



meeting

COUNTY COUNCIL

date

6th April 2006

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD TO APRIL 2006

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio since my last report to Council.

Leisure and Culture

Sport

Beacon Status

2. I am delighted to report that our application for Beacon Status has been successful under the round seven 'Culture and sport for hard to reach groups' strand. The award was presented at an event in London on March 20th.
3. The County Council has had, for many years, a Sports Service widely acknowledged as leading in its field. Beacon Status confirms this and provides the opportunity to widely publicise our work to new audiences. While continuing with much of its traditional work, the Sports Service re-positioned itself several years ago to specifically target social groups who are deprived of fair and equal access to sporting opportunities. A blend of consistent County Council core funding and increasing levels of external funding have led to a range of new and exciting work. I am proud this has been formally recognised.
4. We sought Beacon Status in the main for our work in using sport to improve the lives of disadvantaged groups in society and in particular in improving the lives of disabled people through sport. Our annual School of Sport, our unique Sport Direct project (a European Social Fund / Learning Skills Council training, coaching & employability development programme for disabled people) and our challenging Inside Out Project (which has supported nearly 5,000 young disabled people to be included in mainstream PE and school sport) combine to form an unrivalled service offer.
5. The Beacon Status was also awarded because of the innovative and growing body of work produced in conjunction with the North Nottinghamshire

Coalfield Sport Action Zone (SAZ) Partnership. The SAZ is developing action research initiatives, neighbourhood partnerships and pilot projects using sport to reach and support people in socio-economic groups C2, and DE. The emphasis of this work is driven by a need to create positive sporting experiences for at risk young people from deprived areas, to tackle access issues for low income families, and to build social capital through the power of sport. When this work is concluded it will have a lasting effect on the way sport is delivered and more importantly, to whom it is delivered.

6. There have already been a number of positive effects of the Beacon application process. Beacon Status recognises the excellence of our staff, and helps with the recruitment and retention of top quality staff. It further enhances our status, both nationally and within our own communities and it provides opportunities to influence the development of national policy and to pilot new initiatives. It will bring further prestige to the County Council for its work across culture.

Equality Partnership

7. The Sports Service has pioneered a new approach to work in sport. The Nottinghamshire Equality in Sport Partnership held its first seminar on the Equality Standard with representatives of 6 of the 8 Districts in the County, Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, Notts Athletics Club, Notts County Football Club Football in the Community, Notts Football Association and our Sports Service in attendance. The Equality Standard - A Framework for Sport - is more than a kitemark, it is a development tool for organisations to meet the needs of priority groups. Nottinghamshire is ahead of the game, enabling Local Authorities and large sports clubs and associations to start the process before the launch of the Standard for such organisations. The follow up meeting was held on 23rd March.

Youth Games Launch

8. The official launch event for the Nottinghamshire Youth Games was held on 27th March at Nottingham East Midlands Airport – main sponsors of the event. The launch, attended by the Vice Chairman of the County Council and the Mayor of Rushcliffe, consisted of a sample multi-skills sports coaching session with children from Cotgrave Church of England Primary School in Rushcliffe. The Youth Games will be held on 5th and 8th July and will ensure competition for around 2,000 young people across the districts competing in a wide range of sports.

Technical Developments in the Sports Service

9. Work is now underway on major I.T. projects which will support and enhance the work of the Service. We have begun work on a major database for tracking customers, monitoring programmes and marketing our services. This will be designed in conjunction with the County Council's I.T. Solutions team.
10. Our second major project is the re housing and development of our partnership website www.intosport.org.uk This will now be housed on the

County Council server and we are working closely with the e-content team to redesign the site and make it more user friendly. Each of the Districts will be involved and will have their own page along with many of the national governing bodies of sport and our other partners if they choose. It will form a central portal for the public to get up to date information on local sport in their area.

Community Initiative Fund (CIF) Awards

11. Following the final CIF panel of the current financial year I can now confirm that of the £18,123 allocated to help clubs in the community; 35 were received of which 26 (74%) were successful and the average award was for £697. Athletics submitted the most successful applications and Ashfield was the most successful local authority area. This is the result of a large and very effective campaign from our officers to support clubs to make bids.

Arts, Tourism & Country Parks

12. Lumos Burning Desires took centre stage on a 25th February 2006, when on a cold, wet evening the spectacular culmination of the Nottinghamshire Fallas project lit up the skies above Rufford Country Park. The event was the spectacular finale to a year long project that has seen –
 - 6 local artists trained in the art of creating Fallas (Large scale sculptures, specific to the Valencia Fallas Festival).
 - 6 North Notts community groups designed and built ninots (smaller 6–8ft sculptures) under the guidance of the artists.
 - 150 lanterns created for the finale parade, during public and group workshops.
13. An audience of 1,300 people was welcomed by fire jugglers and stilt walkers who escorted them to the event site. People were able to view the beautifully lit Nottinghamshire Fallas (which was made up of the 6 sculptures made by community groups and the central 25ft Icarus figure), talk to the artists and community groups who had created them before being moved out of the show site to make way for the lantern parade. Lead by the fire bearers, a samba band and banner holders, the parade circled the show sight before exiting to leave the fire bearers to start the burning of the Fallas. As the flames died down, the sky was lit up by a Valencian style pyrotechnic display.
14. In Worksop users of mental health services who have undertaken a Photography Project at the Regal Centre in Worksop will exhibit their work at the 'View from the Top Gallery' at Waterstone's bookshop Nottingham 22nd – 27th March. Following the launch of the Ladybrook Arts Strategy projects are currently underway with girl's hip-hop music and boy's street dance.
15. March also saw the fifth 'Flicks in the Sticks' film festival in Lowdham. Due to the acquisition of two sets of digital projection equipment the festival was able to expand to two screens showing 13 films over 4 days. Catering for all tastes

and ages the mixed programme included 'The Constant Gardner', 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', 'Under Milk Wood' and the 'Motorcycle Diaries'.

16. The annual Radio Nottingham / County Council short story competition attracted over 300 entries with the 10 winners receiving a lucky bag of literary delights and a tour of the radio studios.
17. The new Southwell Library and the meeting room in the Bramley Centre hosted the launch of this year's Festival (17th, 18th and 19th March) and 7 other events. Amongst the poets featured this year were John Hartley Williams, U.A. Fanthorpe and renowned Nottinghamshire novelist and poet, Alan Sillitoe. The last two of these events attracted packed audiences of over 80 people. Andy Croft, a poet in residence, has been appointed and has been working across the town to create artistic links, writing poems and had a full reading session in the library on the final afternoon of the Festival.
18. Renovations have progressed well on the roof at Rufford and the Gallery plans to open again with a major exhibition from local artists Sue Disley and Angela Vernon.

Bramley Centre, Southwell

19. Boasting a library almost double the size of the old one, a bright new register office and modern, well-equipped youth centre all under one roof, the Bramley Centre in Southwell opened its doors to the public on 13th February.
20. The first customer of the day, Marian Ellis was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Principal Librarian for East Nottinghamshire. A constant stream of customers followed, ready to take their pick from an increased selection of books, CDs and DVDs. Later on, the Bookstart Bear, mascot for the (early years) Bookstart scheme, paid a visit to local toddlers taking part in a 'Rhyme, rattle and roll' session in the bright and colourful new children's library.
21. Upstairs in Southwell's new register office, a 5-week old became the first baby to be registered at the venue. The Register office was previously located in a solicitor's office, so the new venue is much more accessible and comfortable for staff and customers.
22. Celebrations continued into the evening as the Youth Centre hosted music, dance and beatbox sessions for young people. The youth centre will offer a mixed programme of activities for young people who live in Southwell, including creative and arts activities, sports, trips and the opportunity to take part in national awards.
23. Enthusiastic entries made in the customer comments book during the opening morning indicate the community are very impressed with the new resource:
 - 'Excellent – the community will be delighted'
 - 'First impressions - light, airy, spacious and inviting. I'm excited and eager to use'

- ‘Splendid! Worth paying council tax!’

24. Since opening, visits to the library have more than doubled to over 450 per day, more than 500 new members have joined in the first month, and over 13,000 items have been borrowed (nearly double the amount loaned in the same period in 2005).

Young People

Youth Service

Bassetlaw District Youth Assembly - 28th February

25. A consultation event was held at the Retford Leisure Centre from 9.30am to 3pm. Over 60 young people attended, including a number from E2E (Entry to Employment) and Young Homeless projects. The aim of the day was to introduce the young people to the Youth Assembly and to encourage them to become involved and make their views known about issues that affect them. During the course of the day Councillor Mick Storey answered questions from the young people about various issues. A number of activities were organised, including a mock trial held by the Crime and Disorder team and teenage health workshops. A major outcome of the day was the production of a logo for the District Youth Assembly.

Rock School, Redhill

26. A rock school took place in the 6th Form Block of Redhill School on 20th, 21st, 23rd and 24th February, culminating in a gig on Sunday 26th February. Twenty-three young people took part in the event, which was considered to have been a success by all involved.

Duke of Edinburgh’s Award - 1st April

27. A celebration of the Service Section of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award took place on Saturday 1st April from 10am to 4pm. Timed to coincide with similar celebrations nationwide, the aim was to involve Duke of Edinburgh participants in a national day to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Award throughout Nottinghamshire. Groups participated in a ‘service’ with an environmental theme throughout the day at all of the country parks across the county. The groups were accompanied by their Duke of Edinburgh leaders and supervised by qualified rangers. Approximately 100 young people were involved in the event across the county.

Play

Support After Adoption - Saturday 4th March

28. A conference was organised for adopters by the ‘Support after Adoption’ team. The Under 14’s team provided activities for the 17 young people attending, including dance workshops, banner making, sports, karaoke, crafts,

healthy eating activities and putting on a show at the end of the day. The young people called the day "Love after adoption".

Early Years Development and Childcare Conference - Saturday 4th March

29. The Out of School and Play Training Teams contributed to the Children's Conference which had a "Carnival" theme.
30. Children took part in costume making, float design, dancing and samba drumming. The event culminated in a procession around the main conference arena. The children suggested a collection for 'Action for Brazil's Children' which is a charity supporting educational and cultural programmes for Brazil's poorest street children and a total of £109 was raised. Children's Commissioner, Alo Aynsley-Green, took part in the samba drumming and paid tribute to the enthusiasm.

Breaks in Partnership

31. The Play Development Worker (Breaks in Partnership) has successfully launched a support pack for 'Settings' who accept disabled children referred through the 'Breaks in Partnership' scheme. This provides a wealth of information of how to cope with a wide range of needs and how to draw up individual care plans etc. It is being backed up by a comprehensive training programme. So far over 400 children have been found places on "Breaks in Partnership". A staggering 171 'settings' are accepting referrals for disabled children.

Libraries, Archives & Information

Bircotes Library

32. On 17th March I was pleased to welcome guests to Bircotes Library. The library was officially reopened by the Chairman of the County Council, Councillor Alan Davison, following a £78,000 refurbishment. The opening was attended by local councillors, representatives of the local schools and other organisations and colleagues from the library service.
33. The library was closed for 6 weeks in October and November 2005, during which time interior walls were demolished, new ceilings and lighting were installed as well as new shelving, carpeting, and furniture, including sofas and attractive areas for informal seating and the public computers. In addition over £10,000 was spent on new stock, and a DVD service was introduced.
34. The whole library has a welcoming, fresh and modern feel, which is enhanced by a new and well-used coffee area.
35. The service has received nothing but complimentary comments from the community and the refurbishment has attracted new members, new visits from school classes and a welcome increase in stock issues of 23% compared with December to February last year and the computer facilities of

11%. A further £1,000 has been spent on book stock to keep pace with the increased usage.

Re-opening of Ollerton Library

36. Councillor Stella Smedley officially re-opened Ollerton Library on Friday 17th March 2006. The library had been closed for a five week period to enable a new lift to be installed. The lift means that a whole new level of facilities is now accessible to wheelchair, pushchair and pram users at Ollerton. The upper floor of the library, which houses the children's library and a meeting room, is now within easy reach to all customers and means that the building is now fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
37. The library benefited significantly from a contribution from Councillor Stella Smedley's Electoral Division Initiative Budget to enable staff to purchase easy chairs and tables for the library and staff also used the period of closure as an opportunity to rearrange the layout of the building to make it more welcoming to users. The event was well attended by the local community.

Kick into Reading

38. For generations young boys have emulated their football heroes both on and off the pitch. Players from Nottingham Forest Football Club's training academy are building on these aspirations to encourage local 7 to 11 year olds to read more.
39. As part of 'Kick into Reading', a scheme promoted by the National Literacy Trust initiative 'Reading The Game', players and library staff from the County and City library services have been trained by professional storyteller Pat Ryan to create and present stories and poems to local school children. A series of 6 sessions were held at West Bridgford Library in March for 360 pupils of West Bridgford Junior School.
40. Children sometimes put books and reading on the subs bench in favour of computer games and television but this initiative will really help literacy move up the league tables! The young footballers are great role models for the children and will hopefully show them how a love of books, reading and telling stories can be an important and fun part of their lives.

World Book Day

Kirkby in Ashfield Library

41. On Thursday, 2nd March staff at Kirkby in Ashfield Library braced themselves for a whole day of class visits from Greenwood Primary school. World Book Day was launched at the school on the previous Monday, when local librarians introduced themselves and the library at a whole school assembly. The school organised buses and 346 children and their teachers visited the library during World Book Day and enjoyed choosing books and exploring the library.

42. Many of the children had not visited the library before and we had 175 new members. Everyone enjoyed the visits and the children were so well organised that many of the library's other visitors commented on how well behaved they were and how nice it was to see so many children enthused by books. Many of the children have returned to the library and the homework centre since their visits, bringing along parents and siblings to join the library too. We also gained 5 new members for Kirkby's *Chatterbooks* reading group.

Southwell Library

43. The first evening event (2nd March) at the new Southwell Library in the Bramley Centre was appropriately a World Book Day event featuring 3 Nottinghamshire authors - Stephan Collishaw, Nicola Mongahan and Clare Brown. James Urquart a professional book reviewer chaired the session which featured readings from a new local publication "Sunday Night and Monday Morning" featuring newly written short stories by Nottinghamshire writers. Each author read a piece from the book and then discussed various aspects of their writing with an appreciative audience.

Arnold Library 25th Anniversary - Friday 10th March

44. I was pleased to welcome customers, partners and ex-staff to this anniversary gathering at Arnold. The event was attended by regular participants from the library's two Reading Groups and the weekly Reading Cafe, as well as members of the WRVS (Women's Royal Voluntary Service) and WEA (Workers Educational Association) both of whom have a long association with Arnold Library. Also there, were representatives of the Connexions service who use the library for interviewing their clients, and County Youth Arts, who have been working with Library staff to deliver an Arts project for the many young people who use Arnold regularly. Birthday cake was served and everyone was invited to look at a variety of displays about the history of Arnold and its library service. A programme of events was run throughout March as part of the celebrations, and customers were invited to tell staff how they have benefited from using the library service. Responses were entered into a prize draw and the winners will receive book tokens.

Arnold Library - Heritage Day

45. This took place on Friday, 17th March. The Heritage Day had been organised in conjunction with the Arnold Local Area Forum. The library mounted a display of some of its old photographs and maps, and Arnold residents were invited to come along with their photos and memorabilia to reminisce and re-create old Arnold. It is hoped that this event may lead to the formation of a Local History Group for Arnold, and to the creation of a pack of materials or other publication, for use in schools or with community groups.

Councillor Chris Baron
Cabinet Member for Culture