

Minutes



Meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

Date Thursday, 28th June 2007 (10.30 am – 2.25 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

Councillors

John C Allin (Chairman)

The Hon Joan Taylor (Vice-Chair)

	Reg Adair		Pat Lally
	Peter Barnes		Bruce Laughton
	Chris Baron		Edward Llewellyn-Jones
	Joyce Bosnjak		Ellie Lodziak
	Martin M Brandon-Bravo OBE	A	Joe Lonergan MBE
A	Kenneth Bullivant		Mick Murphy
A	Richard Butler	A	Jim Napier
	Steve Carr		Jim O'Riordan
	Steve Carroll		Philip Owen
	John Carter		Tom Pettengell
	John Clarke		Sheila Place
	Jen Cole		Peter D Prebble
A	Barrie Cooper		Darrell Pulk
	John Cottee		Alan Rhodes
	M J Cox		Ken Rigby
	Jim Creamer		Sue Saddington
	Mrs Kay Cutts		David Shaw
	Yvonne Davidson		Mrs Stella M Smedley
	Alan Davison		Mark Spencer
	V H Dobson		Andy Stewart
	Sybil Fielding		John R Stocks
	Andy Freeman		Mick Storey
	Glynn Gilfoyle		Martin Suthers OBE
	Keith Girling		Lynn Sykes
	Albert Haynes	A	David Taylor
	John M Hemsall		Parry Tsimbiridis
	Paul Henshaw		Kevan Wakefield
	Stan Heptinstall MBE		Keith Walker
	Helen Holt		Chris Winterton
	Richard Jackson		Brian Wombwell
	Rod Kempster		Yvonne Woodhead
	David Kirkham		Jason Zadrozny
	John R Knight		

OPENING PRAYER

Upon the Council convening at 10.30 a.m. the Chairman's Chaplain led the prayers.

USE OF CAMERAS

Council allowed Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones to take photographs of the meeting in session for use in a forthcoming BBC programme.

FLOODING

Following the recent events across the county the Chairman made a statement as follows:-

On behalf of the County Council may I express the Council's thanks and appreciation to all County Council staff and the emergency services for their marvellous work during the current floods. He also wished the Council's sympathy to be recorded for all residents who have been affected by these events.

The Chairman also read a statement received from Her Majesty the Queen to the Lord Lieutenants and Clerks regarding the recent flooding.

"I have been shocked by the news and pictures of the devastation caused by the severe flooding across the country.

My thoughts are with those who have lost family or friends, whose homes or livelihoods have been damaged, and all those who have been displaced by these events.

May I also express my admiration for the emergency services, the local authorities and volunteers working tirelessly to help those affected.

To everyone concerned with the relief efforts I send my heartfelt thanks

Signed Elizabeth R"

The Chairman then called upon the Leader of the Council who read the following statement

On behalf of the whole of Nottinghamshire County Council, I want to thank the hundreds of our staff who have been working during the past two weeks, and around the clock for the last few days, assisting the people of Nottinghamshire who have been affected by the floods.

The worst affected areas have been in Newark & Sherwood, Gedling and Bassetlaw.

This was the worst flood for many years, and due to the intensity of the downpour it has seen over 30 roads closed, 100s of homes and businesses evacuated, and town centres brought to a standstill.

Over the last few days and nights our highways team have filled and distributed over 80,000 sandbags, our social care team have assisted in evacuating families and vulnerable people. We even helped find temporary homes for people's pets!

We've played a key role in the multi agency Silver Command at Police Headquarters, we've opened and staffed four rest centres, an emergency control centre and a special flooding emergency helpline through our Contact Centre, to make sure that the people of this County had somewhere to get advice, and in some cases food, shelter and a change of clothes. We've issued regular updates and advice to the public through the media and via our website. Also, we have fed information through to Regional and National tiers of government to keep ministers advised of events. And, updates have been recorded onto the Members Line recorded message telephone service to keep elected members advised of developments.

We still have seven schools in the County that are closed and will remain so for a while. But I'm pleased to say that alternative schooling for children who attend those schools has been arranged and will start from Monday.

Emergency planning officers and staff from across all of our departments have been liaising with district councils, health and emergency services to make sure that people in Nottinghamshire are safe and that the multi agency response to this crisis is well co-ordinated.

Most importantly we are now chairing a multi agency recovery working group looking at issues such as housing, business recovery, highways repairs and environmental issues – all this at the same time as being on standby for more rain and possible flooding at the weekend

I would also like to pass this Council's appreciation onto all the agencies involved in this emergency, and would particularly ask that the Chairs of the Police and Fire authorities convey our thanks and appreciation to their respective organisations.

It's been an incredible response to a major emergency. I am sure all colleagues will join with me in passing on our thanks and appreciation to our staff for their professionalism and commitment which yet again went beyond the call of duty. I would ask that Chief Officers please let all concerned know how much their efforts are appreciated.

These sentiments were echoed by Councillors Mrs. Kay Cutts, Stan Heptinstall, John Clarke (Chair of the Police Authority), Darrell Pulk (Chair of the Fire Authority), Stella Smedley and Glynn Gilfoyle.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BIKE RIDE

The Chairman thanked all the staff involved in making the Nottinghamshire Bike Ride such a great event on Sunday, 24th June. Over 5,000 people took part.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: 2007/049

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the County Council held on 18th May 2007 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:-

Kenneth Bullivant
Richard Butler
Barrie Cooper

Joe Lonergan
Jim Napier
David Taylor

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest made by Members or Officers.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

(a) Presentation of Awards

- (1) Councillor Alan Rhodes presented to the Chairman a certificate from the CISP Positive Practice Awards for the Adult Learning Inspection in recognition of a Silver Award for Workstep Programmes.
- (2) Councillor Alan Rhodes presented to the Chairman a certificate for Nottinghamshire's work with the "Involved Arts Project" for older people and adults.
- (3) Councillor John Stocks presented to the Chairman an award received for achieving second place in the Ashden UK Energy Awards for the Council's Wood Heat Sustainability Strategy programme.

(b) Suspension of Standing Orders

On a motion by Councillor Mick Storey and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Kay Cutts, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/050

- (1) That, in accordance with Standing Order 12, the Standing Orders of Council meeting were suspended for the business of agenda item 4 (c) (Constituency Issues) and agenda item 5 (Presentation of Petitions) and
- (2) that Standing Order 2.1 of the Standing Orders of Council be suspended to allow, if necessary, the variation of the order of business from that shown on the agenda.

(c) Constituency Issues

Following the suspension of Standing Orders the next nine minutes of the Council meeting were allotted to give Members, who had previously given notice, an opportunity to speak for three minutes on any particular matter relevant to their constituency or any particular issue arising from their electoral division. This was an opportunity simply to air these issues in Council meeting and it did not give rise to debate upon the issue or question and answer sessions.

Set out in Appendix A attached to these Minutes is a full note of the issues discussed by Councillors Jen Cole (regarding issues involving people with disabilities).

Jim O'Riordan (feasibility study on A612 bus plugs)

Reg Adair (highway and traffic issues in Ruddington).

5(a) PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Chairman reminded Members that there was no requirement to walk whilst presenting a petition and there was a two minute time limit for such presentations.

The following petitions were presented to the Chairman by Members as indicated below:-

- (1) Councillor Sue Saddington - from Farndon residents requesting an improvement to the bus service between Farndon and Newark-on-Trent.
- (2) Councillor Bruce Laughton – from Southwell residents and the Southwell Lowes Wong School objecting to the proposed mobile 'phone mast which has been granted prior approval by Newark and Sherwood District Council

for installation at the telephone exchange on The Ropewalk, Southwell.

- (3) Councillor David Kirkham - from the Alfreton Road Residents Association regarding speeding traffic (on the Ashfield Estate).
- (4) Councillor Andy Freeman – from Clipstone residents requesting a pelican crossing to replace the zebra crossing on Mansfield Road, Clipstone.

5(b) REPORT BACK ON PETITION

RESOLVED: 2007/051

That the matters contained in the report back on the petition received on 18 May 2007 be noted.

6(a) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.1

Seven questions had been received as follows:-

1. An update on the “two-tier working” route forwarded by Nottinghamshire County Council, arising from the Lyons Inquiry Report (Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo)
2. Listening to the People of Gedling (Councillor Bruce Laughton)
3. The new A612 Road and “Bus Plug” concerns (Councillor Andy Stewart)
4. Maintenance of Drainage Systems and Flooding in North Muskham and Fiskerton (Councillor Sue Saddington)
5. Recycling Materials going into Landfill sites (Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo)
6. Future plans for Gravelly Hollow and the Junction with A614 from September 2007 (Councillor Mark Spencer)
7. Insurance costs for small events in local areas (Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo).

6(b) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.2

One question had been received as follows:-

Pension arrangements for elected Members and anomalies whilst serving on the Police Authority (Councillor M. J. Cox).

The full text of the questions set out above (Standing Order 6.1 and 6.2) together with the answers given is included at Appendix B to these Minutes.

VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Following the decision to suspend Standing Orders of Council to allow the necessary variation of the order of business, the Chairman informed Council it was his intention to vary the order of business and, therefore, Agenda items 8, 9, 10 and 12 were taken as the next items of business.

7. REVENUE EXPENDITURE FINAL ACCOUNTS 2006/07

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron and seconded by Councillor Mick Storey, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/052

(1) That approval be given to:-

That the year end carry forward as set out in paragraphs 3.3, 3.5 of the report and Appendix B attached to the report, be approved;

(2) that the increase in County Fund balances as set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report and appendix A attached to the report, be approved and

(3) that the use of transfers to reserves as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report and appendix D attached to the report, be noted.

8. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2006/07

Councillor Baron informed Members of a slight amendment to the Statement of Accounts within note 12 relating to the Pensions FRS 17 (page 29 of the Statement) an error was discovered and the word "increase" should have read "decrease" making the sentence read "The impact of this was to decrease scheme liabilities by £65.7 million or 5.2%."

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron and seconded by Councillor Mick Storey, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/053

That the Statement of Accounts 2006/07 be approved, subject to approval by the District Auditor.

9. ANNUAL AUDIT INSPECTION LETTER 2007

RESOLVED: 2007/054

That the positive nature of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be noted.

10. COMMUNITY HUBS – PROPOSED REVISION TO CAPITAL PROGRAMME

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron and seconded by Councillor Steve Carroll, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/055

- (1) That the capital programme be re-profiled to defer the approved schemes for Gedling and Newark and increase the budget allocated to Community Hubs, as set out in the report;
- (2) that the development of Worksop Community Hub be approved as outlined in the report and
- (3) that the development of West Bridgford Community Hub be approved, subject to resolution of the matters set out in paragraphs 10.1 and 10.3 of the report.

11. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader moved the reports to the meeting en bloc and in presenting the reports to Council he informed Members that they may indicate to the Chairman any questions or comments they wished to put to the Cabinet Members on matters arising from their reports.

Comments and questions are included at the Appendix C to these Minutes.

RESOLVED: 2007/056

That the reports be noted.

12. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN 2007/2009

On a motion by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak and seconded by Councillor Jim O’Riordan, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/057

That the Plan be noted.

13. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN 2007/08

On a motion by Councillor John Stocks and seconded by Councillor David Kirkham it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/058

That the Annual Performance Plan 2007/08 be approved and adopted.

14. A SCHEME FOR CO-OPTED MEMBERS

On a motion by Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones, seconded by Councillor David Kirkham, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/059

- (1) That a scheme for co-opted Members to have voting rights as set out in appendix 1 attached to the report, be approved and
- (2) that the Council delegates to Overview and Scrutiny Committee the authority to appoint co-opted members with voting rights in accordance with the Scheme, as and when it considers necessary.

15. NEW WAYS OF WORKING IN COUNCIL MEETINGS

On a motion by Councillor Mick Storey and seconded by Councillor Albert Haynes, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/060

- (1) That the continuation of proposals as set out in the report regarding petitions, Cabinet reports and the three minutes speeches be approved;
- (2) that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary changes to Council Standing Orders to give permanent effect to the new ways of working proposals and
- (3) that a further review of the changes be undertaken by the Member Reference Group after 12 months and a report be presented to Council meeting in June 2008 for consideration of any further changes.

16. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

On a motion by Councillor Mick Storey and seconded by Councillor Albert Haynes, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/061

- (1) That approval be given to the adoption of a Member Development Strategy as set out in appendix A attached to the report be approved.
- (2) that the Council delegates to the Head of Law and Democracy in consultation with the Member Reference Group, the responsibility of drafting a programme of events for approval by Administration Committee on receipt of Members' requirements;
- (3) that a further report be presented to Council in six months updating Council on progress on the Member Development Strategy and Programme;
- (4) that the Council sign-up to the Member Development Charter endorsed by LGEM and IDeA and
- (5) that reports be presented to Council for approval to further progress through the 6-stage accreditation process.

17. ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

There were no adjournment debates.

18. SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM – LAND TO THE NORTH OF A38 TO KINGMILL ROAD EAST, SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD

With the consent of the Council, the Chairman withdrew this item from the agenda.

CHAIRMAN

M_28June07

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 17TH MAY 2007

THREE MINUTE SPEECH

Councillor Jen Cole

“Thank you Chairman.

I would like Members to imagine for a few moments, if they would, that they have an obvious disability and then imagine that you have to use some disabled facility – maybe use the disabled toilets downstairs.

You might think that this would not be a problem and you would probably be right. However, now imagine - like one of Councillor Stocks’ and my constituents – that you have had radical surgery, you are also disabled, but it is not apparent and obvious, and you too have to use disabled facilities. But this time you are approached by some overzealous employee – someone who does not quite have the grasp of customer care - and they say “Oi, you should not be using those facilities because you are not disabled.”

Now, this is compounded really, to some extent, by the University Accepted Disability Symbol. It does suggest that disability is obvious. So this constituent, instead of just moaning, actually suggested that we implement some sort of disability identity card. Not perhaps the correct terminology, but something along those lines. He even went to the trouble of drawing one up – very pro-active.

The late Dick Anthony was very supportive of this, as is the current portfolio holder. The Department has taken this forward and is drawing up a pilot scheme, with a view to eventually, perhaps, issuing cards on the same basis as the disabled card – the Blue Badge that you use on your vehicles.

I thought Members should be made aware of this, as there doubtless be constituents of yours who are in that situation. It is something that you are not aware of until it is raised in this manner. Our constituent is obviously very, very pleased with the response of the County Council and I quote:

“On behalf of all disabled people – thank you for listening and I am proud to live in Nottinghamshire.”

Thank you.”

Councillor James O’Riordan

“Thank you Chairman.

The new A612 improvement road is working well Chairman and delivering better traffic flows around the local area has improved safety outside Carlton-le-Willows School. This has been noticed by myself and Councillor Clarke on regular occasions.

The key reason for the new road - the bottleneck at Shearing Hill – thank god is vanished now – the new road is working extremely well and down Burton Road there are 20,000 fewer vehicles.

So it is a great benefit, but as I have mentioned before at Council meetings, we have got some concerns about the bus plug part of the scheme. I am happy to report that I received a letter from the Strategic Director of Communities on Saturday morning, Mick Burrows and there is a fresh look now on this bus plug part of the scheme offering a feasibility study to look at access on the old road. There is a promise of more detailed design work if access is feasible. There is going to be a rigorous survey of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and bus users and we hope this modification, if it comes off, will bring better local access between Gedling Village and Burton Joyce.

I mentioned before at full Council Chairman, that I think we can have our cake and eat it with this new road and the bus plug scheme. We can get the benefits of bus plug during peak times and off peak times local access for local people.

This road is part of a by-pass plan. If we jeopardise future development I do not think we will be forgiven by local residents. I must point out that there has been a leaflet going round the local area, produced by the local Conservative Group, saying that this A612 has been closed. That is misinformation, Chairman, and scaremongering. We have got a brand new twelve and a half million pound road. The new A612 is working extremely well. So, I would like to thank Stella and her Department and Mick Burrows for looking at this issue again, for listening to local people, for listening to the local Labour Councillors, for bringing these concerns forward. We have had a series of meetings with Stella and members of her department. So I would like to thank Stella for her open mindedness on this matter Chairman.

Thank you.”

Response by Councillor Reg Adair

” Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity today to request that our officers conduct a detailed review of traffic management issues in Ruddington village.

The reason for my request is that traffic conditions in Ruddington during commercial periods have become an absolute nightmare. We have major problems with a lack of parking regulation enforcement, which I know will be addressed to some extent in the coming year, but at present there are few places for local vehicle users to park.

One of the reasons is that because the village has such a good bus service to the City that it has become regarded by people from outside Ruddington as a quasi park and ride facility.

Heavy goods vehicles also use the village, not only for access, but also as a rat run from the A52 and A60 through to the A453. When we get forty foot juggernauts trying to negotiate corners which were originally designed for horse and carts, one can understand why the road network becomes seized up, and traffic sometimes reaches a standstill for up to fifteen minutes. Aside from the general inconvenience this causes for all road users and pedestrians, emergency vehicles seeking access at peak periods of congestion face an impossible task.

Recently, what is known as the Clifton Bridge has been closed for a roundabout to be built at the Pastures Way, Clifton Lane junction. This, in fact, has taken HGVs out of the village. In normal circumstances villagers would not welcome their village being cut off by roadworks, but on this occasion it has been viewed as a relief. As a resident actually emailed to say and I quote:

“There are many people living in Ruddington who are enjoying the temporary reduction of traffic, particularly HGVs through the village...

Whilst it is unrealistic to suggest that the road closure should become permanent, I would propose that consideration is given to finding a means of restricting the passage of HGVs when the road is re-opened. These vehicles cause much congestion and damage to the environment in the village, but apparently have discovered alternative routes during the current road closure. Let them keep to them, I say. In your role as our County Councillor I would urge you to raise this matter with the County Council.”

End of quote.

Well, Chairman, as requested by this resident and many others, I would ask that this review is treated with some urgency. I think, in particular, we could alleviate

these problems by introducing a weight restriction on the old Clifton Bridge when it is re-opened. (In fact it is re-opened with a weight system presently.)

That would enable the village of Ruddington to become, once again, a viable commercial centre for local people and not just another victim of urban sprawl.

Ruddington deserves a better traffic management system.

Thank you Chairman.”

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 28TH JUNE 2007

QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.1

Question to the Leader of the County Council from Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo

In the Lyons Inquiry report of March this year, it was stated in paragraph 71 of the Executive Summary that two-tier areas 'need to aspire to operate as *virtual* unitaries with greater efficiency through shared back office functions and integrated service delivery mechanisms.'

Given that Nottinghamshire County Council agreed in January to follow the 'improved two-tier working' route, can the Leader of the Council provide an update on what discussions have taken place, and any practical steps taken to give substance to this objective?

Response by Councillor David Kirkham, Leader of the County Council:

"Thank you Chairman.

Can I thank Councillor Brandon-Bravo for giving me the opportunity to update Members on the progress made with our January decision, to improve the way we work with our district councils.

Irrespective of the Lyons' report and the then White Paper, this County Council has always been committed to making the 2 tier system of local government we have in Nottinghamshire work.

With the support of Members in this chamber, we have already established some shared services in the County and in the region. As you would expect these services are diverse, from how we practise law regionally, to how we collect and dispose of our household waste from people's doorsteps.

In the first instance I am talking about East Midlands Law Share – actively promoted through our own Legal Department – and which now includes most councils in the East Midlands.

In the second, we have improved how the County and District councils buy and use waste vehicles and bins.

So January was not a new start to this work, but as I said at the time, we wanted to make a step change in the pace of progress.

Just to run through the sort of discussions I have taken part in over the last 6 months:

- I have held regular one-to-one meetings with my district counterparts;
- and collectively, we come together for County Local Government Association meetings. This issue is always on the agenda;
- there have been 3 day sessions where we have identified key areas for savings and drawn up a schedule of those that can be achieved most quickly;
- and we have also agreed a set of principles to help us make those savings;
- put simply, we will make sure our Information Technology and Human Resources terms and conditions will be the same – and we will work on the principle that new proposals will be brought forward on the basis of partnership decisions.

Members know this is not easy work and I am not going to pretend we are moving forward at the pace I, and other Members here, would like. However, there are encouraging signs of progress.

I can report that Bassetlaw is considering using our Contact Centre and that Mansfield has made inquiries as well. We have also been talking with other districts about agreeing protocols for handling calls when County Council issues are raised with a District and vice versa. It is this sort of practical progress that will help us meet Sir Michael Lyons' very ambitious aspiration for us to become 'virtual unitaries'.

Other work continues, on, for example, how we work in neighbourhoods and in the wider context, we are exploring proposals for wider shared service working with other County Councils and Nottingham City Council.

I am confident that a range of options will emerge from this project.

In the meantime I can assure Councillor Brandon-Bravo and everyone else in this chamber, that I remain fully committed to improving our two-tier system of governance in Nottinghamshire."

Question to the Leader of the County Council from Councillor Bruce Laughton

The Leader of the Council was recently quoted as saying he was "disappointed" with Gedling Borough Council's return to weekly household rubbish collections during the summer months.

Given that Gedling Conservatives made this pledge after listening to local people, and went on to achieve a clear mandate at the polls, is he suggesting Gedling Borough Council should now ignore the stated preference of its residents?

Is this an indication that when he launches his £428,500 Citizens' Panel to "consult" the Nottinghamshire public, he will only listen to the outcomes if they match up with Labour policy, tick the right boxes and meet Government/European targets?

Response by Councillor David Kirkham, Leader of the County Council:

"Thank you Chairman.

Can I thank Councillor Laughton for raising the issue of what we do with our household waste and how we engage with the public.

It strikes me, today, that several of the questions to Cabinet Members are connected - floods, our material recycling facilities and, of course, this question from Bruce.

I want to focus on recycling because recycling is clearly connected to how we dispose of our household waste.

As a County Council, working with our district colleagues we have been moving in the right direction on recycling. As a Labour Party we made a pledge in 2001 to double recycling across the County. By 2005 we had done more than that. But we still need to do more.

And that is why I am disappointed that Gedling Borough Council have decided to turn back the clock and re-introduce weekly bin collections.

We should all be disappointed.

Having made real progress on what we do with our household waste in Nottinghamshire, we were a step ahead of the national mood, because as we all know, there is now a renewed national and international determination to do something about climate change and all the related issues of how we can live more sustainable lives.

Bruce's colleagues in Gedling have taken a step back.

The facts show us why.

There is no doubt in my mind that the change will reduce recycling.

Why?

Well the research tells us recycling rates have increased by a third, up from an average of 23% to 30%, in districts and boroughs changing to fortnightly collections.

All ten of the councils with the highest recycling rates in the country have adopted alternate weekly collections and eight out of ten of the councils with the biggest improvement in recycling rates also use alternate weekly collections.

According to the LGA's analysis, the council tax payer would save around £22 million a year and waste going to landfill would be cut by 1.2 million tonnes if these recycling rates were replicated across the country.

The people of Gedling would be better off if they stuck with fortnightly collections, every extra tonne of waste generated by a weekly collection in Gedling will cost council tax payers more. (Estimates suggest over £400,000 more).

The fortnightly service has changed the way we as individuals and as members of the community, address our responsibilities and duties to our environment. Fortnightly collections encourages us to recycle within our day to day lives.

Recycling in the long run is for the greater 'health' of our communities and environment.

When residents have been well informed, maybe even consulted on fortnightly collections, given sound practical advice in advance of collection changes, people can see this is sensible.

Which brings me to consultation. We know Bruce doesn't like it. Gedling Borough Council doesn't seem too keen either.

The Citizens' Panel set to begin work in the autumn, is a 4-year project. It's not **my** Panel, it is a County-wide Panel. Gedling District Council, along with other district councils and public bodies, will also use it. We always listen to the views of the public before making decisions and the Panel will improve how we listen. It will enable us to hear beyond the vocal minority.

I am confident that the Panel will:

- help us avoid 'over consulting';
- it will stop us duplicating recruitment and consulting exercises;
- it will save us administrative costs;
- and it will deliver us savings, when we consult, in the long-term.

Bruce concludes his question with a rhetorical statement on boxes and targets. The only box Bruce is trying to tick is the one next to his name on the next Parliamentary election ballot paper for Gedling.

The target for most people is to reduce their carbon footprint. I don't agree with meeting every Government target, but most people would agree reducing recycling is both desirable and sensible.

The only target he is trying to meet is to get into Parliament, a Parliament he wants to be led by David Cameron. A man who is superficial, unreliable and lacks any clear convictions. Not my words, but a Conservative MP, well he was until 2 days ago.

Thank you Chairman.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Andy Stewart

The new A612 link road appears to have succeeded in diverting through-traffic away from Burton Road and Carlton-le-Willows School. However, the 'bus plug' near Whitworth Drive is causing excessive inconvenience to the relatively small number of drivers wishing to access local houses and amenities and Carlton Hill.

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment agree with me that this 'bus plug' is not essential to the scheme's success, and could be removed without any significant detrimental effect?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

“Thank you very much Chair.

I would like to Thank Councillor Stewart for his question and I would like to say to Councillor O'Riordan – I too wondered this, but then realised, of course, it was part of the duo act in order to gain some short-term publicity for Councillor Laughton, who will use any springboard regardless of the cost to constituents, to try and get some short-term electoral advantage. Again, of course, it is true – there are lies, damn lies in Councillor Laughton's questions.

The Gedling Transport Improvement Scheme is being implemented in accordance with the approved proposals submitted to, and funded by Government. These proposals, including the bus-only restrictions, have been taken through the proper statutory consultation processes - when only 7 objections were received.

The overall purpose of this Scheme is to provide priority for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. It does provide a very significant improvement to journey times for the vast majority of cars and lorry journeys. It also improves the local environment by relieving traffic and reducing road safety concerns near the Carlton le Willows School. It should be noted that if the bus only restrictions were to be removed on Burton Road, the predicted flows would quickly return to a

relatively high 10,000 per day and many people, **many people** have spoken to me about how grateful they are for that road.

The final element of this work on the bus priority section and the resurfacing are still ongoing and should be complete in August – at which time the Scheme will then be fully operational.

The County Council acknowledges that there are a number of concerns about the need for traffic restrictions on Burton Road and the additional travel distance this necessitates for some journeys. The County Council has, therefore, agreed to review the operation of the 24-hour bus-only prohibition.

I agreed to review that in consultation, long consultations with Councillor O’Riordan and Councillor Clarke. The review will be undertaken, urgently, over the next six months and any changes will be quickly implemented if it is possible to do so without undermining the integrity of the Scheme.

I get very angry when people put out literature that is untrue. It is quite shameful to try and gain electoral gain on the basis of something that is absolutely untrue. In this leaflet it says – I do not listen, but I have said to Councillor O’Riordan and Councillor Clarke – when they have to come to me with their concerns, tough, completely and absolutely untrue and you ought to be ashamed if that is the best you can do to get a vote – by putting out absolute lies. There is nobody in this chamber who could say that I have ever, **ever** closed my door to them when they have come to see me about a problem because I have not. I have prided myself and always been there to listen to Members and this cheap gimmick annoys me intensely. If that is the best you can do because, not only by doing that sort of thing, can I tell you that you have been used. Will it put at risk the wellbeing of this part of the Scheme and what’s more important, that man is putting at risk the wellbeing of the second part of the Gedling by-pass which we had to complete the first part first before we could persuade those that mattered to do the second part in order to relieve the misery that the people who live in Gedling village have suffered at the hands of massive congestion and pollution over the years. So, our colleagues over there ought to think about the long-term cost of their actions as they ought to have thought about the long-term cost of making some gain over the previous question.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Sue Saddington

Does the Cabinet Member for Environment share my concern that the poor maintenance of drainage systems over many years, particularly in the villages of North Muskham and Fiskerton, is causing severe flooding problems?

The flooding is particularly acute at times of heavy rainfall, but even occurs in normal rain conditions. Some residents are having to use sandbags to protect

their properties, and cannot walk on the footpaths without getting ankle deep in water.

Would she accept that this problem urgently needs to be addressed by the County Council and partner agencies, and what assurances can she give in this regard?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

“Thank you Chairman.

May I thank Councillor Saddington for her question.

Surface water drainage systems in many villages are historic, and whatever standard of maintenance were to be applied would be unable to cope in the unprecedented conditions and rainfall experienced in the last few days and in recent times. This is clearly shown by the extensive flooding and damage to property occurring across the whole country.

I do not, therefore, accept that the flooding problems occurring are a consequence of lack of maintenance, which is carried out to a consistent frequency across the whole County and similarly flooding problems are far from limited to North Muskham and Fiskerton alone.

There are many difficult issues around the recent increased incidence of severe weather, be it rain, wind, high temperatures or the like, and which may well be linked to the effects of climate change.

I am very mindful of the terrible impact of flooding of property and the disruption to business and social activity which follows from the closure of roads and I, again, would like to say how pleased I have been with the efforts of the County Council’s staff who have worked extremely hard recently to help our residents and businesses in dealing with the rain and floods.

We are, however, looking hard and long at what can be done to mitigate the effects of severe weather, and I can assure Councillor Saddington that we are doing and will do everything we can to help in those situations.

Thank you, Chair.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo

Is the Cabinet Member aware of concern that the volume of recyclable waste being collected in mixed containers by district councils is overwhelming Material Recycling Facilities (MFRs) in some areas of the country?

A report in the Sunday Times (3rd June) suggests this is leading to recycling companies receiving cross-contaminated materials, which they cannot handle and will only forward to landfill.

Given this Council's responsibility for waste disposal, can the Cabinet Member assure the Nottinghamshire public that when they put aside waste for recycling, and contribute towards our recycling targets, none of this material ends up in landfill?

Can she also update Members on early progress towards the objectives of our Waste Management PFI Contract with Veolia, and assure us that the new MRF in Mansfield will have sufficient capacity to avoid cross-contamination?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

"Thank you very much Chairman.

I would like to thank Councillor Brandon-Bravo for his question and I would like to say that I do believe that this is an honest question and, therefore, I am not going to refer, at any stage, to Gedling in this answer.

Thank you, Martin, for your very pertinent and topical question.

I am very aware that the capacity for material recycling facilities (MRF) across the country is currently being stretched by the number of kerbside recycling schemes that have been introduced in order to improve the UK's performance against the stringent EU landfill directive targets.

As you know the County Council has been very proactive in procuring a long term PFI funded contract with Veolia Environmental Services in order to ensure it is in the best possible position to meet these targets. Veolia has been able to secure capacity at a number of facilities in the UK to process recyclable material collected in Nottinghamshire and these facilities all operate to rigorous quality and waste management licence conditions. A certain percentage of collected material is always rejected through these processes as a result of the limits of technology, but rest assured that where material meets the necessary quality level on delivery to the facilities it is recycled and not sent to landfill. Only material that is genuinely recycled counts towards our best value recycling performance.

In respect of the MRF in Mansfield, which is due to commence construction in the next few weeks, the capacity of the plant has been carefully assessed to ensure it is optimised for the level of material expected from kerbside collections in the County. It is possible, however, subject of course to the necessary planning and licensing approvals, to expand the capacity of the facility significantly if required, without any major capital cost increase and through the introduction of additional working shifts.

I would stress, again, that the national increase in recycling performance is being driven forward by the EU landfill directive requirements to reduce the amount of biodegradable material buried in the ground, and that through the development of not just the MRF, but also the Energy Recovery Facility proposed by Veolia at the former Rufford Colliery, the County Council is in an excellent position to meet its long term obligations."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Mark Spencer

The Cabinet Member for Environment will be aware that the experimental 18-month closure of Gravelly Hollow at its junction with the A614 ends in mid-September 2007.

Can she tell Council when she will be in a position to announce her future plans for this junction, and will she arrange a public meeting to explain her decision to the people of Calverton and surrounding villages?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

"May I thank Councillor Spencer for his question.

I am to consider a draft report concerning the experimental closure of Gravelly Hollow at its A614 junction this month and this will contain full information on accidents, Councillor Spencer's views and other related matters to enable me to make an informed decision as to whether the temporary closure should be made permanent. The decision report will be formally placed on the record and will be subject to the usual challenge period before implementation.

It is not my practice to attend public meetings to explain the decisions I have taken as Cabinet Member for Environment. These decisions and the information provided in making them are a matter of public record and are freely available.

Thank you, Chair."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Partnerships from Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo

Given that this authority directly and through Local Area Forums is endeavouring to encourage public participation in local initiatives, would the Cabinet Member consider the problem facing many local groups who encounter prohibitive insurance costs when seeking to organise quite minor events?

A small summer event on 7th June this year was faced with £150 single event insurance cover, which was met through councillors' Electoral division Initiative budgets.

Would it not be possible, perhaps through approval or endorsements by the relevant LAF or Members'.

Response by Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Partnerships:

“Thank you Chairman.

Can I thank Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo for his question.

What I am going to do, Martin, is have a look at the issue because it is a particular problem because there has to be a risk assessment done for each individual event that takes place. So that means that obviously insurers look at that in a way of a sum of money. So I want to take that away and talk to the officers to see how in fact it can work, but also just make sure because we do not want to be taking on any particular burden for the Authority that, in reality, we cannot really afford. So, I would like to go away and just look at that because there are a number of groups, right across the County, that have this particular problem (as they have come to me before) about that and I would just like to review the situation.

In reference to your particular group, if you could give me a copy of the letter and other correspondence that you have got, I can also look at that and see whether that was a fair sum or not, that you were quoted on, of £150.00.”

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 28TH JUNE 2007

QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.2

Question to the Chairman of Nottinghamshire Police Authority

The Department for Communities and Local Government has been confirmed that it will consult later this summer on a recasting of the pension arrangements for Elected Members in line with recent changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

At present, Nottinghamshire County Councillors can combine their Special Responsibility Allowances into the LGPS, but Members who are appointed to serve on the Police Authority are unable to do so.

Does the Chairman of the Police Authority agree with me that this is an anomaly which needs to be rectified, and will he make representations to the Department to this effect?

Response by Councillor John Clarke, Chairman of Nottinghamshire Police Authority:

“Thank you Mr Chairman and I would like to thank Councillor Cox for his question.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will be consulting this summer on the recasting of the pension arrangements for elected Members.

It is noted that there is also a difference relating to the elected Members sitting on the Police Authority, but consideration should also be given in respect of Independent and Magistrate Members who are appointed to the Police Authority and this matter will be put to the Police Authority Resources Panel for consideration, of which Mike Cox is the Chair.”

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 28TH JUNE 2007

REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

1. Culture and Regeneration

Members made the following comments or asked questions as indicated:-

- Reference was made to the Newark and Sherwood Polish and Eastern European Event held on the 23rd June and how good this event was.
- Congratulations on the modernisation and re-opening of the Sutton-in-Ashfield Library.

Councillor Steve Carroll replied as follows:-

- With regard to the opening of the Sutton-in-Ashfield Library the only disappointment was that the local press did not give any coverage to the opening and the week of events for both adults and children.

2. Community Safety and Partnerships

In response to questions and comments on:-

- Fines and punishment of those people who flout the legal system.
- Regarding the flooding, Members were extremely pleased with the information available for Members.
- Anti-social behaviour on Sutton Lawn, Sutton-in-Ashfield; pleased to see the County Council has made inroads into sorting the problems out with the help of other agencies.
- Junction 27 of the M1 and the problem with "car cruisers"
- Relationships with Parish Councils.
- The Emergency Planning Conference.

Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle replied as follows:-

- Regarding the fines to the criminals who flout the legal system, the Trading Standards Department continue to hold meetings with magistrates over the fines handed out to these people. He also reported that there had been a recent appointment to a post within the Trading Standards

Department to help confiscate property obtained by illegal means (recover costs from the criminals.)

- Again, I would like to thank all the staff that have dealt with the flooding situation in Nottinghamshire and for the excellent work they have done in keeping Members and the public informed of these emergency issues.
- Regarding Sutton Lawn, there is still a lot of work to be undertaken but with the partnership working it is improving.
- Junction 27 – there has been a lot of hard work undertaken by the legal department in obtaining the injunctions needed to stop these car cruisers from causing problems and there has been a lot of partnership working with the police and the District Council in achieving this.
- The Emergency Planning Conference was an extremely good conference especially under the circumstances as there were speakers from New Orleans talking about the experiences of the major flooding they had experienced.

3. People and Performance

In response to comment on the design, publication and print section, Councillor Stocks informed Members that work being undertaken to ensure all corporate printing was directed through the Design and Print Section to more effectively use the equipment the County Council has had at its disposal in the basement of County Hall.