

Councillor Report 2008/9

Graham Chapman

Introduction

I am one of three councillors who represent Aspley Ward with a population of approx 14000 and an electorate of over 10,000. The ward is made up of 4 distinct communities - Broxtowe Estate, Bell's Lane Estate, Aspley Estate and the strip of housing along Nuthall Road. The ward consists mainly of interwar, brick built council housing, 50% of which have been sold. There are small pockets of private housing – three recent infill sites and post war and interwar housing along the Nuthall Road. There are 6 small retail centres, one superstore (Co-op), 4 community centres, a sure start and two libraries. There is a recently developed sports centre serving Aspley Estate and two Children's Centres. The ward also contains two newly built primary schools.

Council Involvement

I am deputy leader of the Council, with responsibility for Economic Development, Finance, Land, and Communications. I also serve on the Development Control Committee, Nottingham Regeneration Ltd, Science City Board and the Training and Skills Board. My priorities during the year have been to:

- balance the council finances
- shift resources from back office to front line
- ensure a more coherent approach to land management
- improve the communications systems between Portfolio Holders and the public
- promote science development in the City
- promote skills training

Community Involvement

I am on the board of the Broxtowe Partnership Trust. I have also had involvement with the Aspley Partnership, Bells Lane Tenants and Residents, supporting and initiating children's parties and helping with tea dances. I am working with the Broxtowe Education, Skills & Training and employment agency (BEST) to establish a social enterprise and other schemes which will bring employment to the estate.

Ward Work

My top priority has been to 'calm' some of the anti social behaviour hotspots. I am working on three areas Welstead, Withern and the top of Eltham Drive. We have supported the rebuilding of two primary schools and four secondary schools serving the area. I have initiated a path closure to reduce ASB in Keverne Close and helped negotiate the restarting of building on the Oakford Close site after the site was mothballed due to the recession. I have helped initiate the provision of on site car parking in three areas where houses were isolated from the street by greens.

I am currently working on a cheaper method of providing hardstandings for council houses in the area and a new method of providing fencing. Over the last 2 years I have dealt with over 1000 pieces of casework and carried out regular two weekly surgeries, shared with my colleagues. We have started a system of street walks with the help of the ward organiser and housing office. I have put out 3 newspapers and about 20 fly leaflets.

Successes – in the Ward

- provision of new school buildings
- made a start on the parking problems caused by the greens
- heavily supported BEST training to become involved in Social Enterprise

Successes – on the Council – this year

- overseen a radical restructuring of the budget in order to respond to downturn in income and the need to shift resource to cater for increased demands for spending on people with disabilities and child protection
- helped bring the capital programme back into balance over three years and sorted out the difficulties in the area capital programme
- established much tighter systems for:
 1. setting portfolio priorities
 2. dealing with communications
 3. policy formation
- ensured that support for science city is a high priority for the council
- began the move towards the formation of a conurbation wide Economic Development Company
- developing a company to provide the City with a strategy and a means of securing energy supply, reducing the cost of production and harnessing the innovation in the two universities

Use of Devolved Budgets

The main use has been the programme for dealing with parking access on greens in Aspley; the programme will continue. However, we are currently working on the possibility of using some of the budget for a programme of hardstandings. The councillor allocation - £3000, has been used for a variety of small events – bus for children to visit the Council House and Parliament to present a petition, tea dances, 3 children’s parties.

Challenges

- bringing in this year’s budget without an excessive overspend
- balancing next year’s budget and providing additional resources for the elderly, for child protection and for people with disabilities
- developing the Economic Development Company in order to reduce the duplication with the current arrangements and to support a more coherent approach to developing Nottingham’s economy
- help set up a trust to promote Robin Hood
- finding the resources to begin a city wide programme of hardstandings for council tenants
- making progress on value for money system – much this year has been in response to budget requirements and it has been useful
- helping create an energy policy for the city which encourages new sources of energy generation, reduced energy consumption and the roll out of energy research projects into manufacturing

Councillor Graham Chapman
Deputy Leader/Labour City Councillor for Aspley Ward