

Annual Report  
Erewash Borough Council  
2009-2010  
Cllr.Carol Hart

I still continue my role at Erewash Borough Council as Lead Member for Communities and also Deputy Leader but there have been one or two changes since I became a Cabinet Member for Communities at Derbyshire County Council following the elections in June last year. Because of a conflict of interests and not being able to vote twice I stepped down as the EBC member on the Erewash Local Strategic Partnership and now represent DCC on this Board, however the EBC Leader, Chris Corbett stepped in as the Borough Council's representative. I have still retained the chairmanship of this Board. The other major area of change is in Community Safety, as I have this in my portfolio at DCC I again have stepped down as the EBC representative and also from the chairmanship of this group, with being involved in the finances and grants in this area it could have caused personal and prejudicial interests and again the Leader is now representing EBC on this group.

Just to pick out one or two highlights from the various portfolios:-

**Environment:-** This year has seen a change in some of the refuse rounds, which seemed to go off without any undue problems. This year also saw the introduction of the Civil Enforcement in parking. There have been a few teething problems mainly because people had got used to parking anywhere without much fear of prosecution and now suddenly rules are being enforced. Hopefully this is now settling down. We took the decision to close some of the public toilets, this after monitoring the usage. Some residents were not happy but as with everyone else the Borough Council has to save money and the toilets that had a high usage were retained.

**Human Resources:-** This portfolio covers Job Evaluation which is a major exercise for all councils. We have no choice but to implement it but it has taken many months if not years of officer time working with the unions to come to system which we believe will be acceptable to most of our staff. It is going to cost the council a lot of money to implement and this has been one of the factors in setting our budget and our programme for the coming year. We are working towards level 2 for Equality and Diversity and hope to have achieved this by September, 2010. Sickness levels remain above the target of 9 days per employee at 11.5 days. We also received 288 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act in 2009.

**Planning & Regeneration:-** Major funding obtained amounting to £1,852M from Heritage Lottery Funding and DDEP for regeneration work in Long Eaton Town Centre. We work with the Ilkeston and Long Eaton Chamber of Trades in regards to the re-development of Ilkeston and Long Eaton in keeping with the Master Plans for the towns. The Stanton site is a very long and drawn out process and it seems as though there will be no planning application forthcoming before July, 2010. Work is still going on regarding the access/egress and hopefully it will not be too long before these are made public and consultation can begin again. We continue to work with the Erewash Partnership to regenerate the two town centres and to help new start up businesses. Our Town Centre Manager works with the Partnership to organise events etc., and recently we have

received approximately £52,000 from Government to put towards projects that hopefully will bring life and re-generation into our two town centres.

**Sport & Leisure:-** We have had to spend large amounts of money on several of our leisure facilities which had suffered from a lack of maintenance during the previous administrations time in control. We have also nearly completed Rutland Sports Park with extra facilities to enable us to attract major events to the facility. Work on the changing rooms, reception and gymnasium at West Park Leisure Centre is nearly complete and we have just agreed to spend over £2M renovating the Victoria Park Leisure Centre, we said in our first manifesto we would keep swimming in the north of the borough and although we would have loved to have built a new facility funding is so hard to find at this present time and such pressures on our budgets that we have decided to go with the major refurbishment.

**Finance:-** The cash windfall from the sale of council houses has now almost dried up and from now on most capital works will have to be done on borrowed money and justified in these terms. There has been a major damaging effect on the Council's finances due to lower Government settlement figures and also a much reduced return on the Council's investments, we have always been very prudent in where we place our money and this proved a wise decision as we were not caught up in the Iceland debacle. We have always said that we would keep council tax to a minimum and by making some tough decisions we have managed to declare a zero Council Tax raise for this year, we are also positive that this will have no detrimental effect on our front line services.

**Community Services:-** This is my portfolio and luckily for me it sits very well with my responsibilities at Derbyshire County Council. The new receptions at both Ilkeston and Long Eaton are completed with extra facilities for our residents, especially welcome have been the new and private interview rooms, these have proved invaluable to our Housing Options Team and our Financial Advisers in dealing with the many vulnerable residents who have presented themselves in this present financial climate. We continue to bring in funding from the Supporting People programme to assist some of our partners who look after the single homeless hostels, support Teenage Parents project and other vulnerable people. This funding has also enabled us to retain for another year a debt advice worker with Erewash Citizens' Advice Bureaux. Last year the CAB dealt with 1900 requests for help, up 40% on the previous year and this year the total is 2,500. By providing this extra debt advice it means that less families show up as homeless at the Council and thus helps us to keep costs down. The Community Safety Team has worked really hard again this year, most of their work is connected to anti-social behaviour and they have been working closely with the police and leisure staff to be pro-active rather than re-active. There were considerable concerns that the problems with the economy and the recession that crime could rise, this has been to a very large extent kept in check. Alcohol still seems to be one of the major factors with anti-social behaviour and again a lot of work has been done with off licences, pubs etc, with help from the PCT to try to limit any damages.

We have a thriving Youth Forum with all the secondary schools in the Borough taking part and pleasing to note that we now have a special needs school involved. They have been given budgets from Erewash Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council and

it is good to see young people taking their membership seriously. Community Forums still remain a problem, it tends to be that the Rural Forums are less well attended than the Town Centre ones, most likely due to the fact that residents are happy to attend parish council meetings and perhaps do not feel the need to attend the Forums. We are carrying out a review at the moment to see if we can find other ways to attract a better attendance.

Just to finish, one or two things of note, we won silver awards in East Midlands in Bloom for both Ilkeston and Long Eaton, we have trialled free Saturday car parking in four car parks and results are being collated but in the meantime we have extended the trial, we have put funding to a PAMIS toilet which is situated in the Co-operative shop in Ilkeston, this is possibly the first to be installed in any market town and finally it was fantastic for the Borough to have the Mercian Regiment using their rights of Freedom of the Borough of Erewash to take part in march pasts in both Long Eaton & Ilkeston thereby giving our residents a chance to honour this regiment.