



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Six Month Strategic Performance Report

2012/13

Introduction

Our Strategic Plan 2010-2014 sets out our promises to the people of Nottinghamshire and explains what we will do to improve things for our residents over the four years of the plan.

This six month report tells you about our progress in the first half of this financial year against our five priorities for Nottinghamshire, as detailed in our [Strategic Plan 2010-2014](#).

It includes examples of the work that we have done from April to September 2012 and of our successes so far, as we work towards our four year goals. We also identify areas we need to continue our efforts to improve on.

Summary

Our priorities are:

to foster aspiration, independence and personal responsibility – Priority A

During the first six months of this financial year we have made good progress supporting people's independence by enabling them to make choices about where they live and the services that they receive in their communities. We are making improvements to schools to support aspiration and have secured additional government funding for some of the schools in most need. However there are a small number of schools where improvements will not be made as quickly as we planned and we have more to do to improve the attainment of some of the more vulnerable groups of learners.

to promote the economic prosperity of Nottinghamshire and safeguard our environment – Priority B

Between April and September we have invested to develop our infrastructure to support economic growth. We have

some of the best major roads in the country but now have to do more to improve some of our minor roads. We have also worked to regenerate our rural areas and are developing plans to protect our environment for the future.

to make Nottinghamshire a safer place to live – Priority C

We have worked with the Police and others to make Nottinghamshire safer. Overall crime is down and road safety levels are improving. We are seeking to further improve safeguarding and to reduce re-referrals, and have developed new arrangements with our partners to go live before the end of the year.

to secure good quality, affordable services – Priority D

In the first six months of the year we have sought an external perspective on the quality of some of our services which has highlighted our strengths and some areas to improve. Our services are becoming more affordable but our savings are slightly below target. We have also been able to invest in new developments to meet the service needs of our customers and communities.

to be financially robust and sustainable – Priority E

Our work from April to September has made us more sustainable as projects to reduce our costs have progressed. This has included improvements to our business processes, use of buildings and our work with partners. Our improved procurement may not achieve its year end target but it is expected to reduce our purchasing costs by £5.6m.

Priority A: Fostering aspiration, independence and personal responsibility

Give more people greater choice and control over how they get the support they require to stay healthy and live independently for as long as possible

We are changing the way we provide services to help support more people to live independently within their own home and to provide alternatives to residential or nursing care.

In the first six months of this financial year we have provided a range of services that help people to live as independently as possible, known as **reablement**. Our support workers provide up to six weeks of intensive assistance to people in their own home, assessing their needs and making any changes that will allow them to retain their independence.

A key measure of success is whether, following this assistance, service users can live independently and require either no further support or a reduced level of support. Performance for the first six months of 2012/13 is on target with 65% of service users benefiting from this assistance and requiring less ongoing support.

We also set out to increase the number of people who manage or influence their own care through the use of a **personal budget**. This is an important way to give them more choice in the care they receive and maintain independence. In the summer we held information events across the county in Worksop, Kirkby in Ashfield and Carlton to raise awareness of the benefits of having a personal budget. We have continued to increase the percentage of adult social care service users and carers receiving a personal budget, which is currently 79%. This very positive figure is significantly better than our target of 70% by March

2013 and places Nottinghamshire amongst the top performers nationally.

Enable local people to make more decisions about their lives and where they live

An important aspect of independence is to get the support you require to choose where and how you live. We are committed to ensuring that people have an increased choice and can remain in their own home if they choose to.

We have re-launched our '**Living at Home Programme**' which brings together a range of services that give adults who need care more choice and control over where they live, and can help people return to previous levels of independence.

We are also using innovative methods, such as our telecare and other assistive technology services, to support vulnerable individuals as well as streamlining a number of our current processes. These technologies have ensured timely referrals by occupational therapists and colleagues in the NHS.

The past six months have seen a modest reduction in the number of adults supported in residential and nursing care placements from 2,940 to 2,874. This is not currently meeting our target, but when considered against the wider context of an ageing adult population (a 15.8% increase between 2001-2011) this reduction is considered an achievement.

We are working to deliver a more flexible and efficient service by training all community care officers to undertake both social care and occupational therapy assessments. It is anticipated this will reduce the need for visits by more than one member of staff.

Improve the quality of school buildings

The County Council has committed to spend approximately £100m through a **school refurbishment programme** to improve the quality of school buildings.

Over £20m has been allocated to the programme for this financial year, with 72 schemes to be completed. So far during the first six months, six of these have been completed. Two of the first schools to benefit are the Grove School in Balderton and West Bridgford Infants School. Work was undertaken at both schools during the summer holidays to make repairs and improve the quality of the buildings to provide an environment more suitable for current teaching practices.

It is anticipated that a further 59 of the 72 schemes on the schools refurbishment programme will be completed by the end of March 2013. The remaining seven schemes will carry forward into 2013/14. The delays with these schemes are primarily due to access issues on site. In addition to the 72 schemes, there are seven schemes which were incomplete at the end of the last year. These have been added to the current programme.

We have also bid for government funding for major improvements at 37 primary and 11 secondary schools through the Priority School Building programme. In May 2012, the Secretary of State announced that we had been successful in securing this funding for 15 Nottinghamshire schools. Despite this being fewer schools than our original bid, Nottinghamshire had the most successful bid in the country with more schools accepted than any other local authority.

Improve the life chances and achievements of children and young people

There are many services across the council that strive to improve the life chances for children and young people.

One of the key measures of achievement is the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs Grade A*-C including English and Mathematics. Provisional results for 2012 show that, for the first time, Nottinghamshire's outcomes are better than the national average. 60.3% of Nottinghamshire pupils achieved five good GCSEs including English and Mathematics (an increase of 2.7 percentage points from 2011) compared to 58.6% nationally (which saw a decrease of 0.4% from 2011).

To give children and young people the best possible life chances, our Education Improvement Service has worked with one secondary and eight primary schools which Ofsted have judged to require special measures or given notice to improve. We support head teachers brought in as advisors by the Department of Education (because of their track record of high performance and leadership) to develop and implement improvement plans. These plans are monitored and the progress of each school checked prior to further inspection.

During the first six months of this year we have worked to increase the rate of progress of the most vulnerable groups of learners such as those eligible for free school meals, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Looked After Children. We have entered a partnership arrangement with the National Literacy Trust to deliver a joint programme to support Looked After Children and their carers to develop good reading habits including the use of

their local libraries. We have also submitted a bid to the Education Endowment Fund for funding to support eight secondary schools to develop a reading intervention strategy. This aims to improve the progress of vulnerable pupils who are below the national average in reading as they enter secondary school.

A key measure of progress is the gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible, at age 16. The gap has reduced to 31.8%, just missing our target of 31% for 2011/12. Subsequently we have held a Listening Activity to gain an insight into the views of vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers. The feedback from this will help to inform the way we work to further improve children's examination outcomes and life chances.

Work with the voluntary sector to improve preventative and core services and strengthen local communities

Our commitment to work with the voluntary sector was reinforced in May with the establishment of a committee of councillors - the Grant Aid Sub Committee - to specifically oversee our work with the voluntary sector and local community. This includes distribution of £2.1 million in grant aid to encourage and support voluntary and community action.

During the first six months we have set out to support and pilot a number of projects through our programme of **Community Transport Schemes**. The programme has approximately £320,000 grant funding from the Department of Transport to award. This has included giving support for a new scheme providing transport for wheelchair users who have difficulty using public transport. The Broxtowe Car Scheme Plus has two new specially adapted vehicles which can accommodate large electric wheelchairs or small mobility scooters.

We have also established a Community Chest scheme that gives local organisations a chance to seek funding to support activities which benefit local communities, or to bid for funding for a project that they would not otherwise be able to do.

Embraced localism with increased community involvement in the way services are shaped and delivered

A natural progression from our ongoing work with the voluntary sector is our strategic priority to encourage greater community involvement. This seeks to adopt innovative methods to enable local communities to have their say, not just in the services they receive but the way in which they receive them.

As part of this commitment we said that we would introduce a Lengthsman Scheme – to enable local communities to employ a local person to carry out some of our services such as clearing drains and grass cutting. We launched the scheme in April 2012 and to date 17 town and parish councils have successfully begun pilot schemes which have proved popular with the participating communities. We are evaluating the scheme during the pilot and need to give further consideration as to how it might work in larger areas and those without parish councils.

We have also sought community involvement in shaping the services to be prioritised by the Government. In May 2012, we launched the Superfast Broadband campaign aiming to get 5,000 public pledges by October 2012 to ensure that broadband infrastructure work in rural areas is prioritised by the Government. Residents and businesses have shown their support and the campaign has exceeded the 5,000 pledges we sought.

Deliver services in ways which promote independence and empower people to make positive choices about their lives

In addition to improving people's choice and their ability to influence service delivery, we are also keen to help provide the skills and support that people need to make positive decisions about their own lives.

Work on the Learning Disability and Mental Health Community Care Efficiency programme has been continued throughout the first six months of the year. This programme is designed to provide services that promote independence and support people to make positive changes in their lives in the most efficient way.

To date it has led to 28 adults being successfully supported to move from residential care into supported living. This provides them with more housing security, and gives them more control over where they live, who they live with and how they wish to be supported. In addition, there have been a number of successful transitions of younger adults from residential care into supported living.

The Council's supported employment programme helps to provide meaningful work for people with physical or learning disabilities. . We have supported 69 employees with disabilities who have gone on to achieve certificates for new skills and qualifications.

Our **i-work team** matches local employers and people with learning disabilities who are looking for work. I-work has agreed with schools planned progression routes towards achieving paid employment.

We have extended the funding of the i-work team for another two years to support 153 people to find paid

employment over the next two years, which could save the authority up to £520,000 in day services costs.

Priority B: Promote the economic prosperity of Nottinghamshire and safeguard our environment

Promote Nottinghamshire as a place to do business and invest

Nottinghamshire County Council takes economic growth seriously and recognises the potential of the county's business community to grow and create new jobs and wealth. The council has recently been bringing businesses together to develop a Growth Plan for Nottinghamshire to support businesses, stimulate economic growth and bring jobs to the area.

We have continued to support self-employment and entrepreneurs through our innovation centre networks. The centres are home to over 90 local businesses, predominantly new starts and Small and Medium Enterprises. These companies employ over 400 people across Newark, Mansfield and Worksop. Occupancy rates and financial out-turn at Newark and Mansfield are strong, with the Newark Beacon centre achieving over 90% occupancy. The Worksop Turbine centre has been less successful. We are looking at how we can improve occupancy levels at the centre through changes to unit size.

The number of businesses per head of population in Nottinghamshire remains low compared to national figures. In September 2012, 7.5% of people aged 16-64 years were self-employed. This is below our target of 8.0% and lower than the national average which is around 12%.

We have supported Nottinghamshire companies to access the Growing Places Fund through our Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2). Four projects currently in the appraisal process have been submitted and decisions on their bids will be made in the New Year. Nottinghamshire businesses can also apply to receive assistance from the

Regional Growth Fund. Despite actively promoting the Regional Growth Fund and encouraging businesses to apply, to date the amount of funding Nottinghamshire businesses have received is low compared to other areas of the country.

Develop our infrastructure (roads, public transport, employment sites) to enable long-term growth, improve employment opportunities

By investing and improving our road network to become one of the best connected counties in England, we aim to attract investors and companies that are looking to expand.

Work commenced in October on the A453 widening scheme to improve the link between the M1/East Midlands Airport and the employment sites around Nottingham. To date this has involved ground surveys, tree clearance, fencing, ecology and archaeology investigations. The Council's funding of £20m helped to persuade the government to bring forward this scheme which is now due to open in May 2015.

We have commenced work to install new traffic signals at the junction of the A614 and B6034 to improve access to several employment/popular tourist sites. We are also contributing £250,000 to the Highways Agency scheme at the A1 Elkesley junction, which will commence in Autumn 2013.

So far this year we have restored more than 50 miles of road surfaces across the county, three times more than in 2011/12. The condition of our principal 'A' roads continues to be in the top 25% nationally. However the number of non-principal 'B' and 'C' roads and unclassified roads requiring

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maintenance is higher than our targets of 7% and 17% respectively. To address this, we will transfer our focus and some funding from principal to non-principal and unclassified roads over the next two years.

Building a strong public transport system contributes to the economic growth of Nottinghamshire and improves people's ability to access employment opportunities. Work is currently underway to create a new bus station in the heart of Mansfield. The current station is the busiest in the County and is the starting point or destination of over five million journeys a year. The £9 million scheme will significantly improve the quality of the bus waiting area, and is expected to encourage more people to travel by public transport. We have also started to develop plans for a new bus station in Worksop, and will be holding a public exhibition of the proposals in early 2013. We are undertaking a major review of public transport and launching a pilot in the Newark, Ollerton and Southwell area.

Last year, the number of local bus and light rail passenger trips originating in the county fell short of our expectations with 33.2m journeys, against our target of 35.9m. Two of the largest operators, which provide 57% of the journeys, reported a 2.6% and 2.8% reduction in passengers.

Seek opportunities to contribute to enhancing Nottinghamshire as a tourism destination and increase the number of visitors to the county

The Council's commitment to enhance Nottinghamshire as a tourist destination, and increase the number of visitors to the county was demonstrated by a number of developments between April and September 2012.

In June, we contributed to the network of more than 2012 beacons across the country to celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee by lighting a spectacular floating beacon at the National Water Sports Centre. Over 6,000 people attended on the night to enjoy the lighting of the beacon and firework display.

This year's annual Robin Hood Festival, held in August, proved to be a memorable success. The event attracted 25,000 visitors, an increase of 25% from 2011. It was also featured on ITV's This Morning programme.

A partner has been secured to assist us to create a new, exciting visitor and tourist attraction to promote the national and international reputation of Sherwood Forest and the legend of Robin Hood.

In September 2012, the council agreed to increase its annual contribution to Experience Nottinghamshire by £100,000 to £218,000. Experience Nottinghamshire markets the county to the leisure and business visitor, including to domestic and overseas markets. The increased contribution will assist Experience Nottinghamshire to develop and run four new marketing campaigns to attract visitors into the county. The main focus of the campaign will be the 2013 season and we are working to ensure that the County fully benefits from this increased investment.

Regenerate our market towns and rural areas

Through our Local Improvement Scheme, we are working with local and rural communities to improve and regenerate their areas. The scheme includes heritage and conservation projects suggested by local communities and groups who are also closely involved in their delivery.

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Work is underway to restore listed buildings, pinfolds, war memorials and scheduled ancient monuments, such as a £15,000 contribution to restore two war memorials in Cossall.

Projects to enhance the natural environment have included planting native trees; creating community gardens, allotments and orchards; improving ponds; and restoring water meadows. We are also supporting the new Newstead and Annesley Country Park, including a contribution of £25,000 to create pathways and plant hedgerows.

By the end of September 2012 we had completed 84 local schemes against a target of 50, and have plans to complete a further 152 schemes by the end of March 2013.

One town to benefit from major improvements to its town centre is Hucknall. The £12m scheme, with an £8m contribution by the Government, includes a new pedestrianised High Street and a new inner relief road. Consultation on the scheme took place during September 2012, giving local people the opportunity to view the revised plans. Construction is expected to commence in September 2014.

Ensured our environment is well managed and our countryside is protected

As part of our management of the environment we are seeking to reduce our dependence on landfill. We are supporting the Love Food Hate Waste campaign and over the summer we held six roadshows, across the county, to provide information to residents on re-using leftovers rather than throwing food away.

Following a successful trial, we have extended our used cooking oil scheme to all household recycling centres across the

county. Oil collected is refined to create biofuel and is then converted to generate green electricity. We have also extended our paint recycling scheme to another two household recycling Centres. The scheme accepts unwanted paint from the public and passes on any good quality, reusable paint to community groups and charities.

In 2011/12, 38.8% of waste in Nottinghamshire was sent to landfill - better than our target of 40%. We are planning for how to manage our environment in the future through a new Waste Core Strategy. In the autumn we consulted on the Strategy, which includes estimates of how much waste capacity is required to meet expected demand over the next 20 years. Following the Secretary of State's decision to refuse planning permission for an Energy Recovery Facility at Rufford, we are developing a revised plan with Veolia Environmental Services to find alternative ways to manage waste currently sent to landfill and reduce this further.

The government's Natural Environment White Paper encourages different sectors to work together to identify opportunities to protect and improve the natural environment at a local level. With partners we have established the Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership so that we can work together to protect our countryside.

In April 2012, Nottinghamshire became one of six national pilot areas for a new approach to 'biodiversity offsetting'. This forms part of the planning system and involves developers compensating for unavoidable habitat loss. We have identified a number of locations where habitat loss could be compensated for during the two year pilot in Gedling, Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood.

Priority C: making Nottinghamshire a safer place to live

Improving our safeguarding arrangements and outcomes in protecting vulnerable children and adults in their communities

The ability to act quickly in a coordinated and consistent way is crucial to ensure that vulnerable children and adults are kept safe. This is one of the reasons we have been developing **Nottinghamshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**. Working together in the same location, representatives from the County Council, Police and Health will be the first point of contact for someone who is concerned about the safety or well-being of a child or adult, to ensure help is provided before problems escalate.

Nottinghamshire has a higher number of adult safeguarding referrals than that of neighbouring authorities, in part due to the proactive approach we have taken to raise awareness about the risks to vulnerable adults. The MASH will help us to continue to improve our safeguarding performance for both children and adults. **Between April and September 2012, the percentage of children's safeguarding assessments (referred to as initial and core assessments) we have completed within agreed timescales has consistently been above 80%. This is better than the most recent national data.**

Requests made for social care services are called referrals. **Between July and September we received 1,750 referrals to children's social care; of these 26.7% were re-referrals. The MASH will ensure that referrals are effectively handled and help to reduce the level of re-referrals below our target of 26%.**

Over the coming months we will closely monitor the effectiveness of the MASH to assess how well it is protecting vulnerable children and adults.

Demand for our adult social care services continues to increase, making it more challenging to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults. The number of people aged 65 and over in Nottinghamshire has increased by 15.8% over the past ten years, and the number of people aged 85 and over has increased by 31%.

To improve outcomes, our market development and care standards team have carried out **quality audits of care and support providers** to ensure that poor practice which poses a risk to the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults is identified. We have worked with providers to improve their care services.

In some instances a provider has not been willing or able to make the necessary improvements, and we have therefore suspended the contract so that no new council funded placements are made to the care provider. We have also advised the regulator.

Deliver prevention in circumstances where lives and communities are put at risk

Increase public confidence in the county as a safe place to live

Public roads can pose a risk that affects everybody who lives, works or visits Nottinghamshire. Our **road safety** team are leading a programme of education and advertising campaigns designed to reduce the number of casualties on our roads.

Children of school age are a key group we target. To coincide with the start of the new school year, in September we launched the 'ditch the distraction' campaign. This was targeted at secondary schools and colleges, and

involved the use of social media, outdoor signs, pavement art and posters to encourage students to ditch the distraction of mobile phones and i-pods as they use the footways and cross the road.

We have also continued to develop our Safer Routes to Schools schemes; work with schools to deliver road safety education and offer our national standard 'Bikeability' cycling proficiency training.

Road safety education is just one way we look to reduce road accidents. During the first six months of 2012, we have delivered a number of important engineering and enforcement measures. Examples of these include the traffic signals implemented at the junction of the A60 and Forest Lane, and the reduced speed limit on the A614 between the Ollerton and Leapool roundabouts.

We measure the effectiveness of our work by monitoring the number of road deaths and serious injuries. The number of reported casualties during the first six months of 2012/13 was 197, which is below the target of 238. We are on track to achieve a 40% reduction, compared to the 2005/09 average, by 2020.

Anti-social behaviour is a significant issue for some communities and can lead to people feeling that they are at risk. Addressing anti-social behaviour requires a number of agencies to work together to tackle the causes and effects of this behaviour. We continue to support a number of successful schemes across the county which look to reduce instances of domestic violence, improve citizenship, and educate young people about the impact of low level crime.

Nottinghamshire's community safety team provides solutions for local problems. An example of this is a court injunction secured in April 2012 to stop car cruising in Netherfield and Colwick. More than 200

vehicles had previously congregated around the Victoria Retail Park in Netherfield on Sunday evenings, with groups also meeting during the week. The noise and anti-social behaviour generated numerous complaints from local businesses and residents.

The South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership successfully secured an injunction banning drivers car cruising in the area. Six months on, the injunction continues to have an extremely positive effect. The Community Safety Partnership actively monitors the situation, checking the compliance of the injunction and ensuring that the problem has not simply moved elsewhere. The success of the injunction has attracted attention from elsewhere in the UK.

In partnership with the Police and other agencies, the Safer Nottinghamshire Board has contributed to reducing levels of recorded crime across the county. Between April and September 2012, total recorded crime fell by 18.3% and criminal damage has reduced by 26.6% compared to the same period of the previous year.

Priority D: to provide good quality, affordable services

Redirecting our resources into our priority areas by releasing funding from other services

Undertaking value for money service reviews

Clear business cases for service development and investment

In 2011/12 we saved £70m by transforming the way that we provide services. This released £20m which we have reinvested in our priorities this year, which include services to safeguard vulnerable children and adults with disabilities. We are also investing in major projects across Nottinghamshire to support our priority area of economic prosperity. This year we have used savings made in 2011/12 to help fund the A453 widening scheme, a refurbishment programme of six residential care homes, and essential repairs to school buildings.

Like all authorities, the County Council faces a challenging financial future. We are reviewing the budgets and plans for each of our services to identify where additional savings can be made in future years. For 2012/13 we have set ourselves a target to save £37m. Our forecast in September 2012 shows that we expect to make savings of £36.4m. We are seeking the views of our residents on which services they want to see prioritised next year, with the limited funding that will be available

We are also working to ensure that we provide value for money from our existing budgets, and are predicting an under spend of £6.3m against the 2012/13 budget.

Quality assuring and benchmarking our services against the best and learning from them to improve our own services

To quality assure against the best, we invited a team from other local authorities and the Local Government Association (LGA) to visit the council in July. They conducted a 'peer review' to give us an external perspective on our services and identify other councils that we could learn from.

The review highlighted a number of achievements, including a strong political direction; an inclusive management style; and a respectful and constructive relationship between councillors and officers. The review was also clear that more needs to be done, and at pace, in order to meet future service efficiencies. We have put an action plan in place to address the recommendations made in the report and work has begun to implement this.

Invested in new developments which meet emerging customer, community and economic needs

Through our Capital Programme we are investing in new developments to meet the needs of our residents. One such development is the Eastbourne Centre at Sutton in Ashfield, where we have invested £800,000 to convert a disused gym into a space to help 16-17 year olds develop skills for work. The site will also be used to meet the needs of young people by providing a youth centre during week evenings and at the weekend.

Through the council's 10-year Library Strategy we are investing in library services to meet community needs. During September, £50,000 was spent

improving Calverton Library and a further £20,000 was spent on new book stock. Work has also continued on the new £5.3m West Bridgford Library and Young People's Centre which will open in March 2013. Satisfaction with our libraries service is currently very high at 97% against a target of 90%.

To meet our customer needs we have invested in Mansfield Day Service, which reopened in July following a £500,000 makeover. The building was previously used by older people and people with learning disabilities, however since the refurbishment it now also provides services for people who have mental health issues and people with physical disabilities. Many of the changes have been based on suggestions from people who use the service about their needs. This is part of a wider £4.85m programme of modernising our day services to create a network of modern, multi purpose centres.

Created enhanced opportunities for citizens and visitors to take part in cultural activities

Cultural services make a vital contribution to the local economy and help to promote independence, achievement, lifelong learning and a sense of well being.

In addition to our ongoing range of successful programmes, we have created opportunities to participate in activities linked to the Jubilee, the Olympic Torch Relay and London 2012. This has led to an increase in the number of young people and adults taking part in sports, arts and outdoor education to 111,225 in the first six months 2012/13. This is higher than anticipated, and above our target.

During the first six months we have had 1,202 people volunteering in the delivery of sports and arts activities in the county against a target for the year of 2,000.

Building on the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games, we are the county's lead organisation for managing the Sport England Sport Maker campaign - backed by Olympic legend Sir Steve Redgrave. We are aiming to recruit 1,000 sports volunteers this year.

Satisfaction of visitors taking part in cultural activities at Sherwood and Rufford country parks is very high at 97.5%, well in excess of the 90.0% target and an increase on the previous year from 92.0%.

Services that are organised around the customer

We have been working to improve some of our most popular services by making it easier for customers to access our services, including how to: apply for school places, report potholes, bookings for registering births and deaths and our Handy Persons Scheme. We have also provided clear, up to date information for our customers on all of the ways to communicate with us: by telephone, the internet, email, face-to-face, Facebook and Twitter.

We listen to our customer feedback and where necessary make changes to services. Following feedback on the cost of contacting the council, we have changed our customer service centre number to a new 0300 number. From November 2012, all residents will pay a local rate or use inclusive minutes to get in touch with us.

We take any complaint seriously and aim to resolve them as quickly as possible. This year 96% of complaints have been resolved at the first stage of the complaints process, – well above of our target of 90%. To continue to respond to complaints efficiently, we will seek to learn from what we have done well and identify further areas for improvement.

Delivered the early intervention action plan and implemented targeted youth support arrangements

Our targeted prevention work has included the introduction of an offer to support all vulnerable adolescents. We have continued to work with those at risk of offending, and our youth workers have focused on diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour into positive activities.

We have reduced the number of 10-17 year olds entering the Youth Justice System for the first time, with a 27% reduction compared to 2011. Re-offending has also been reduced from 14.7% to 13.2%. Reductions are due to successful implementation of policing practices such as restorative justice – giving victims of crime the chance to tell offenders the real impact of their crimes, and continued prevention work.

We have improved our youth support arrangements by establishing local teams of professionals that bring together the Connexions Service and our officers who provide support for parents and children who have difficulties at school. This has improved efficiency and simplified access to our services for professionals and young people.

Our Children's Centres are reaching 42% of families in greatest need of support. This is below our target of 45% but shows improvement from the previous period. One way we have engaged with families in need is through promoting our services at local community events.

We have also implemented a Youth Homelessness Strategy for 16-21 year olds, allocating an additional £462,000 for supported housing over the next three years in response to feedback we received from our consultation on ways to

prevent and tackle youth homelessness across the county.

Reviewed existing partnerships and ensured these are effective both within and beyond the county boundaries

We have a number of partnerships that ensure effective working with partner organisations. The Safer Nottinghamshire Board helps to deliver the shared community safety priorities across the county. The Board is working to deliver our Nottinghamshire Community Safety Agreement (2012-2015). This includes early intervention work, prevention of offending, and improving confidence and satisfaction in local communities. Initial findings from our Annual Residents Survey show we have improved perception of safety in the local area during the day and at night. Data from the police for the period April-September shows that recorded crime levels have reduced by 18.3% compared to the same period last year.

Following the recent elections in November 2012, a new Police and Crime Commissioner is now in post and we will seek to work in partnership with the Commissioner to help shape future community safety activity across Nottinghamshire.

We continue to support the work of our Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2), which covers the areas of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and works to support economic growth. This partnership has recently secured a £5m funding boost for the area. The 'Unlocking Investment Growth' programme will mean small and medium sized businesses can apply for grants of between £50,000 and £1m which can be used to invest in individual schemes to help create jobs, support business expansion and generate economic growth.

Priority E: to be financially robust and sustainable

Excellent procurement and commissioning which secures best value for money and have opened our services to new providers

To support new and existing providers, many of whom are SME's, we have been working to reduce the number of invoices awaiting payment by us. The latest data from September 2012 shows that we have 5,279 invoices currently awaiting payment - a significant reduction during the first part of the year from a starting point of 10,000 invoices. This still exceeds our target of 4,000 and further work is being done to ensure that all invoice processing is undertaken in a simple and efficient manner.

In order to ensure excellent value for money, we have been working to simplify the process for buying low value goods and services through our Business Management System (BMS). As part of this, we have reviewed our use of procurement cards, ensuring that these are used only where it is the most effective solution.

In the first six months of this year we have achieved estimated savings of £5.6m through improved procurement. This is against a target we had set of £6m. The £400,000 shortfall is due to price fluctuations and factors such as increasing costs.

Extracted maximum value for money from all of our assets including our buildings

By making better use of our existing buildings, the council is reducing the number of premises it owns and leases from twenty three to eight by 2017. This will save £2m each year in running costs which we will reinvest in frontline services. A number of our properties have already been vacated and are on

the market, ensuring that we are on track to deliver the predicted savings. We have already sold Ludlow Hill House, Centenary House and properties on Loughborough Road.

The council's Ways of Working programme is creating a modern, flexible working environment so that council employees can work smarter, faster and more effectively. The programme overall is on track to deliver.

Taken every suitable opportunity for external funding and sharing resources with our partners

The development of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Nottinghamshire has enabled us to share resources with our partners in the Police and Health services to ensure clearer accountability and reduce duplication of effort.

We have negotiated the use of shared premises for our transport and travel services team with Rushcliffe Borough Council. This will save over £70,000 a year. In addition, our customer service team has recently co-located customer service points and moved teams to Beeston, Eastwood and the new Mansfield libraries. There are plans to locate teams in Worksop and West Bridgford libraries in 2013.

We are working in partnership with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. Our customer service team is targeting the over 85s by telephone, who are at the most at risk of fire. They are being offered a free home safety check by the fire service. If successful, this scheme will be rolled out across the county.

Business processes and systems that are good and that maximise the use of new technology

We launched our Business Management System (BMS) in November 2011. Since its launch there have been many improvements in how we pay our suppliers and staff, but there have also been many teething problems that we continue to address.

The introduction of this single, integrated HR, finance and procurement system has exposed a number of inefficient processes across the council. It also demands a more controlled way of working, with stricter adherence to deadlines. We are working hard to ensure we maximise the full potential of our BMS.

We will continue to address the issues with our BMS and to work towards implementing phase 2 of the system during the remainder of 2012/13. This includes external payroll (schools) and property maintenance.

A workforce that is fit for purpose, skilled, able and empowered to make decisions and actively contributes to the improvement of services year on year

The Council achieved reaccreditation to the Investors in People (IIP) standard in June 2012. IIP is a standard that helps an organisation to improve its business by ensuring it makes effective use of its people. This includes training and developing its workforce. The council has been IIP accredited for over 10 years.

There were a number of strengths that were highlighted by the inspectors which included inspirational leadership, highly effective communications and a culture of

continuous improvement. A number of areas for development were also identified and we will be using our new workforce strategy to address some of the findings from the IIP inspectors.

We have continued to reduce sickness absence levels by working with managers to build employee health and well-being, and encouraging employees to make lifestyle choices to feel fitter, healthier and more resilient at work.

Sickness absence figures for the council for the first six months of 2012/13 have reduced to 7.94 days (average days per employee) against a target of 8.25 days. This compares to 8.99 days at the same period in 2011/12 showing a reduction of 12% over the year. From the start of the Strategic Plan in 2010/11, there has been a 21.8% reduction in employee absence.

Key strategies and policies would be fully aligned to our key priorities

Significant improvements have been made to the council's approach to policy development, helping to ensure that all council policies are aligned with its strategic priorities. The council approved its policy framework in May 2012 and implementation of the framework is ongoing.

The council's policy library was approved in July 2012 and is available on the County Council's website. All publicly available policies have been added to the library. Work is now focused on ensuring policies are developed consistently across the council, and existing policies are reviewed in accordance with the agreed framework.