



Meeting	County Council	
Date	6 April 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 1 I am very pleased to present my latest report covering some of the current issues ongoing in the Community Safety and Partnership portfolio. I hope all councillors find it of interest.

Community Safety

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)

2. I am currently engaged in a second round of meetings with divisional police commanders and district/borough chief executives. The first round took place in mid-2005 and proved to be most useful in highlighting specific partnership issues and identifying key anti-social behaviour priorities for potential funding support from the Portfolio holder's 2005/6 budget. The current round is also focusing on identifying areas which could benefit from potential investment in 2006/7.
3. I am also working to ensure we have a County Councillor on each CDRP across Nottinghamshire and where CDRP merges are planned this representation is maintained at one per District.
4. I will be holding regular meetings with members who are on CDRP groups to:
 - ensure they are fully briefed on the partnership work that is being undertaken
 - outline NCC spending, policy, strategies and priorities as they affect the district/borough
 - raise the profile of the County Council within CDRPs
 - promote the role of each member as a champion for community safety within the county council, enabling them to raise issues direct with service departments where appropriate

Alcohol

5. Anti Social behaviour arising from the misuse of alcohol continues to be a major source of concern to our communities. The Government have recognised these concerns and have been targeting them through their Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign. These are led by the Police with Trading Standards authorities as key partners. Whilst test purchasing was a major task in the last campaign it was just one of the many activities the Campaign covered.

6. The last campaign and its media coverage has certainly raised the profile of the sales of alcohol to underage youngsters. A visit to the high street will show this. To help make further progress the Home Office have issued an Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Code (AMEC) Good Practice and Lessons Learned guidance. These include new legislation to cover
 - Drink Banning Orders
 - Alcohol Disorder Zones
 - A new offence of persistently selling alcohol to minors
 - The power for the Police and Trading Standards to issue closure notices on premises
 - Working with the Drinks Industry to embed Good Practice, Principles and Standards
 - Collaborate with supermarkets and other parts of the off-licence trade in their efforts to eliminate underage sales of alcohol.
 - Encouraging Trading Standards Services to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, either through Chief Constable's accreditation or new legislation.
7. As you are aware the County Council have been key supporters and participants in these campaigns and whilst there is still much to do it is pleasing that progress is being made. However, I intend to ensure that we don't relax our efforts and am determined to drive things forward. Following a reallocation of existing resources we now have two officers dedicating their time to addressing the problem of the sale of age restricted products to juveniles. As part of their present focus on alcohol sales we have agreed a new joint working protocol with the Police to improve communications between the two partners.
8. There are also two further initiatives to promote retailer awareness of the implications of selling alcohol to underage people. Firstly in partnership with the City Council, Police and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and funded by the Government Office East Midlands (GOEM), we are launching a Point of Sale awareness campaign featuring Posters, Window Stickers and Mouse-mats. Secondly, we are active participants in launching across the region the Trading Standards Proof of Age pack. In addition to promoting retailer awareness, the pack also contains a helpful training procedure for retailers to use with their staff. This pack is generic to all age related products.
9. In addition we are recruiting a consultant to scope and analyse the nature of the drinking culture and its associated issues in Nottinghamshire supporting the continuance of the strategic alcohol post within Nottinghamshire County DAAT, establishing an initiative to support the development of an alcohol role within Tier 3 drug services for the development of counselling prevention models, peer led and alcohol user groups, and developing resources and training to reduce the impact of alcohol on the elderly.
10. There have also been two recent Trading Standards prosecutions on previous underage sales of alcohol. In one the licensee of an off-licence in the Porchester area of Gedling has been fined £200 with £200 costs for selling alcohol to an under 18 year old. In the other the licensee of an off-licence in Beeston received a 6 month Conditional Discharge with £50 costs and his shop assistant received a 6 month Conditional Discharge with £80 costs for selling alcohol to an under 18 year old.

Avian Flu

11. After a period of significant media interest in Avian Flu, planning has returned to a more measured stance. Officers have continued to monitor the spread of the animal disease across Europe and in joining others in making preparations for its possible future arrival in Nottinghamshire.
12. The Emergency Planning Team has coordinated the planning and preparation of the County Council's response to a potential human influenza pandemic. In recent weeks these preparations have included participating in a multi-agency flu pandemic exercise led by the Health Protection Agency.

Doorstep Crime

13. We continue to be active in our initiatives to combat Doorstep Crime. The feedback to our recent awareness event was very positive and we are now looking to assess how the current and future input from all who attended can improve matters further.
14. Key activities planned include;

Community Plays. A further round of these are being held and I am ensuring that all elected members are aware of when one is being held in their area and the plays are supported by an information pack which not only helps the facilitators but also recognises the County Council's contribution to the event.

No Cold Calling Zones. We are currently reviewing the success of our current No Cold Calling Zones (NCCZ) to help draw up the criteria for future targeted NCCZ in Nottinghamshire. I know from previous interest that a number of Councillors would welcome this initiative in their areas.

Door Chains and Viewers. Working in partnership with other agencies such as the Handy Person Schemes, we are looking to extend the provision of door chains and viewers to vulnerable consumers across the County.

Domestic Violence

15. I have awarded a further £61,000 from the Safer Communities Budget to support a range of initiatives to progress the County's work on domestic violence. Two thirds of this will support direct services to women and children experiencing domestic violence including the development of three new services;

- Children's Outreach Worker to cover the Gedling area
- Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in Nottingham
- Mansfield and Ashfield Safety Centre

The other third will support preventative work in schools and training for a range of health, education and social services professionals.

16. I have approved the use of £45,000 from the Safer Communities budget to fund a post of Business Crime Reduction Manager; hosted by Nottinghamshire Police. The officer will manage a project to help reduce business crime in North Nottinghamshire, which will contribute to the achievement of the Local Area Agreement target.

Gypsies and Travellers

17. I have also approved a grant for £45,000 to enable the East Nottinghamshire Travellers Association (ENTA) to host the post of “Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer” for an initial trial period of one year. This post will undertake the role of “link officer” and will be the first point of public contact. They will visit unauthorised encampments and will establish any welfare, educational, social services or health requirements the Gypsies and Travellers may have, involving other departments or agencies as and when necessary. They will ensure the adoption of and compliance to the Code of Conduct.

Internet Scams

18. The recent international audit of internet sites offering home working schemes resulted in our officers identifying thirty three sites requiring further investigation. Problems identified included exaggerated claims as to earnings, including one of £2500 per week; requirement to pay registration fees such as £25 and many of the sites didn't give clear name and address details.

Partnerships

Community Engagement

19. I'm continuing to push ahead with plans to enhance community engagement, especially our role as elected members and community leaders. I am pleased that many of you have already taken part in the initiation I launched at the last Council meeting and have spent some time with an Officer to help us map and identify the natural communities in the areas you represent. This will help us work out the range of support you and those communities need.
20. One of our biggest priorities in terms of community engagement is what we are progressing through the Local Area Agreement, is to make sure that people know how they can influence decisions affecting their local area and communities. We are working with the partners to ensure that people know where and how they can get involved. In many instances, through our community leadership role, the first point of contact should be their County Councillor.
21. The Community Engagement Teams continue to make progress on a range of issues including
 - Extended Schools
 - Children's Centres Panels
 - Older People's Networks
22. I am also working to ensure that our progress on community engagement is closely linked into Members' Forums. This is important as we all need to be aware of what is happening and are receiving and giving a consistent message. New ideas to help strengthen the role of Members' Forums are always welcome!

Community Cohesion

23. We are backing our Youth Service in a project to photograph the diverse range of people who live and work in Nottinghamshire and to record the languages, faiths and jobs represented. The aim of the project is to increase awareness of the diversity and richness of our communities and the contribution they make to the County.

This project, led by young people and assisted by a photographer, will capture the images on a poster which will be distributed throughout the County. Youth Workers will use the poster to promote and provoke discussion on diversity issues. His will also help to challenge some of the myths and rumours that lead to prejudice and discrimination. The cost of the project is £3,000 with £300 allocated from the Youth Service.

24. I want to change the way we are handling our community cohesion initiatives and to build on the progress being made. Our successful Strategy Group will be supported through a project manager role and will lead on a programme of community festivals across the county.

Office of Fair Trading

25. On 7 March the County Council hosted a visit from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) for Trading Standards authorities across the region. The visit was to develop the principles for the new relationship between the OFT and Trading Standards nationally. On the day I was able to meet with the Chairman of the OFT to discuss the role of elected members in championing and leading the Service and the importance of integrating its achievements into the local authorities overall aims and objectives.

Consumer Direct: East Midlands

26. On 9 March I attended the Consumer Direct: East Midlands Regional Management Board. Whilst Consumer Direct has been up and running for under a year it has already developed into an integral part of the Trading Standards community across the region. Consumer Direct Centres now operate across Great Britain and have helped remove the "postcode" lottery across the country for Consumer Advice.
27. I was also very interested in hearing about the potential uses of the information now being gathered through the Consumer Direct database. Firstly it can be used to target our resources at rogue traders and dubious trading practices across the County. This will assist in our progress towards intelligence led enforcement. More importantly from an elected members standpoint, I feel, for the first time the database will be able to give us all information on consumer concerns and trading malpractices in our communities. Such information will help support us in our community engagement and leadership roles.

Service Issues

Trading Standards: Other Prosecutions

28. A Whatton farmer pleaded guilty to causing unnecessary distress to a ewe which was dying. He was fined £400 with £200 costs.
29. A Redhill man received a 120 hour Community Punishment Order, was ordered to pay £2500 compensation and £400 costs after being convicted of obtaining property by deception by purporting a car not to have been an insurance write off when it actually had been.

Welfare Rights

30. I was very pleased on 10 March to open the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisor Conference covering all current issues in the Welfare Rights world and attended by officers from across the UK. I was impressed by the commitment of all I managed to meet on the day.

Emergency Planning

31. Emergency Planning staff has joined with Education Department in training more than 120 Governors and Head and Senior Teachers with training linked to the recent publication "Coping with a School Emergency." This is being followed by similar events for Education Department staff.

Registration Service

32. We continue to make progress in improving the quality of accommodation for our Registration Service. I was pleased to recently open the new Beeston office in the Library and the Southwell office is now open for business, in the new Bramley Centre. We have now formally opened the refurbished office at Retford and I thank the Chairman of the County Council, Alan Davison, for leading on the opening event. The plaque commemorating this is just one small tribute to the contribution to public life he continues to make on Nottinghamshire and Bassetlaw.

Youth Offending Service

33. The Youth Offending Service has entered into a partnership with a charitable trust that has provided an allotment in Worksop for the service to work with young offenders. The scheme, which began in March, enables young offenders to develop their skills and self esteem by working with an experienced gardener. The produce grown will be sold and the money raised will be given to assist the work of Victim Support. It is hoped that similar schemes will be developed throughout the county.
34. The performance of the Youth Offending Service has continued to improve. Following the most recent data published by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, the service is assessed as being of high quality and the best performing service within the family group of similar local authorities.

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS