

Councillor Report 2008/09

Leon Unczur

Introduction:

I have been a Councillor for Aspley Ward since 1993. For the first 4 years I was a County Councillor and then, when the city became a Unitary Authority in 1997, I became its first City Councillor.

In 2003, Aspley Ward increased its boundaries and now covers the Aspley, Bell's Lane and Broxtowe Estates. Although the area has many problems, it has been a worthwhile experience representing the Ward for the last 14 years.

I live within the Ward I represent and have done so since 1973. In those 30+ years, there have been distinct demographic changes within the area, moving from a very established and settled community to a more transient and mixed population.

Council Involvement:

I have had the good fortune to have been involved in various Projects which have made the city a better place to live in. As the Executive Member for Adult Services, I started the process which will change how we deliver Adult Social Care in the future, making it much more responsive to people's/carers' needs, giving them choice in deciding what they want and what they need, thus leading them to a more independent lifestyle.

As Executive Member for Culture and Community, I worked with colleagues on various Projects that delivered better leisure facilities, thus bucking the national trend of a decline in swimming and through successful partnerships, with the Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors, Nottingham now has some of the best community parks in the country and that is equally matched by our city parks.

There is now much greater choice in both outdoor and indoor leisure activities, which help combat the real issues that are problematic to the community that I represent – heart disease, smoking, obesity, alcohol/drug abuse and poor health in general.

Again, in partnership, I helped transform Nottingham's Museums, Galleries and Libraries, making them much more accessible to communities and, particularly, to hard-to-reach groups. Books for Babies, the People's Network, the award-winning work of teaching prisoners to read for the children and bring Robin Hood back to Nottingham Castle, to name but a few Projects that have worked on breaking down exclusion and, thus, making our services more relevant to the people we actually represent.

My work with communities has helped Nottingham deliver successful Melas, Carnivals and Prides and, again, working in partnership has now produced one of the best BME Art spaces in the country.

I started to re-prioritise the Youth Service, delivering more targeted work, such as working with hard-to-reach groups who stay away from our Youth Clubs. We created new posts to work on the streets and to help many young people who are vulnerable and often excluded, such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people.

I am the English Chair and former National Chair of the Association of Public Service Excellence, which supports some 280 Local Authorities across the UK, advising and

lobbying Government on issues such as Housing, Transport, the local Carbon Footprint and the benefits of delivering Local Services for Local People.

My Work in Aspley Ward:

I have worked with my Ward colleagues to deliver 2 new schools in the area, improve facilities at the Sixways Community Centre and at our libraries. Melbourne Park has now been extensively improved with a new all-purpose Multi-Use Play Area and complete refurbishment of the park's furniture, with extra benches being placed in the park.

On the Amesbury Circus site, a new Multi-Use Outdoor Playing Facility, which is floodlit, is used by the schools and the communities in joint-partnership.

A new Play Centre, built out of the void one, was built for the Broxtowe community and delivers structured play for children – and it was so badly needed for the area.

The Ward Councillors work with the Broxtowe Partnership, Aspley Strategy Group, Bell's Lane Community Centre, Aspley Training & Community Centre, local activists, the Voluntary Sector and other Agencies, including Health, to consult and deliver services for local people. Using those sources, as well as Events such as 'Your Choice Your Voice', street walks, holding regular surgeries and liaising with the Tenants & Residents' Groups, has helped inform us on the needs/issues for the area and, thus, helped with Policy making.

Aspley Ward Surgeries:

Aspley Ward surgeries are held at the following times:

1st and 3rd Saturday of each month

09.30 am - 10.30 am at Aspley Library, Nuthall Road, Nottingham

11.00 am - 12.00 noon at Strelley Library, Broxtowe Lane, Nottingham

Use of Devolved Budgets and Area Working:

The 3 Councillors for the Aspley area pooled the £10,000 allocated for each elected Member and, along with other funding, we have managed to deliver a variety of Projects for the Ward, these include:

- The transferring of Greens into Parking Schemes on Camborne Drive, Tunstall Crescent and Tilbury Rise.
- Christmas Festival, including provision of tree and lights.
- Ward walks, to identify people's priorities for their neighbourhoods.
- Christmas Community Safety Campaign, where 400 houses were delivered information about reducing crime and preventing burglaries.
- Agreeing on Gating Order in Aspley.
- Organising 'Weeks of Action' across Aspley.
- A launch of the 'Dog Poo' Campaign in Aspley.
- A number of clean-ups, currently being organised.
- Supported 3 Community Christmas Events.
- Organised a number of older people's Tea-Parties, including one at the Council House, all have been successful but that one was particularly successful.
- A 'Park Life' Event on Melbourne Park, with attendance of over 4,000 people.
- Working with the Service Providers, to sustain childcare provision in Broxtowe.
- Supporting Beacon Football Club with their activities.
- Help to purchase a bus for the local Tartanaires Group.

Training and Development:

I have been on various training courses, to help me as a Councillor:

- The IDeA Leadership Academy
- The IDeA Diversity Training Course
- The IDeA Mentoring and Coaching Skills
- The IDeA Cohesion Workshops
- Local Government Association Courses on Local Government Finance,

as well as many Seminars relating to various issues on Local Government relating to improving services within our Authority.

Three Personal Successes that I have helped deliver:

- One of my personal favourite successes has been the building of the Aspley Training and Community Centre. This was a Project that was developed by the community and I was pleased to be instrumental in delivering it, as part of a team, through to its completion – making an Auditorium/Training & Community Centre that has developed and empowered local people to support others. It has been a tremendous success.
- Another success has been that of being the National Chair of the Association of Public Service Excellence.

Because the Association deals with real issues, that help Councils improve services such as Housing, Street Cleansing, School Meals, Leisure Facilities, Parks and Open Spaces – the very things that affect people I represent.

- The third is the refurbishment of Wollaton Hall/Wollaton Park. As a child I always wanted to do something with Wollaton, as parts of it seemed to be falling to pieces. I am pleased to say that, through an incredible partnership and working with some very special people, we made a real difference – possibly the biggest improvement that the Hall has had for some 400 years.

Challenges for the Aspley Area:

There are many challenges still facing the area. There is a low educational attainment level, poor health, teenage pregnancy and a general lack of ambition/self-belief for many people we represent. We are working hard, with the community, to encourage change and there are some considerable successes. Local residents have now become 'Champions' for young people, Healthy Living Advisors, and some are working with us on the long-term vision for the estate.