

meeting	COUNTY COUNCIL		
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REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD MAY TO JUNE 2011

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, since the last report to Council. I hope you find the report of interest and I will be very happy to provide further information on any subject it covers.

TRADING STANDARDS

Consumer Law Landscape Review

2. Following Vince Cable's announcement in October, the Government remain keen for local government to provide the delivery mechanism for all consumer protection work in the future. It is expected that there will be a political and officer governance mechanism to direct the work currently done regionally by councils, and to allocate the funds to carry out current Office of Fair Trading functions.
3. It is recognised that there must not be additional financial risk to authorities participating, and the Government is exploring ways of indemnifying them. The majority of trading standards work will continue to be wholly delivered, funded and managed by local authorities.
4. The funding associated with this change is unknown, but if all current funding streams and structures were joined up, it is believed to be in the region of £12-15 million nationally, over an initial period of 3-4 years.

Animal Disease Prevention

5. Officers recently quarantined an illegally imported squirrel type rodent which had stowed away in a container from South Africa. We will quarantine the animal for 14 days whilst it is observed for possible disease.

6. Trading Standards staff recently attended the 'Beef Expo 2011' event at Newark where over 150 pedigree cattle were displayed. Such gatherings bring a heightened disease risk, and officers ensured tight licence conditions and increased bio security measures were complied with. Post event checks will be carried out to ensure animal movements were correctly recorded.

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

7. Recent activity includes:
 - Officers prevented two different residents from each handing over £2,000 to a suspect protective roof coating company operating in the county.
 - In a similar incident, we again assisted a vulnerable resident deal with another aggressive roof coating company demanding £1500 for unnecessary and cosmetic work. Again this company hadn't given correct cancellation rights so we ensure our resident paid no more than the £80 deposit for the work.

Lorry Watch

8. Following the success of the three pilot schemes, this year we will set-up a further 7 to 9 schemes for specific environmental weight restrictions across the County. An analysis of intelligence will direct where the new schemes should be located based on the most need. The size and complexity of the restrictions themselves will determine how many schemes we are ultimately able to establish.

Partnership Working

9. We are working with Environmental Health colleagues to tackle a bakery regarding hygiene, food standards and food labelling issues, following its expansion into sandwich supply. If no improvements are forthcoming, joint enforcement action will be taken.
10. We recently accompanied Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs staff to Nottinghamshire car boot sales. One individual was apprehended with a quantity of counterfeit dvd's and music cd's, whilst customs officers seized 7,600 illicit cigarettes and a car from another individual. A number of offences are currently being investigated, and more operations are planned.

Education Initiatives

11. **Doorstep Crime and Scam Awareness Event** – we are organising a second Doorstep Crime and Scam Awareness workshop at Worksop library, to raise awareness of key prevention messages with those working with older and vulnerable adults.

12. **A1 Housing** – We recently trained 20 A1 Wardens, the ‘front line’ staff for Bassetlaw District Council’s 7,000 homes. The event provided doorstep crime awareness, and each warden was given a pocket guide to intelligence the Authorities need, and relevant contact details.

Court Action

13. On 18th May, one of the two directors of a roof coating company failed to attend court to face charges of material information not being shown on sales contracts. Consumers were unable to contact the business to get poor quality, shoddy work rectified because they could not contact it. A warrant in the first instance has been issued and sent to Nottinghamshire Police.
14. Two partners in a mobility business appeared at Crown Court on the 3rd June in relation to a number of charges concerning cold calling older and vulnerable people. The matter was adjourned, as the defendants have agreed to plead guilty to some offences if others are dropped. Our legal team is considering options. This Scambusters led investigation was referred to the team by Nottinghamshire Trading Standards due to large numbers of complaints from our County and beyond.
15. Two partners in a van sales business have been sent to Crown Court to appear on 6th July on charges of running a fraudulent business, falsely representing vehicle mileages (clocking), and conspiracy charges.
16. Following his previous Hearing where a where a confiscation order of £18,000 was made regarding the supply of GHD hair straighteners, a man was back in court on the 9th June for non payment of the outstanding £2,500. The court has now ordered that he must look at his foreign property and vehicles, and have adjourned for four weeks.

Media Coverage

17. The Authority received some very positive media coverage in May regarding some of the work of our Trading Standards Officers. East Midlands Today for example ran pieces relating to telephone scams, and also a door to door clothing collection scam. The BBC ‘Fake Britain’ television series featured a piece on the unsafe GHD hair straighteners investigation concluded last autumn.

Congratulations

18. Trading Standards Officer, Joanne Stain, recently won the national Diploma in Trading Standards prize for 2010. This is a great achievement both for Jo, and her colleagues in Trading Standards who supported and mentored her throughout her studies, in a period that has been a difficult for staff. I am sure you will all join me in sending congratulations to Jo.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Malicious threats / 'Active Shooter' Workshop

19. An 'active shooter' is an armed person who uses lethal physical force on people, and who continues to do so while having unrestricted access to further potential victims. This can happen in locations such as shopping centres, railway stations and schools as well as in rural areas. An example was the Derrick Bird shootings in Cumbria last year. The implications for local authorities from such incidents are considerable, and so members of the emergency planning team supported Nottinghamshire Police in staging a half-day workshop to explore elements of the response to, and the consequences of, a deliberate armed attack in this area. The workshop took place at the Arrow Centre, Hucknall, on 20th May and arose from discussions at a recent Local Resilience Forum meeting involving Mick Burrows.
20. County Council participants included representatives from Corporate Communications, Highways, Education Psychology, Health and Safety and Strategic Place Planning. The event enabled participants to become informed about police procedures in dealing with such incidents, and to consider how local authorities and service providers can complement the police response. The event involved presentations from Nottinghamshire Police and a series of exercises to explore how current arrangements might be improved. Realistic scenarios were used to illustrate the issue, including one involving shots being heard and sightings made of an armed teenager in the grounds of a school.

Reservoirs Emergency Plan

21. The Resilience Working Group of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has given its approval of a newly completed LRF Reservoir Emergency Generic Off-site Plan. Officers from the emergency planning team made a major contribution to this work, alongside colleagues from the Environment Agency, emergency services and others. The plan addresses the off-site, or downstream, consequences of a potential or actual dam breach. Concern over the safety of dams in the UK was heightened when the Ulley dam near Rotherham came close to bursting during the 2007 floods. Hundreds of people in nearby villages had to leave their homes when cracks appeared in the dam following a long period of torrential rain. Rotherham Council used 2,600 tonnes of limestone to shore up the dam wall to make it safe on a temporary basis.
22. The purpose of the Nottinghamshire LRF emergency plan is to ensure that local responders are able to make a swift and effective response to any reservoir incident. The plan covers activation, alerting, management and co-ordination aspects of the response. It also outlines the type of response, such as rescue and setting up Rest Centres, and the facilities and resources which would be available. The plan is flexible to cover a range of eventualities and details statutory duties and response obligations which have been agreed locally. The legal authority to prepare off-site plans for reservoir inundation is

provided by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This requires action to be taken to improve, maintain and support the country's resilience, and requires emergency response organisations to communicate and work together on all aspects of emergency planning.

REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES

Register Office Open Days

23. The Registration Service has been given very challenging financial targets to achieve in the coming years. These will be addressed by economising where possible, but also by marketing more vigorously the range of celebratory ceremonies that are offered at Register Offices and in local 'Approved Premises' for civil marriages and civil partnerships. As part of this process our Superintendent Registrars for Rushcliffe and Bassetlaw recently arranged two 'Open Days' to showcase their services.
24. On 13th May, a Baby Naming day was organised at Rushcliffe Register Office. Members of the public were invited in, as were the users of nurseries and surgeries in the area. Several local hotels that are Approved Premises also attended to illustrate the range of venues available for these events. The Open Day was designed to provide information and to promote future sales.
25. Similarly, on 15th May, in conjunction with the Worksop Guardian Newspaper, our Worksop Register Office held a Wedding Fayre to publicise options for civil marriages. Local relevant businesses and Approved Premises took stalls in the Register Office and members of the public were able to talk to staff and raise any question they had. The registrars were also able to take the opportunity to raise awareness of the other services available through the Register Office.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Funding (including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

26. All the funding is now almost in place to ensure MARACs continue their essential work for the rest of 2011/12. Much effort is now going into designing a process which will bring together all County Council funding for Domestic Violence, including MARACs, into one commissioning process, leading to more streamlining, greater clarity and accountability for service providers and improved services for victims. It is expected that the new commissioning process will pay for services from April 2012 onwards. Funding agencies are also being asked, wherever possible, to commit to three year agreements to ensure some sustainability for the sector.

"I Pledge" Project

27. By the end of July 2011 1000 pupils from primary schools across the county will have successfully completed the "I Pledge" Youth Crime Prevention programme with the National Centre for Citizenship and Law at the Galleries of Justice. As well as learning about the consequences of crime, as part of the programme pupils were asked to think of a way to improve their local community. Each of the participating schools was then invited to enter their pledge to the community into a competition prize draw. The winner of the best community pledge will be decided by the panel on June 16th.

Anti Social Behaviour

Dragons Den

28. The "Dragons Den" project in Ashfield has been working with young people in local schools to identify good ideas to reduce crime and disorder in their local communities. The team that has been leading the project has been selected as the runner-up in Nottinghamshire Police's "Diversity in Action Award 2011". The team was told that the quality of the nominations had been exceptional this year and that they should feel extremely proud of their achievement. They will be presented with their awards at the Nottinghamshire Police Annual Awards Ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 5th October 2011.

Gating Orders

29. The Community Safety Team has received requests to consider Gating Orders at several locations in the county over the last 3 months.
30. In all cases crime/asb information has been sought from the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) analyst to see whether there is a pattern of crime and disorder which would warrant a Gating Order.
31. A number of Gating Order requests do not meet the essential criteria. At a number of these locations residents have not been reporting incidents. In most of these areas local policing is going to be put in place with additional patrols to re-assure residents.
32. The Team is working with the local CSP in relation to two Gating Order applications that appear to meet the criteria – one in Ollerton and the other in Eastwood.
33. Both of these locations show high repeat asb/criminal damage. Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Team has been alerted to these two locations. Site meetings with the Local Access Forum will be arranged once the local CSPs have given approval for the applications to go ahead. A report will then be produced for the Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Committee, which will also outline who will fund the installation of the gates.

Pintail Close Car Cruising

34. The Community Safety Team continues to co-ordinate work to tackle the growing problem of vehicle nuisance at Pintail Close. Pending the installation of a vehicle calming scheme (due to start in July, following the statutory consultation period with local businesses), the Community Safety Team has organised for Pintail Close and the surrounding problem areas to be closed to traffic at potential problem times – typically, Sunday evenings, between 1900 and 2330 hrs.
35. The first use of this road closure order was on Sunday 29th May and Monday 30th May (Bank Holiday). On both of these evenings Pintail Close was closed to traffic and patrolled by Nottinghamshire Police. The following is a summary of the effect of those closures:
- **Sunday:** 400 cars attempted to enter the area, and were turned away. Police undertook “stop and check” exercises and issued approximately 50 tickets for numerous offences including cannabis warning, stop search, no road licence, no insurance, misuse of vehicle, non use of seat belts.
 - Nottinghamshire Police were also patrolling the Colwick Loop Road utilising Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.
 - **Monday:** Approximately 70 vehicles were turned away. Nottinghamshire Police repeated the “stop and check” exercise.

Other Partner Activity

36. The Community Safety Team has co-ordinated work with partners on the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership to complement and enhance activity. This includes:
- Work with local businesses to install security gates - to prevent the misuse of their car parks.
 - Work with McDonalds to seek compliance/amendment to their current licence – to prevent late sales and dangerous overuse of their car park.
 - Increased high visibility presence by “marked vehicles” from partners.
 - Messages put out on relevant web sites alerting public to the road closures and vehicle calming measures.

Messages

37. Local businesses are very pleased to see “something is being done” and were very pleased with the activity at the bank holiday and subsequent weekends.

38. Local residents were pleased to have experienced a much reduced problem of noise nuisance and partners on the CSP have been impressed at the co-ordination of the activity and the speed of actions to resolve the problem.

Next Steps

39. The road closure order, and partner activity as described above, will remain in place until the installation of the vehicle calming scheme in July. At that time, the situation will be reviewed and a revised activity plan will be put into place.

COUNCILLOR MICK MURPHY
Cabinet Member for Community Safety

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