry, supplying furnishing fabrics and components for the manufacture of furniture.
39. The company continued to evolve until eventually the upholstery manufacturing side of the business ceased completely and the supply of furnishing fabrics became the primary focus. In the 1980's, Romo started its own in-house design studio, injecting the creative approach to design for which the company is known today.

**Councillor Kay Cutts**  
**Council Leader**