



meeting

COUNTY COUNCIL

date

29th March 2007

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND REGENERATION

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD TO MARCH 2007

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio since my last report to Council.

Culture

Nottinghamshire Archives

2. The popular Family History Hour series was repeated during January and February at the Archives. Sessions on *Registration, the Census, Family History and the Internet, Wills and Probate Records* and *Digging Deeper* were again sold out.
3. On 12th February Paul Holmes, Liberal Democrat MP for Chesterfield and Culture spokesperson paid a visit to Nottinghamshire Archives as a part of a tour of East Midlands museums, libraries and archives. In addition to a general introductory tour he was shown some of the work the Archives are doing in producing e-learning materials to commemorate the bi-centenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

Libraries, Archives and Information publications

4. I was pleased to be present at the launch of two further local history publications produced by the Libraries, Archives and Information Publications Group.
5. On 7th March 2007 the Vice Chair of the County Council, Councillor John Allin launched *A Basketful, Willow growing and Basket making in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire* by Rodney Cousins. The publication has been produced jointly with Heritage Lincolnshire and was launched in Sutton on Trent which was the centre of buff basketry.
6. On 20th March 2007 I was pleased to launch *Turning Back the Pages in Old Carlton* by Enid Doona and Paul Tovell at Carlton Library. This is the latest in

a series of photographic publications and has been produced in conjunction with Carlton Local History Group.

Libraries

Sutton-in-Ashfield Library

7. Following a major refurbishment, Sutton-in-Ashfield library reopened to the public on Saturday, 3rd March. During its 4 month closure the building has been totally re-modelled with new ceilings, lighting, carpeting, shelving and furniture. A complete internal redecoration and new layout has added to the transformation. The result is a bright, welcoming library with greatly improved stock display and £50,000 of brand new books. Another feature of the new-look building is that it now incorporates the Registration Service.

World Book Day

8. Libraries throughout Nottinghamshire participated in this year's World Book Day. There were displays complete with balloons and postcards in many libraries as well as activities ranging from quizzes and coffee mornings to staff dressing up as characters from books, school visits and a very successful reading event in Lowdham.
9. Nottinghamshire Libraries supported Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender month in February. There was a display and events in the foyer of County Hall and two events at Beeston Library. We also bought new non-fiction books and produced an attractive booklist.

Arnold Library's Reading Café

10. Arnold Library's Reading Café was launched in April 2004, and nearly three years later has become a lively, stimulating and well attended forum for the discussion of books and reading, as well as a regular social fixture for a large group of keen readers.
11. The Reading Café opens every Wednesday morning from 10.00–12.00 noon. Each month has a new theme (chosen with help from Café attenders), and a collection of books to accompany it. Once a month library staff lead a discussion on the theme, and occasionally there is a guest speaker such as a local author or performance poet. The discussions generally attract a larger group of participants whose main interest lies in the books. For many regulars the Café plays an important part in their quality of life. They look forward to sharing their news and views on a variety of subjects, including books and literature, with a group of like minded people, and many firm friendships have been established.
12. The latest discussion on 21st February covered "Childhood through the ages." The librarian talked about the development of the idea of childhood and gave a whistle stop tour of children's literature from the earliest publications in the mid eighteenth century onwards. The group then shared their memories of

favourite childhood reading and the session ended with a stimulating discussion of whether things were better then - or not!

13. The Café idea is now catching on in other libraries, and Beeston Library also run regular Reading Cafe sessions.
14. This has been a deeply rewarding piece of work for the library staff involved as well as for the Café customers. It has brought in new users, strengthened our relationships with existing customers, provided a framework for promoting all kinds of books and literature and has been successful in encouraging people to try new things. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and we still have many ideas for new themes and activities to try. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Holocaust Memorial Day

15. On 14th February, Worksop Library celebrated Holocaust Memorial Day. The event was aimed at focusing on the large Polish community in Worksop, and to hold an event which would help to make links with them, and celebrate our diverse international population. Preparation included producing a poster and fly bills in Polish, translated by an assistant at the local school, and taking them out to shops and community groups. The day itself began with a talk by a Holocaust Survivor, Simon Winston. He gave a moving and intensely personal talk to a packed audience, encouraging everyone to remember the “dignity of difference” and to ensure that the Holocaust never happens again. Those present then moved outside for a ceremonial tree-planting ceremony, supported and funded by both Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. Dr Graham White, honorary consul for Poland, gave a speech about the significance of this tree and Mr Winston laid the first sod around the young sorbus, a protected tree in Poland. Many in the crowd joined in with the spade work.
16. Back in the library some Polish food, (which had been bought at local Polish delicatessen and baked by the library staff) was enjoyed by all. There was a large exhibition all about the Holocaust, and a display about Polish immigration to Worksop, which included Montague Burton, the founder of Burton’s clothes stores. The local press were in attendance, and produced a lavish piece with three photographs later in the week. Many people also borrowed topical books which had been gathered and displayed especially for the event. In all around 70 people attended the day, and were both pleased and touched to be involved in such a positive celebration of our community.

Country Parks & Open Spaces

Green Travel Award for Rufford Abbey County Park

17. Rufford Abbey Country Park was delighted to hear that it had won a ‘Green Travel Award 2007’ from the Greater Nottingham Partnership. The awards are designed to recognise local tourist attractions that are taking positive steps towards sustainability.

18. Over the past two years Rufford has introduced card and paper recycling, the collection of soft drink cans, and more use of local foods in its catering outlets. Public events at the park help to make sustainable living fun – for example, the 2006 Envirofest event, which attracted 5,900 visitors over a single weekend.
19. Land management staff at the park has also started work on a green waste composting scheme to recycle material produced during grounds maintenance operations. The park already uses only ‘green’ electricity but recently took a step towards self sufficiency by commissioning a hydro electric feasibility study at Rufford Mill. This will investigate whether in the future Rufford’s historic watermill could be adapted to produce electricity from water power. Initial findings look promising.
20. Nic Broomhead, Head of Country Parks, collected the award on behalf of the County Council at the Broadway Centre in Nottingham on February 7th.

Country Parks Staff Cope with Gales

21. As gales and extreme weather conditions swept the country in January, country park rangers swung into action to deal with fallen trees and branches.
22. At Sherwood Forest Country Park a large number of silver birch trees were uprooted and four 2-300 year old oaks came down. Because of the danger to the public from falling branches and deadwood, the park closed on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th January while rangers worked to clear damaged trees and make paths safe.
23. Rufford fared better, losing mostly small timber. However, one of the historic trees on Lime Tree Avenue which had been brought down had to be removed. Rangers spent several days removing deadwood and fallen branches in order to make the woodland safe for visitors.
24. Bestwood closed down completely on Thursday afternoon and car parks were closed on Friday while rangers cleared over thirty trees which had fallen across footpaths. The office at Alexandra Lodge was without power over the weekend of 20th and 21st January and again on 23rd and 24th January.

Sports

Senior Sports Review of the Year

25. This year’s Sports Review of the Year took place on Tuesday, 30th January at the East Midlands Conference Centre on the campus of the University of Nottingham. Nearly five hundred people gathered to celebrate the achievements of participants, administrators, coaches and officials in Nottinghamshire sport.
26. Local journalist and sports commentator Andrew James hosted the evening and was joined by guests from professional sport including Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club’s Jason Gallian and Mick Newell. Winners from last year

including Coach of the Year Christine Lineker and Achievement of the Year Richard Whitehead were also on hand to congratulate this year's winners. The senior category nominees were joined by the junior finalists selected at the event held on 15 January held at County Hall.

27. Awards were presented in the following categories:

Club of the Year	Bingham Penguins Swimming Club (Rushcliffe)
Nottinghamshire Youth Games Fair Play Award (sponsored by Nottingham East Midlands Airport) Professional of the Year	Broxtowe Nathan Robertson Mansfield Harriers U13 Girls Cross Country Squad (Mansfield)
Junior Disabled Sportsperson of the Year	Sam Hynd (Swimming) (Ashfield)
Junior Volunteer of the Year	Alice Bullas (Various sports) (Rushcliffe)
Junior Sportsperson of the Year	Lucy Smith (Biathle) (Newark & Sherwood)
Volunteer of the Year	Pete Kennedy (Football) (Rushcliffe)
Coach of the Year	Glenn Smith (Swimming) (Mansfield)
Disabled Sportsperson of the Year	Natalie Blake (Power Lifting) (Newark & Sherwood)
Team of the Year	Beeston Men's Hockey Team 1 st XI (Broxtowe)
Amateur Sportsperson of the Year	Phil Beniston (Power Lifting) (Ashfield)
Roll of Honour	Peter Birchmore (Swimming) Geoff Lumb (Football) Don Nettleton (Hockey) Joan Wall (Hockey/Athletics) Dave Wright (Football)
Outstanding Achievement of the Year	Lee Westwood (golf)

Special Olympics Nottinghamshire

28. Young people with learning disabilities living in Nottinghamshire or the City are being encouraged to get involved in 'Special Olympics Nottinghamshire' - a new sports club in Basford.
29. The club has been set up by the Sports Disability Unit and operates from Ellis Guilford School every Monday evening 6.30-7.30pm. The new club gives potential athletes with learning disabilities from age eight upwards the chance to develop their fitness and get involved in a range of sports and social opportunities.
30. One of the coaches delivering sessions at the club is East Midlands Disabled Sportsperson of the Year, Richard Whitehead, who is a Disability Sport

Performance Pathway Coach in the Disability Unit tasked with helping disabled athletes to choose a sport to become involved with then supporting them along the developmental pathway for their chosen sport.

31. Special Olympics Nottinghamshire has come from Special Olympics Great Britain which is an initiative aiming to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic type sports for people aged eight years of age and older with a learning disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop fitness, demonstrate achievement, experience enjoyment and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community

Sam Hynd breaks world record

32. At February's Nottinghamshire ASA County Championships, Sutton In Ashfield Swimming Club and Mansfield/Nova Swim Squad swimmer Sam Hynd smashed the IPC (International Paralympic Committee) S10 category World Record for the 400m Individual Medley. The record had stood since 1995.
33. Sam, who is the Nottinghamshire County Council Junior Disability Sports Person of the Year, set a time of 5.14.59 which takes an incredible 32 seconds off the previous mark. Sam had tremendous support, with packed audience, cheering his every stroke, at the Water Meadows Swim Complex in Mansfield, which was playing host to the second gala for the 2007 Nottinghamshire County Championships. He will now travel to Denmark to compete with the Great Britain squad at the Danish Open championships.

Sport Direct Celebration Event

34. On 22nd March at the Summit Centre in Kirkby in Ashfield, there was a presentation event for 15 beneficiaries on the Sport Direct programme. Sport Direct is a project run through the Sports Disability Unit and co-funded by the Learning Skills Council and European Social fund. It is aimed at developing skills and confidence in disabled people through a programme based around sports coaching. The beneficiaries were presented with certificates for passing both their sports leaders award and also completing the minimum operating standard courses for coaching in first aid, child protection and how to coach disabled people in sport.
35. The awards were presented by myself and new project officer Rebecca Millar.

Beacon Peer Support Funding Application

36. As part of our Beacon role, the County Council has been asked to be part of a joint application for Peer Support funding, to build on the successful Round 7 theme and dissemination year, for 'Culture and Sport for Hard to Reach'.
37. The application is based on efficiency through partnerships, with a specific focus on consolidating the good practice and relationships that exists between

the partner Beacons and to share our experience with others over the coming year and beyond.

38. The aim of the proposal is to offer support to other local authorities, in a performance improvement capacity. We will be sensitive in our approach and specifically target those authorities that demonstrate a need to improve their understanding of 'reaching the hard to reach'. In some cases, this will require liaison with Sport England, the Arts Council, MLA (Museums Libraries and Archives Council) or the IDeA's (Improvement and Development Agency) National Cultural Advisor, to identify areas of the country or specific local authorities that would benefit from the service.
39. In addition to improving performance, the proposal will also contribute towards data capture and impact analysis, providing qualitative and quantitative evidence that sport and cultural engagement programmes can contribute to the wider political agenda including, Section 17, crime, the fear of crime, youth disorder, addressing health inequalities and broader issues of economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
40. The proposal for Peer Support funding will contribute towards the development of the following services and research:
 - National Panel
 - Development of Beacon Toolkits
 - Research and data capture
41. A 'diagnostic' service will be provided by a National Panel, drawn from the Beacons (and if required appointed consultants to increase capacity), whereby local authorities can present current practice and challenging issues that need to be addressed. Start-up solutions based upon the Panel members' previous experience would then be offered to ten targeted authorities in the form of 'peer support', with referral to other relevant Beacons or successful clients where necessary.
42. It is proposed that the partner Beacons will develop toolkits that will identify areas of 'excellence' and 'compare and contrast' existing research that has been undertaken in the theme of 'Culture and Sport for Hard to Reach Groups'. Case studies will be researched and toolkits produced that will 'tell our story' in a useful, practical and transferable way.
43. The third element of our proposal will focus on developing new research that will demonstrate the impact of inclusion programmes on national policy and the Government agenda.
44. We have the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Government Office in the East Midlands and expect notification of whether we have been successful by early April.

Regeneration

Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route

45. Councillor Baron and myself represent the authority on the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership (SGZP) I am very pleased to report that significant progress continues to be made with respect to the development of land along the Mansfield/Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR), particularly on the County Council-owned Rushley Farm site at the junction with the A60. Here, the County Council is in the advanced stages of agreeing the sale of a proportion of the Rushley Farm site to West Nottinghamshire College.
46. Furthermore, an application for outline planning permission has been submitted to Ashfield District Council and Mansfield District Council, for a £70m relocation of the college on to this land and the development of an adjoining technology park with links to the college. If agreed by the planning authorities, these proposals constitute an exemplar development for the area and demonstrate a real commitment to the creation of high-quality employment opportunities and complementary training for local people.

Adult and Community Learning Service

47. On 30th January I undertook a visit to see first hand some of the activities commissioned through the Department's Adult and Community Learning Service. My first stop was at a Day Centre where learners were writing poems, being supported by an enthusiastic and creative tutor. I then moved on to a County Council nursery in Ashfield where parents were being shown how to use books and read effectively with their children to gain maximum pleasure and benefit. The third venue was to talk a group who had been referred to a course run by a mediation service to support them in dealing with issues which were preventing them from engaging as active citizens or from holding down jobs.
48. The final call was to join a Community Operations Group (COG) meeting. These groups are managed by ACLS but bring together parties involved in learning activity within ACLS priority localities. The groups identify local learning needs and broker the delivery to ensure that needs are met.
49. From talking to all those engaged in these learning activities, the benefits of participation were clearly evident, not least the content of the session but also the social and emotional value of being with a group. Those present at the COG clearly valued the opportunity to come together to share information and plan learning activity jointly.

Sherwood: The Living Legend

50. I am delighted to report that the Economic Regeneration service has supported the Sherwood Living Legend project through the preparation and submission of a funding bid for £5 million to emda (East Midlands Development Agency), towards the costs of the Sherwood: the Living Legend project.

51. As members are aware the Sherwood: the Living Legend project will cost £50 million, of which £38 million will come from the Big Lottery fund, if the project wins the national vote. This means we have around £12 million to find from elsewhere and Economic Regeneration is working to secure as much of this as possible from external sources, in order to minimise the cost to Nottinghamshire Council tax payers.
52. We have approached emda because the project will not only have a substantial economic and physical regeneration impact on Nottinghamshire and its residents, but will also have a regional impact. The project represents a major investment into the internally renowned Sherwood Forest. This will add significant value to the East Midlands' tourism offer.
53. Our project is the only major project in the higher category for Living Landmarks in the region, so we hope that emda, as a regional body, will be pleased to support us. I will keep you informed once the outcome of the bid is known.

Science City

54. I am pleased to have agreed an allocation of £25,000 towards the development and implementation of the Nottingham Science City project - which is one of 6 national pilots whose aim is to develop redbrick universities and create greater public awareness of the importance and accessibility of science through schools and public events. This work will consolidate the science base in the City and the County, and has the potential for future Treasury funding injections to sustain long term development plans. I wish the Science City Development Board well in its efforts to convince Government of its capabilities to deliver on this exciting new agenda and will work to shape its delivery in my capacity as a Board member of NDE (Nottingham Development Enterprise) - which is acting as the co-ordinator of the Science City Development Board.

DTI Post Office Network Consultation

55. The DTI released a consultation document on the future funding and structural plans for the post office network. Due to increased losses of £4 million per week the current size of the network of over 14,000 offices, there is a proposal to close a maximum of 2,500 post offices across the network, divided equally across urban and rural areas. The closures are expected to commence in summer 2007 and are in addition to other ad hoc closures since the start of the decline in the 1970's.
56. Officers in the Economic Regeneration service developed a response to the above consultation which was submitted on 8th March on behalf of the Leader. The following are key issues highlighted in the response:
 - The role of the County Council should be made explicit in the process of selecting sites for closure and service development

- The section criteria for the service must give greater consideration to the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled, those living in areas of deprivation, and the financially excluded
- As a consequence of previous ad hoc nature of the closures, there are voids in the present service which need to be addressed
- The development of outreach services and Social Enterprises should draw on facilities, programmes, knowledge and expertise within the Authority.

57. We will continue to monitor the situation as it develops.

Health and Well Being Conference

58. On 26th January I was proud to represent the Authority at the above conference aimed at encouraging public sector organisations to sign up to a new national initiative to improve the emotional wellbeing of workers. Together with officers from across the Authority I joined the 90 delegates in gaining an understanding of the Department of Health 'Action on Stigma' - six principles which include making staff aware of top tips for looking after their mental well-being, warning signs to look-out for and the need to seek help early on if they develop a problem.

59. The issue of mental health and worklessness is important and through support from my portfolio we are leading the development of initiatives aimed at stemming the flow of people with mental health problems onto Incapacity Benefit.

Councillor Steve Carroll
Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration