



meeting	County Council	
date	6 May 2004	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER

Purpose of Report

To outline key current themes and issues from the Deputy Leader's portfolio

Community Regeneration

The North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP)

With a full staffing complement the SSP has made considerable in-roads in the past few months. It was able to fully spend its 2003/4 funding allocation, its 2004/5 Business Plan has been approved by emda and it has begun to commission the projects that will have the greatest economic impact upon the sub-region. Having changed its name to the Alliance SSP, it has put in place a communications strategy to actively engage partners. Regular newsletters and newsflashes are being published and staff have been visiting partner organisations to gain a greater understanding of the priorities throughout the area.

Along with other SSP Board members, I attended an awayday in mid-February which focussed upon strategic and organisational issues that needed to be addressed to take the SSP forward over the coming years. That has set the context for two partner consultation events which the SSP is hosting during May.

In late March, I attended a meeting of North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire local authorities where contributions to the Alliance SSP were discussed along with local authority representation on the SSP Board and Strategic Issue Groups. Despite the proposals to rationalise and reduce the size of Strategic Issue Groups, the County Councils have secured representation on all Groups which will ensure we will have a platform to effectively engage and influence the SSP's agenda. The Strategic Issue Groups are:

- Transport and Infrastructure;
- Enterprise and Innovation;
- Skills and Employment.

The SSP's Transport and Infrastructure Strategic Issue Group, which I chair, has led the way in arriving at the strategic priorities which will inform the commissioning of projects over the coming year. The Group will shortly be issuing commissioning packs for 2005/6

activity and is working with partners to bring forward proposals that will help deliver the strategy for the area.

Local Area Forums and Local Strategic Partnerships

A restructuring of the Ashfield Partnership will lead to a more geographically based approach, designed to better serve the needs of local communities. A well attended consultation exercise succeeded in reaching broad consensus about the way forward.

The Newark and Sherwood Older People's Forum has set up a planning group to organise four events throughout the district along similar lines to the successful 'Beating the Winter Blues' that was held in Newark in November last year. The event provided older people with information on a range of topics, including health matters, pensions, medicine management and energy efficiency.

A working group has been established to take forward the inter-generation work that the LAF has prioritised as its major focus over the year. Representative from the Older People's Forum and the Youth Forum are to be invited to join the group that will seek to identify a programme of initiatives to break down the barriers that exist between generations.

For South Broxtowe LAF, a display of Chinese artwork by local schools was held in Beeston library during February to coincide with Chinese New Year celebrations. 10 schools were involved, including one for pupils with special needs. Broxtowe Action fund allocated £17,800 to 17 projects across the borough in the last bidding round in March – the County Council contributed £10,000 into this fund for 2003/04

Gedling LSP held an action planning event in February and has agreed a structure with a Board, executive group and subgroups, which include the local area forums

Information Technology

IT Services, in consultation with all service departments, has just completed a major review and update of the corporate ICT Strategy. A report on this will be presented to full Council in the near future.

Community Protection

Registration Service

The Registration Service has completed its preparations to stage the first presentations in Nottinghamshire of the new Citizenship Ceremonies.

The ceremonies arise from the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which provides that attendance at a citizenship ceremony is mandatory for people applying for British citizenship. Applicants are required to swear or affirm an oath, and to state a pledge, in front of a Superintendent Registrar. The Government has made clear that it sees the ceremony as an opportunity for the local community to formally welcome their new citizens.

To date, there have been only a very small number of applicants in this County (just seven by 15th April), and so it has not yet been possible to stage a viable event. However, it is

anticipated that the first Citizenship Ceremony in Nottinghamshire will be staged before the end of April.

Trading Standards Service

Operation V79

On 30 March a new initiative was launched with Nottinghamshire Police as part of their operation, code named "V79". The police were stopping vehicles checking for criminal activity, but with DEFRA funding; checks on animal transporters by our officers were included. 16 transporters were stopped and inspected by Animal Health Officers, four vehicles were issued with improvement notices for non-compliance with regulations, while four others were given warnings. A good experience with both Police and ourselves agreeing further exercises would be very helpful.

Internet Sweep

In February we took part in the annual international internet sweep looking for "too good to be true" offers given over the internet. We were looking at home schemes, lottery scams, get rich quick schemes and prizes/free offers. In all 50 sites were examined, especially the small print associated with the adverts. 26 of the sites were found to contravene relevant Regulations, 13 of these related to home working and particular problems related to a lack of identity of the advertiser. Two press releases got good media coverage. Enquiries are ongoing by our Service and the Authorities where the advertisers identified reside.

Food Week

In early April, the Regional Trading Standards Authorities each promoted a food awareness week based around research on the types of food available for school age children's lunch boxes. Displays were arranged at five locations across the County where leaflets were distributed and members of staff discussed children's food issues and gave away fresh fruit donated by the stores where the displays took place. There was much interest in the display and a press release generated media interest.

Safety Zone

Ten half day events involving Trading Standards and seven other agencies with an interest in child safety. Ten Nottinghamshire schools involving approximately 600 year six pupils were given eight settings where dangers had to be identified and solutions to problems found. This is seen as a very worthwhile educational event.

Young Consumers of the Year

This year's local competition was held at County Hall and involved teams from three Nottinghamshire schools testing students' knowledge of a wide range of consumer issues. Lakeview Sixth Form College, Beeston won a closely contested quiz with Brunts School, Mansfield in second place and the Beckett School, West Bridgford in third. Lakeview went on to represent the County at the regional final on 22 April.

Cllr David Kirkham
Deputy Leader