



meeting Communities Department Briefing

date 30th April 2007

agenda item number 3

Report of the Strategic Director for Communities

Departmental Update

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members on the progress and developments in the Communities Department and the delivery of core strategic priorities, including matters discussed at the last Briefing in November.

Building the New Department

2. The organisational restructuring is now being managed across the remainder of the department. The majority of posts in the top three management tiers have now been filled in accordance with the enabling process. However a small number of key posts are still vacant including the Service Director Cultural Services post. Arrangements are in place to fill these as soon as possible.
3. Detailed proposals for the structure of the five new divisions were published in early December. Following consultation with all staff affected the final proposals are currently being confirmed and the enabling process applied. This is being managed by individual service directors but we anticipate most colleagues would transition into the new structure by the early summer.
4. Cabinet Members along with the Department's senior management team appreciate that appointing to the structure is only a part of building the new department. Commitment has been given to the importance of working with all staff to ensure that we all contribute to creating a positive, outward looking customer focused culture for the new department to provide the excellent services that Elected Members and the public expect.
5. To support the change to the new department a change programme has been initiated to support managers in making the transition. Phase one has been completed with individual divisional teams. The department also commissioned an Ambassadors programme to ensure that effective engagement with a wider group of colleagues beyond management also occurred. The Ambassadors initiative which aimed to stimulate a positive approach to sharing best practice, recently fed back to senior management team on its findings. This objective has been achieved.

6. Individual Cabinet Portfolio arrangements are working well with management input being led by the Service Directors. Cabinet Members and senior managers are working closely together to ensure the Communities Department continues to deliver on the aspirations and ambitions the authority has for delivering excellent services. Key performance remains steady with signs of improvement in a number of core areas including library visits and passenger transport.
7. A programme of communication improvements has been initiated a) to ensure the services and developments are better communicated to local Elected Members b) to ensure the services are profiled effectively with the general public and key partners and c) to ensure the 7000 people working for the department are better informed of key developments and priorities. Initial feedback on these improvements is positive, particularly from Elected Members. Further improvements are needed and are being initiated. Officers in the department are constantly being made aware of the importance of the role of Elected Members in sensitive and significant local issues.
8. Major Projects are progressing satisfactorily including
 - a) Sherwood Living Legend
 - b) NET
 - c) Community Hubs
 - d) Highways Northern Area Office
 - e) Holme Pierrepont
9. The department is carefully considering accommodation demands particularly as the core HQ support functions are currently split between County Hall and Trent Bridge House.

Beacon Awards

10. The authority recently secured a Beacon Award for Emergency Planning awarded jointly with Newark and Sherwood. This reflects the robust strategies and plans that are available in both councils and the commitment to learning and sharing. This Beacon adds to the four previously awarded Beacons reflecting the excellence of some of the services in the department.
11. We are coming to the end of the year as Beacon Council for culture and sport for hard to reach groups. The current holders of the beacon awards have been encouraged by the DCMS to apply jointly for further funding from the Beacon Peer Support Fund to allow our work to continue. The proposal is to support continuing work to provide peer support to under-performing authorities, to undertake research, and to develop a toolkit to promote excellence.

Regional Spatial Strategy

12. Following the presentation at the last departmental briefing, the Cabinet agreed to the council's response to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy.
13. The process continues with the Examination in Public scheduled to start in May. The County Council will be appropriately represented at particular sessions.
14. The Panel is expected to report in September after which the Government Office may prepare modifications to the draft RSS. Any implications of this will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

Scrutiny

15. The Select Committee on Highways has undertaken an extensive review of many aspects of Highways services with the final report being considered recently by Cabinet. A further select committee is looking at the effectiveness of our crime reduction work and will be taking evidence from the Chief Constable as well as the Portfolio Holder. A report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23rd April is proposing a review into what arrangements are necessary to ensure that Nottinghamshire maximises the potential benefits from the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Achievements and Successes

16. The department continues to secure recognition for a wide range of achievements and successes at a local level, countywide and national level including from Beacon awards to successfully implementing a code of practice with local farmers. The wide range of achievements reflects the diversity and strength of the services managed by the department on behalf of the authority. Appendix one provides brief details of these achievements.

Mick Burrows

Strategic Director for Communities

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Appendix One

Examples of Communities Department Service Achievements

From September 2006 to March 2007

- Nottinghamshire County Council's Archives Service acknowledged as being in the top 10% of archive services in the country
- £120,000 successful Kirkby-in-Ashfield Library refurbishment
- Stapleford library service celebrates 100 years of service to local people
- Arnold Heritage Event successfully delivered
- Alan Ball Award to library service
- Jimmy "Jumpshot" Smith celebrates 25th Anniversary with Nottinghamshire County Council and secures 100 primary schools involvement in basketball
- 500 people attend the Nottinghamshire Sports Review 2007
- Step into Sport conference. 300 sports volunteers of the future began their training at Worksop College or Trent Bridge Cricket Ground
- Nottinghamshire Athletics Awards Evening
- Health and Work Conference - improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities and mental ill health
- Nottinghamshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) celebrated a glowing re-inspection report by the Adult Learning Inspectorate which found the overall effectiveness of the service to be good
- Great Nott's Bike Ride presentation evening - cyclists raised over £42,000 for local charities. British cycling acknowledge Nott's as one of the best in the country
- John Stanley presentation to libraries
- Continued success for Building Better Communities – 526 completed schemes across the county. (approximately 40 in the last six months)
- Mansfield Bus Station and Hucknall inner relief road a step closer following DfT funding announcement of £8m.
- Recent MORI surveys showed improvements in waste and recycling (from 76% to 84%) and improvements in public transport.
- Energy Recovery Facility location announced and consultation work with local people commenced

- National Archaeological Week success with a series of events across the county
- Opened a state of the art Household Waste and Recycling Facility in Bilsthorpe.
- Completed the Household Incentive Scheme pilot which ran in locations in the North and South of the County – financially rewarding communities for recycling more.
- Launched Considerate Farmers Code – highways initiative aimed at reducing disruption caused to traffic by tractors travelling along the A614
- International Walk to School Week – road safety campaign success
- Visit from Ben Bradshaw, MP, Government Minister for Local Environment as part of waste PFI contract
- Government grant of £500,000 – used to convert 27 boilers in Notts schools to woodheat.
- Gresham Fields Development – first milestone reached – new road, foot and cycle paths opened in first part of £69m project for 2 new schools and a sports complex.
- Christmas Drink Drive- Road Safety campaign success.
- Notts Construction Framework (partnership of NCC/private sector) launched
- Beeston Broadgate Award (BBC scheme) from the Association of Town Centre Management – for Creating a quality environment project of the year
- 97% success rate for satisfaction survey on Notts Concessionary Fare scheme
- LTP Settlement - £17.3m investment for County
- Christmas tree and card recycling campaign success
- Statement of Community Involvement published– how NCC will involve local people in its planning functions adopted
- Winter Road Safety Campaign success
- NCC Apprentice Jessica Hughes received runner up accolade for Apprentice of the Year Award as part of Work based Learning Awards
- I♥Notts - recycling and composting campaign – residents called on to make a pledge to demonstrate their love for the county.

- Does your firework safety measure up? Successfully delivered the campaign to warn people about the dangers of getting too close to fireworks.
- National Consumer Week - Trading standards officers provided ongoing advice to local people at supermarkets and a wide range of venues across the county focusing on different consumer issues.
- Nottinghamshire people given food for thought as trading standards officers help people to understand what all of the different food labels really mean as part of Food Awareness Week
- Nottinghamshire County Council together with local partners has appointed DTZ consultants to commission a feasibility study to look at the possibility of creating a Science and Technology Park at the Rolls Royce site in Hucknall.