



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 28th JUNE 2007

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Purpose of the Report

This report covers some of my key activities as Leader since the last County Council meeting during May and June.

Meetings attended with the Chief Executive

- Continue to hold regular routine meetings with Deputy Leader and Chief Executive.
- East Midlands Counties Leaders' and Chief Executives' meeting.

Meetings between Leaders and Chief Executives of Nottinghamshire County Council and Districts

The Chief Executive, appropriate officers and I met with the Leader and Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council and Bassetlaw District Council.

Meetings with District Councils are ongoing, so would be happy to hear from other Members about major items that might be raised in these meetings.

Routine meetings with the Nottingham Evening Post and Corporate Communications

The Deputy Leader and I continue to hold fortnightly meetings with a representative from the Nottingham Evening Post and Corporate Communications, where current and forthcoming areas of interest are discussed.

- Also, continue to hold fortnightly Communication Portfolio update meetings with the Deputy Leader and officers.
- Meet regularly with a representative from the CHAD (Helen Lambourne), where current and forthcoming areas of interest are discussed.

Nottinghamshire Consultation Practitioners' Forum

I attended a meeting of the Nottinghamshire Consultation Practitioners Forum (which is made up of representatives from the voluntary sector, public sector

and Nottinghamshire County Council employees) on Monday, 4 June 2007 to launch Nottinghamshire's consultation good practice guides. These twelve consultation guides were written with input from members of this Forum and have been produced as part of the County Council's commitment to improve the support available to Council employees and our partners carrying out consultation. The guides have been written to support our Public Engagement Policy (approved by County Council on 1 December 2005) which gave a commitment to produce a set of consultation guides to:

support people who are undertaking consultation in Nottinghamshire
provide good practice guidelines which should be used by anyone
planning or undertaking public engagement work, and
promote, share and spread best practice across the Council.

The guides provide a five-step approach to help plan consultations, run them, analyse them, feedback the results and the decisions taken to residents and stakeholders. They also contain Nottinghamshire County Council's twelve consultation standards which establish best practice and have been drawn from the 12 consultation guides.

SWAC 'Transform Tuesday' (part of National Recycle Now Week 2007)

I attended a Schools Waste Action Club (SWAC) Transform Tuesday event at Mansfield Civic Centre on 5 June 2007, where I presented awards to the winning schools, including Orchard Primary from Kirkby-in-Ashfield, which finished the day in first place.

The day, which formed part of Recycle Now Week 2007, comprised a series of competitions themed around the 3R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and was open to schools in Nottinghamshire taking part in the SWAC programme, which builds knowledge of sustainable waste management through links with the national curriculum.

Take your Councillor to School Day

I attended John Davis Primary School as part of the County Council's 'Take your Councillor to school day' on 18 May.

I was on my best behaviour and met the School Council where we discussed my role, what the County Council did and the role of the School Council. My special thanks to the members of the School Council and I thoroughly enjoyed being shown around the school.

Adult Learners' Week Awards evening

As part of a series of events planned to mark the national campaign for Adult Learners Week, I attended the Adult and Community Learning Service's Awards Ceremony on the evening of 24th May at County Hall. I was delighted to present awards to individual learners from across the County who had been nominated for their outstanding achievements and commitment to their learning. The evening gave the opportunity to hear about the success stories of learners, tutors and learning support workers and was a great celebration

of the learning taking place across Nottinghamshire, through the Adult and Community Learning Service which is part of the Communities Department.

Official re-opening of Sutton-in-Ashfield Library

The morning of Friday, 8 June saw me at the newly refurbished Sutton-in-Ashfield Library for its official opening after a 4 month closure and a half a million spend.

The Library is now light and spacious with new shelving, comfortable seating, a coffee area, colourful children's area and dedicated young adults area - not to mention the computer suite on the 2nd floor plus a large injection of new stock. This refurbishment has transformed an ageing 70s building into a modern 21st century library. The building also houses the County Contact point on the ground floor and a newly created area for the Register Service.

Local staff were joined on the day by Geoff Hoon MP, Mick Burrows - Strategic Director of Communities Department, local councillors, the new Head of the Library and Archives Service Peter Gaw and other invited guests.

A huge cake was cut to mark the Library's re-opening and was shared out between guests, customers, local schoolchildren and staff.

My thanks to all the staff involved in the refurbishment – what a great result!

The Nottinghamshire Partnership meeting

I chaired the latest meeting of the Nottinghamshire Partnership, held in Chilwell on 14 June. The agenda included presentations on local strategic partnerships, sustainable community strategies and the new local area agreement. I made a speech about how the Nottinghamshire Partnership should respond to these key issues.

Building Better Communities Conference 2007

On 12 June we held our annual Building Better Communities conference, this year returning to Boughton pumping station. The day acts as an opportunity to showcase improvement schemes such that delegates will hopefully be inspired to come up with suggestions for improvement schemes in their own areas. Once again, community Awards were presented to local groups or individuals key to the successful development or delivery of schemes in their own areas. Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment and myself presented the Awards in respect of 12 local projects from all around the County. This year over 165 representatives from around the County were present which represents our busiest event to date. I am sure that colleagues present found it interesting and informative.

Countywide Older People's Strategic Partnership meeting

I attended the Countywide Older People's Strategic Partnership which was attended by over fifty representatives of older people, a range of third sector organisations, the District and Borough councils and Health representatives as well as County Council Members and officers.

The main item on the agenda was Malcolm Coe from the Government Transforming Services for Older People team. He gave a PowerPoint presentation and then set us to work on suggesting ways of improving new draft performance indicators on the quality of life for older people. The feedback session produced many useful ideas, which I trust will appear in the final Government version.

The second presentation introducing the findings of new research on the needs of "Seldom Heard" older people, presented by the researcher and Lynn Williams, the Nottinghamshire County Council Partnership Officer. This again produced a lively discussion and the recommendations will be the subject of further consultations and recommendations to Members.

Adult Learners' Awards Ceremony (LSPs)

I attended the Adult Learners Awards Ceremony for Ashfield and Mansfield on Friday, 25th May and presented the award to the overall Ashfield winner, Naveendra Nookanah, in my capacity as Vice-Chair of Ashfield Partnership. The Ceremony took place during Adult Learners' Week and saw a number of Ashfield Learners presented with prizes for their achievements.

Great Nottinghamshire Bike Ride 2007

I took part in the 26th Great Nottinghamshire Bike Ride sponsored by the Big Wheel and BBC Radio Nottingham.

For the first time, this year, there was a 7 mile ride. My wife and I took part in the 18 mile ride and there was, of course, the 50 mile ride. All rides started and finished at the National Water Sports Centre, Holme Pierrepont.

Every year, people of all ages and abilities are invited to take part.

The four benefiting charities this year were:

- Cerebral Palsy Sport
- Marie Curie Cancer Care
- Rainbows Children's Hospice
- When You Wish Upon a Star

This is the second year I have taken part and has always been a very successful day, enjoyed by everyone who took part and attended the event.

BEL event

On 18 and 21 May I presented my vision for putting the customer at the heart of what we do to the Heads of Service for the County Council. This is part of the Building Effective Leadership or BEL programme, which is helping to develop the leadership capacity of the Council by giving our Heads of Service

the opportunity to explore the strategic plan in detail, and to provide leadership in its implementation. These two events were led by Dr Bob Garnett, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services, with a number of Service Directors providing input to the events.

County Youth Assembly

During a meeting of the County Youth Assembly on Saturday, 9 June 2007, held at Hucknall Interchange, young people were consulted upon a number of points regarding possible free or reduced cost travel within Nottinghamshire. These discussion points included; the times that it would be available, the ages covered, what should it look like, what would it mean to young people and what other benefits could it include?

The young people worked in small groups to discuss and record their thoughts and their responses included requirements for free buses from 8-9am & 3-4pm weekdays, they wanted buses everywhere to use the same times and should provide the same privileges, they should operate at weekends and school holidays and before and after school.

They felt that the service should apply to young people aged 19 and under even if working, that those in full-time education should be eligible for a student card (no matter what age) and that you should receive a travel card when you start secondary school.

The look of the card was felt to be important and they agreed that it should be Credit card sized, have the young person's date of birth, picture, terms and conditions, credit limits, the expiry date and should be laminated. They would like it to be electronic, so that it could be cancelled if lost and they were definite that they wanted a card, rather than a booklet.

The young people were very enthusiastic about the prospect of a travel card, feeling that it would save money, be good for the environment by encouraging travel on public transport, would save their parents time and expenditure in transporting young people around and would increase their social time. They pointed out that not all young people are earning their own money and some have very little disposable income and that the card would be a great help to them, providing equality of access. It would provide them with easier access to different places and help the image of young people within the community.

Discussions also took place regarding additional benefits that could be included within the scheme, including discounts in various shops and at various activity bases, for example bowling alleys and cinemas.

It was suggested that the card could be taken away if the young person misbehaved, or that you could receive credits where earned.

They then discussed the cost of the scheme to tax payers, however, this was felt to be justified by the benefits available from the scheme. The young people also made the point that if education is supposed to be free to all, so why did some of them have to pay to reach school?

The discussions were full and frank and produced some useful points that would need to be addressed further when the provision of the card scheme were debated by the County Council.

My door is always open. So please feel free to contact me with ideas/proposals/issues at any time.

COUNCILLOR DAVID KIRKHAM
Leader of the County Council