



meeting	<b>County Council</b>	
date	<b>17 June 2004</b>	agenda item number

## REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER

### Purpose of Report

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

### Regeneration, Learning Skills & Employment

The Children and Young People's Substance Use Policy was officially launched at Mansfield Town FC on 12<sup>th</sup> May. The event was aimed at young people themselves and was very successful. An evaluation of the training that has been undertaken in relation to the policy has just been published.

The Jupiter Co-ordinator has now been in post for two months and has made great strides in promoting the sharing of data. Data is now available from Police, Probation, Fire and Rescue Service, Social Services, Education, Environment, Youth Offending Service and others. Most of this information is now able to be mapped down to census output areas, much smaller than wards, so a very detailed picture can be traced over time. The focus for the co-ordinator will be mainly on the crime, disorder and drugs audits that have to be completed by partnerships this year in the run up to producing new three year strategies by April 2005.

We are also able to access the Home Office's "Iquanta" data set, which monitors Police performance at Force, Divisional and CDRP levels. Once again, this enables a detailed picture of performance to be tracked and compared with the performance of other divisions, other Forces and other CDRPs. The latest crime statistics indicate that domestic burglary has reduced by 6% from the previous 12 month period (May 2002 -April 2003 compared to May 2003 - April 2004). Robbery is down by 12% and vehicle crime by 10% over the same period. Violent crime has risen by 10%.

Pintsize Theatre Company are currently touring Nottinghamshire schools with their performance of "Who Are Yer?", a theatre in education approach which focuses on anti-social behaviour, peer pressure and the consequences of crime. Feedback from schools has so far been universally positive. Pintsize are the company which produced the powerful "What About Me" video on the impact of substance misuse on families, which members may have seen.

## **Community Protection**

### **Emergency Planning**

The Emergency Planning Team has participated in the preparation of the County Council's comments on the Environment Agency's draft Fluvial Trent Strategy. The principal aim of this Strategy is to identify preferred approaches to sustainably manage flood risk along the Trent corridor over the next 50 years.

In overall terms, the draft Strategy report indicates that major flooding in Nottinghamshire may occur more often and with greater severity in the future than had been believed prior to the study. Consequently, the report gives rise to important implications for emergency planning, and for the County Council's ability to ensure that its own essential services can continue during future flood incidents.

The Emergency Planning Team is engaged with internal and external partners in the preparation, testing and maintenance of flood contingency plans.

### **Registration Service**

The Registration Service has now completed the first Citizenship Ceremonies in Nottinghamshire. By the end of May, a total of nineteen new British Citizens had been welcomed to the County through the course of three ceremonies. These include group Ceremonies at County Hall and Mansfield Registration office where the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the County Council have made the welcoming speech.

Attendance at a Citizenship Ceremony is now 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.

### **Trading Standards Service**

Trading Standards have recently undertaken a consultation exercise with the public through the use of focus groups. Key findings showed that the majority of consumers who used the service were happy with the help offered to them. However, it was clear that some people had unreal expectations of their rights which could lead to them being disappointed over the outcomes of their complaint. There was, however, some confusion over the remit of Trading Standards, which was more wide-ranging and less consumer focussed than most people expected. Officers in the Service are using the results of their consultation to help further improve service delivery.

Under the Fireworks Act 2003, further controls on Fireworks are being planned as the Government has now produced a third consultation document containing proposals that will;

- a) make permanent the emergency Fireworks Regulations 2003 – where it is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 to possess fireworks in a public place, and for the possession of category 4 fireworks, that is, professional display fireworks, by any person other than a fireworks professional;
- b) create a curfew on the use of fireworks – set between 11 pm and 7 am, with the inclusion of exemptions for traditional and multi-cultural celebrations;

- c) prohibit the supply, to the public, of category 3 fireworks that exceed 120 decibels;
- d) create a licensing regime whereby those intending to supply fireworks to the public all year round are required to apply for a licence to do so from their Local Authority;
- e) make it a requirement that all suppliers to the public, whether internet, mail-order or retail / wholesale, display a notice informing consumers of the law regarding underage sales and possession; and
- f) create an importation requirement whereby all importers of fireworks will provide Customs and Excise with details as to the destination of their product – so as to allow for a port to point-of-sale audit trail to help clamp down on illegal storage and distribution.

It is unlikely that all of these controls will be in place for this year's "Bonfire night" period.

These proposals follow on from those covering controls on air bombs, mini-rockets and changing the retailer defence on underage sales from a mens rea offence to one of strict liability. These came into force on 8 June 2004.

A recent Trading Standards prosecution involving fireworks also received a considerable amount of media attention where officers found a significant quantity of fireworks being stored in unsafe conditions in a residential area.

A further meeting of the regional forum of Elected Members and Offices has been held where a process of selecting the host authority for the EMCOTS Consumer Direct was agreed. The meeting also received an update from the DTI on national developments. With the first four pilot regional centres opening from this August, significant progress is being made. EMCOTS has now received a formal invitation from the DTI to be involved in "Wave 2" of the Consumer Direct roll out. This should mean that our regional Consumer Direct Centre will be on line in mid 2005. This will fundamentally change the way consumers in Nottinghamshire gain initial access to advice on consumer matters.

### **Community Legal Service**

The Lord Chancellor's Department has recently published the results of an independent report into the Community Legal Service. The report contains an interesting critique of the current position particularly relating to a lack of overall accountability for the Community Legal service and a need to clarify its role and strategy. In addition, there are recommendations relating to the future of the Community Legal Service, Quality Mark and Partnerships. Further to this report, we will be looking at our role in the CLS network within Nottinghamshire.

**Cllr David Kirkham**  
**Deputy Leader**