

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

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agenda item number **7a vi.**

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY – APRIL 2010

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio. This report reflects the wide range of initiatives being undertaken across my portfolio, all of which help improve and enhance the quality of life for Nottinghamshire people.

ROBIN HOOD MONTH

2. Nottinghamshire County Council, along with our partners Nottingham City Council, have declared May as Robin Hood Month. This is to coincide with the release of Ridley Scott's new film, Robin Hood. The film is expected to be one of the big blockbusters of 2010 and is a gritty modern retelling of the popular worldwide legend that is inextricably linked with Nottinghamshire.
3. An exciting programme of major events have been organised throughout the month transforming the county into a medieval kingdom. Highlights include:
 - Medieval re-enactments
 - Jousting
 - Archery
 - May Day parade led by Robin Hood
 - Family fun days
4. An official movie exhibition, staged in partnership with Universal Studios, will run throughout Robin Hood Month at Nottingham Castle and Sherwood Forest and will allow visitors the chance to see the set, props, weaponry and costumes from the film.
5. May Day marks the start of Robin Hood month and we are encouraging everyone in Nottinghamshire to get involved in May Day celebrations by reviving customs and traditions that have been practiced in the county for generations. May Day traditions and the legend of Robin Hood are at the heart of the county's heritage

and this will be a fun way to teach a new generation about old customs and traditions.

6. We have invited all schools, district and parish councils in the county to get involved and this could include May Day parades, Maypole dancing, May Queen/King competitions, making of May Baskets or Morris Dancing. The County Council, with help from the Sherwood Forest Trust, will be hosting a May Day parade from Edwinstowe to the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest. Robin Hood will lead the parade which will include a traditional 'Jack in the Green' made by local people.
7. I am also pleased to announce that we have recently invested £70k of Single Programme funding across a number of projects designed to boost the tourism economy in Nottinghamshire, using the Robin Hood brand and capitalising on the release of the new film. These include increased destination marketing activities and the production of a promotional DVD for Sherwood Forest.

THE GREAT NOTTS BIKE RIDE

8. I was delighted to attend the launch of this year's Great Notts Bike Ride on 17 March. The event was supported by a number of local sporting stars from Nottingham Panthers and Nottingham Rugby Club along with members of the Nottingham Outlaws BMX club based in Bulwell.
9. The bike ride takes place on Sunday, 20 June and participants can chose from the following options:
 - the 5k family lap
 - an 18 mile community ride
 - 50 mile challenge ride
 - 75 mile sportive route
10. Last year over 4,000 cyclists took part, raising over £50,000 for the benefit of four local charities. I very much hope that this year we can improve on this impressive total.

COUNTRY PARKS AND CONSERVATION

Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre

11. I am delighted to report that following the review of all major capital projects, the Council will be investing an indicative £5.2 million to build a new visitor centre at Sherwood Forest. The new centre, which will be open to the public in 2012, will provide a café, gift shop and a visitor experience that will both educate and entertain. A visitor centre is the first port of call at any attraction and I am confident that the new centre will create an excellent first impression.
12. The Council has already invested over £800,000 purchasing a new site for the centre. The design and plans are currently being developed and will be unveiled

this summer. A planning application will be then made later this year with works beginning spring 2011 and completion expected by the following year. The current visitors centre will not close until the new centre is open and operational.

Easter Egg Hunts

13. This year families can take part once again in the annual easter egg hunts at Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve and Rufford Abbey Country Park. At Sherwood Forest families will be invited to follow a trail of clues to uncover facts about the ancient forest and Robin Hood, while at Rufford Abbey they will be encouraged to follow the clues on a trail of giant dinosaur eggs. Last year almost a thousand families took part in the hunts. This is just one of the many ways in which our officers work hard to promote our country parks as places where families can engage with the outdoors in really creative ways.

LIBRARIES

Library Refurbishments

14. I am pleased to report that the Council has approved the major refurbishment of Mansfield Library. The £3.6 million programme will improve facilities for customers and include a second lift, new toilets, better access to the local history section and improved areas for children, study and youth facilities. There was a considerable response to the public consultation last year and the new plans have been tailored to meet the needs of local people. The new library will bring added vitality to Mansfield town centre, offering people renewed opportunities for informal learning and culture.
15. Plans to move Annesley Woodhouse library have also been agreed. The library will move to new, larger and more central premises at the Acacia Avenue Community Centre later this year and £15,000 will be invested in new furniture and equipment.

Storyfest Nottinghamshire

16. Libraries throughout the county took part in the inaugural Storyfest Nottinghamshire in March. Celebrating our love of stories, we had a huge range of activities on offer, from live storytelling nights and author events to story writing workshops and tales of Nottinghamshire's past. We also launched our new collection, 'Home Grown' which celebrates local writing in the East Midlands, and held workshops by some of the featured authors. Festival highlights included Roald Dahl fun days held at seven libraries, acclaimed local author Jon McGregor talking about his latest novel at West Bridgford Library, Fright Nights with a professional storyteller and the festival finale, 'Lost in Translation', a live storytelling event hosted at the Bonington Theatre in Arnold.

Big Learning Weekend

17. Building on the very successful Love Libraries and Love Reading campaigns held in 2008 and 2009, Nottinghamshire Libraries took the opportunity this year to promote another important aspect of the service, informal and lifelong learning which are recognised as making a significant contribution to the well-being of individuals and communities.
18. Over just a weekend in February, the service delivered an ambitious programme of thirty five informal learning activities in libraries across the county, challenging people to try something new – including an antique workshop with ceramics expert, Eric Knowles, sculpture in Worksop and West Bridgford, swing dancing in Arnold, making a Roman Mosaic in Mansfield Woodhouse and family history in Collingham, Ollerton and Balderton. Almost 800 people decided to have a go, many of them families learning together. Three libraries, Arnold, Beeston and Worksop, opened their doors on a Sunday for the first time.
19. One of the aims of the project was to develop sustainable activities that would attract customers to return and also to develop library collections. West Bridgford library is now running a five week local studies course and Bircotes is offering one in lyric writing. The four family history scrapbook activities encouraged several people to donate materials to their local libraries. Libraries worked in partnership with other learning providers across the County and received some funding towards the events from the Learning Revolution Transformation fund.

Young People select stock for new library

20. In January a group of 6 young people visited bookshops in Nottingham to select stock for the young people's collection at the new Worksop library. The young people were members of 'Headspace', a focus group of volunteers who are working alongside library staff to develop new and exciting library services for young people in the Worksop area when the new library opens later this year.
21. 'HeadSpace' is a national project run by The Reading Agency which aims to create modern and attractive spaces within libraries designed by young people where they can read, meet and volunteer. Nottinghamshire successfully bid for funding to open the first headspace in Nottinghamshire at Worksop. The focus group have also been involved in selecting furniture for the library and are now developing a programme of activities that will appeal to other young people.

Kick into Reading

22. West Bridgford library was delighted to host "Kick into Reading", the highly successful National Literacy Trust initiative. The library joined forces with Nottingham Forest Academy players to inspire children to "kick into reading". The academy players were trained by a professional storyteller, Tony Dallas, to create and perform stories and poems, to bring storytelling sessions alive and to encourage a love of reading. Over 100 pupils from West Bridgford Junior School visited the library to share the stories with the football players and the excitement created showed the children that reading is both fun and an important part of life.

Self Service Provision

23. By the end of March ten of our largest libraries opened with self service provision installed. All those sites have achieved their target of 80% of issues via the self service kiosks which leaves library staff more time to focus on helping customers and answering enquiries. Public response has been very positive, with many library users commenting on how quick and easy it is to use the equipment and how helpful the library staff has been. The installation has also enabled each library to remove large counters, allowing the redesign of entrance areas to create much better stock display. There are a further five installations planned as part of the programme and these should be completed by May.

Public Library Customer Survey

24. In November 2009, as part of a national CIPFA survey of public library users, we ran a survey in all Nottinghamshire libraries asking our customers aged 16 and over what they think about their library service. The response was excellent with over 14,000 customers providing feedback on the library service.
25. The results showed that over 90% of library users thought the service was good and provides good value for money. Libraries are used for a whole range of purposes with 90% of customers borrowing books, 46% finding information and 38% borrowing DVDs and CDs. Around 20% visit libraries to read newspapers, use the computers, access informal learning and attend events and activities. These results will be used to shape and improve future services. These surveys are run once every three years and a survey for under 16s is due in the Autumn of 2010.

Recent Events at Local Libraries

26. I am always pleased to report on the variety of interesting and innovative events that have taken place at local libraries around the county:
- Chinese new year celebrations took place at West Bridgford library in February, including workshops on Chinese crafts, painting and traditional music, as well as a presentation on Chinese emperors
 - A crime fiction café was held at Sutton-in-Ashfield library to discuss the Inspector Rebus novels by the Tartan Noir author, Ian Rankin
 - Libraries across Nottinghamshire entertained youngsters and families during March with events about the wonderful world of insects including talks about the crucial role insects play in helping forensic experts solve crimes and how to look after the UK's declining honeybee population.

Adult and Community Learning

27. I am pleased to announce that the Adult & Community Learning Service has nominated eight individual learners and ten groups of learners for awards as part of national 'Adult Learners Week' which is co-ordinated by the National Institute of Adult & Continuing Education (NIACE) .
28. In addition the Service has nominated 3 organisations that deliver learning for ACLS in the 'Opening Doors' category, which recognises creative and innovative projects or organisations that have had a positive impact on the lives of their learners.
29. Adult Learners Week will be held from the 15-21 May and an evening event celebrating the achievements of Nottinghamshire ACLS, learners, tutors & Learning Support Workers will be held at County Hall on Wednesday 19th May.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES

30. Nottinghamshire Archives launched a competition in February called My Life! It asked individuals or groups to submit written, audio or visual diaries about a day in the life of 7-16 year olds including personal thoughts about issues affecting them. The competition aims to capture personal moments to give future generations an idea of what life was like for a young person in 2010. Selected entries will be added to the collections at Nottinghamshire Archives offering future historians a fascinating insight.

SPORTS SERVICE

Sports Review of the Year

31. The Sports Service hosted around 450 guests at this year's Nottinghamshire Sports Review of the Year in February at the East Midlands Conference Centre. Celebrating the achievements of athletes, rewarding administrators, coaches and officials in Nottinghamshire sport for another remarkable year for the county.
32. BBC East Midlands Today presenter Colin Hazelden, hosted the evening, along with Natalie Jackson. Guests from professional sport included; Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club's Mick Newell and Chris Read, players from both Nottingham Panthers and Nottingham Rugby and some Nottinghamshire Olympians and Paralympians, including gold medallist Rebecca Adlington. Five young leaders from the Step into Sport volunteering programme worked on event support as part of their training. The winners were announced from a shortlist of up to five in each category and a full list is available on the authority's website.

Rising Stars and Shining Stars

33. The County Council is investing around £95,000 each year in the run up to the 2012 Olympics in the Rising Stars and Shining Stars initiatives aiming to support promising athletes and elite athletes with their training and competition costs. Rebecca Adlington and Tim Brabants, both Olympic gold medalists have agreed

to become ambassadors for the schemes which will support around 100 talented young people with grants of up to £500. Shining Stars will help athletes already performing at an elite level and with a realistic chance of competing in the 2012 Olympics, with grants of up to £2,500 towards living, training and competition expenses. In return, these top competitors will work with the County Council to encourage young people to get involved in sport.

National Governing Bodies of Sport

34. We are supporting the organisation of the Women's Champions Hockey Trophy to be held in Nottingham in July as well as the associated development and roadshow events. This will include a Quicksticks tournament, England Hockey's brand new game designed specifically for Primary Schools. This is the first time the tournament will be hosted in England.
35. A golf coaching academy which is designed to recruit new coaches has been established in Nottinghamshire in partnership with the major golf associations. There has also been disability awareness training for golf coaches with 36 golf professionals trained this month, making a total of 152 in all. As a result of this training, regular golf sessions for disabled people are now taking place in golf clubs, day centres and at Derry Mount Special School.

Community sport

36. Working alongside the Healthy Communities team, the Sports Service assisted with the delivery of an Active Communities event at Arnold Town Football Club in March delivering both boccia and exercise activities.
37. Both Retford and Gedling Gymnastics Clubs have completed their portfolio for GymMark accreditation. The Service is making presentations on the benefits of accreditation around the county.
38. Staff from the Play Sport project attended a Move More Often course with a view to developing a multi skills programme for frailer, older people as well as young children. A pilot 2-day multi skills workshop has been submitted to 1st4Sport aiming to attain accreditation for delivery of multi skills courses in the county.
39. The first draft of the coach development plan covering the next 3 years, is now complete and will be issued for consultation. Development plans have been agreed with the Amateur Swimming Association, the Bowls Development Alliance, Canoe England and England Hockey. There will be meetings with a further 6 sports in the near future to finalise development plans.
40. Work has begun with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club and Rushcliffe's Partnership Development Manager on the 2,010 for 2010 event aiming to have 2,010 young people playing cricket at the same time. This event will require a large amount of volunteers which will be supported by our Step into Sport officer.

ARTS SERVICE

Young People's Arts Award

41. A grant from the Arts Award national office enables the Service to deliver a programme of training and advice which supports local schools, youth, arts and community groups to deliver the Arts Award. This is a national qualification recognising young people's creativity and leadership skills. In 2009/10 we:
- supported 502 young people aged 11-25 to achieve the Arts Award (a fantastic 92% increase from the previous year)
 - trained 61 new Arts Award advisors and helped to increase registered Arts Award delivery centres from 13 to 38
 - Established two action research projects to increase delivery of the award with disadvantaged young people. This research will feed into national office Arts Award strategy.

Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

42. The Arts Service has been working with Council colleagues and external partners to increase the potential of BSF to create new cultural facilities for Nottinghamshire communities. Activities included a seminar for students, staff and management in the 7 BSF schools which looked at the impact of creativity and the arts on learning and at how the school can contribute to local cultural facilities. The Arts Service was also instrumental in a series of creative consultation projects linking schools with independent artists, architects, performers, and a creative learning advisor. A public exhibition at Rufford Craft Centre Gallery between January and March this year was designed to share the schools' ideas and encourage contributions from the wider community.
43. As a result of these activities the County Council has successfully raised the profile of arts and culture in BSF schools and established a dynamic BSF Arts and Culture Stakeholder group.

Rufford Craft Centre

44. The Arts Service has been consulting with arts and education professionals to broaden the learning and cultural experience on offer at the Rufford Craft Centre. This has resulted in the recruitment of a new team of 15 freelance artists to deliver a broader creative education and outreach programme and a new schools programme which was launched in March along with self-led education resources for groups and families.

Creative and Media Diploma

45. The Arts Service supports delivery of the Creative and Media diploma locally by facilitating partnerships with the independent creative and cultural sector. The Service has been successful in securing external funding (DCFS Strategic Commissioning) which will fund the creation of a 'Find Your Talent' youth event

at Rufford and other North Nottinghamshire arts venues. Colleagues in the Arts Service and CYP are currently developing the programme.

46. The Arts Service has also been involved in the development of a creative industry summer school to support delivery of the Diploma which involved an exhibition at Rufford Craft Centre co-produced by the students.

Training and good practice events

47. I am pleased to report that a recent training event for secondary school teachers to refresh creativity in the classroom was so successful that it will be run as an annual secondary conference, and is currently being remodelled for primary schools and for tutors attached to the Adult and Community Learning Service.
48. The Arts Service has been working closely during 2009 with colleagues in Children and Young People's Department and ABC Arts to train and support 21 teachers to apply for Artsmark, a kitemark which recognises and boosts a school's commitment to the arts.

Arts Partnership Nottinghamshire (APN)

49. Through our role coordinating APN we supported voluntary, independent and public sector partners to work together to offer a year round countywide programme of events for young people. The partnership involves all the local authorities across the county working with voluntary and independent partners and it provides professional development web-based resources. Through this partnership in 2009/10 1600 young people experienced an arts performance, and 553 young people engaged in more intensive projects addressing important issues such as teenage pregnancy, underachievement and anti-social behaviour.

ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Nottinghamshire Economic Development Partnership (NEDP)

50. The new Nottinghamshire Economic Development Partnership Board, comprising senior representatives of the private, public and voluntary sectors, met for the first time on 5 March, 2010. The Board has been established by the Nottinghamshire Partnership to lead its efforts to strengthen the county economy.
51. The new Board and Executive Working Group will take responsibility for two significant pieces of work: leading the economic strand of the Local Area Agreement and the commissioning and approval of projects under the Single Programme and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Streamlining the management arrangements allows the NEDP Board and Executive Working Group to replace five former groups. The NEDP Board is chaired by Paul Maloney, Regional Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses and a local businessman. Cllr Keith Girling, Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture and Community, is vice-chair and will chair the Executive Working Group.

Economic Prosperity

52. The Economic Prosperity event took place in February at Trent Bridge Cricket Club and focused on recovery and growth for businesses and the economy in city and county. The Leader and Councillor Girling joined me at the event and I am pleased to report that it was extremely well attended.
53. The event was aimed at updating the public and private sector on initiatives by both the city and county councils to ensure that the local economy is re-vitalised. Guest speakers from local businesses focused on how their organisation or business sector can help to drive economic growth in the future. Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive. This breakfast meeting was the latest in a series of events linked to the future prosperity of Nottinghamshire, which play a vital role in shaping our investment in future growth.

Nottinghamshire County Councils Young Dragon competition 19th of March 2010

54. In March, 13 teams from Nottinghamshire secondary schools competed in the final of the Young Dragons competition at the John Fretwell Centre near Mansfield. We have launched this competition to encourage young people to develop their enterprise skills in a fun and exciting way. Enterprise skills are becoming increasingly important and the skills they learn will help them when they enter the workplace.
55. Following months of preparation, teams presented their business ideas to a panel made up of the Corporate Director of Communities, local business leaders and myself. The day began with an inspirational presentation by last year's winners from Toot Hill School. As a consequence of winning, the team went on to raise funds for a charity working with disabled riders and have also run a rock concert in aid of the Haiti appeal.
56. As well as making their presentations to the Dragons, teams were engaged in a series of workshops throughout the day. Enterprise ideas were assessed on the basis of teamwork, creativity and innovation, feasibility, social, ethical and environmental considerations, market analysis and promotion.
57. The first prize of £500 was awarded to Toot Hill School for their 'IDea Band' – a wrist band allowing access to a person's medical information in the event of an emergency. The second prize of £250 was awarded to Retford Oaks school for 'Pensionopoly' a board game for the elderly and third prize of £125 was awarded to Arnold Hill school for 'Collapsabox', a collapsible lunchbox. The prize money will allow the groups to pursue their enterprise ideas back in school. Well done to everyone who took part.

Scoping High Spec Data Transfer Opportunities in Rural Nottinghamshire

58. The Nottinghamshire Economic Development Partnership is examining opportunities to improve High Speed Data Transfer in rural areas of the county. A scoping study was commissioned in February and the full report will be available later this month.

I would like to include the following reports by my deputy portfolio holder, Councillor Keith Girling.

Small Business Engagement – report by Councillor Girling

59. At its meeting in December 2010 Cabinet agreed that the County Council should sign the Small Business Engagement Accord promoted by the Federation of Small Business and that I be nominated as the Business Engagement Champion. The County Council is acutely aware of the vital role played by small businesses (those with less than 50 employees) and they generate wealth, employment and opportunity and dominate the Nottinghamshire economy. The Accord, which contains 14 principles for the authority to adopt, was formally signed by the Leader on 24 February 2010.
60. I have already visited a number of small business clubs across Nottinghamshire to listen to views and discuss how the County Council can support them further. I am also considering the establishment of a Business Engagement group which will formalise regular meetings with key business organisations.

Showcase Market and Sell – a report by Councillor Girling

61. I am pleased to report that Nottinghamshire County Council, via Single Programme funding, sponsored a series of six Showcase Market and Sell events, which were held across Nottinghamshire in March 2010. These free events were organised by the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and gave local businesses an excellent opportunity to:
- showcase, market and sell their products and services via exhibition space / brochure and business card exchanges,
 - network, make new contacts and attract new customers
 - participate in a range of sessions providing practical advice on how to grow a business.
 - learn about local business support and advice provided by Business Link

62. I attended a number of these events in my role as Business Engagement Champion.

Innovation Festival - a report by Councillor Girling

63. The 4th Innovation Festival (i-Festival) is taking place across the East Midlands between 12th March and 23rd April 2010. It features an inspiring programme of events, designed to celebrate and nurture a culture of innovation in the region, with activities for young people, businesses, communities and research

organisations which support or are involved in an innovation environment. Supported by the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) and East Midlands Innovation, the regional Science and Industry Council, the 2010 i-Festival is building on the success of the 2009 event which saw over 177 events and over 20,000 attendees.

64. Nottinghamshire County Council supported the festival via a Single Programme funding contribution of £20,000. This investment enabled the organisation of a number of events in Nottinghamshire including; an access to finance road show for innovative local companies, sponsorship of two food and drink sector knowledge exchange workshops and a conference on skills for a low carbon economy. Sponsorship of the i-festival 2010 highlights the important role of innovation in growing the Nottinghamshire economy, increasing the productivity and sustainability of local businesses and creating new, skilled jobs within the county.

Recession Response – a report by Councillor Girling

65. Following the success of the “Ride Out the Recession” events held in summer 2009, a further series of five half day events entitled “Is Your Business Fit for Finance” is taking place in April 2010 at different venues across the county.
66. These events are aimed at Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) to help them successfully secure finance from banks and other sources. Experts from the business sector, including bankers, are providing tips on financial forecasting and negotiating with banks and also giving guidance on how to ensure a business plan is viable and professional in its presentation. The events are being delivered by Business Link on the council’s behalf.

Councillor John Cottee
Cabinet Member for Culture and Community