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Dutch Criminal Justice Board seek alliance with Staffordshire

Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board hosted a two-day visit in the historic city of Lichfield from the Criminal Justice Board of the Flevoland, a county in the centre of the Netherlands.

The 22 strong-team consisted of the Chief of Police, Chief of the Crown Prosecution Service and senior staff from the Court Service, Probation Services, Prison Service, Bureau of Child Care, Child Protection Board and Victim Support. The group was also accompanied by state official from the biggest cities in the county, the city of Almere and city of Lelystad.

The visit on 13 and 14 September 2007 was arranged at the request of the Dutch who wanted to learn from the experiences in Staffordshire and to share good practice regarding joined-up-justice work.

On the first day of the visit the group received presentations from board members and senior criminal justice staff in Staffordshire on the vision of the future, how the joined-up criminal justice system works in Staffordshire, Government and inter-agency partnership links, organisational priorities and successes, measuring performance, improving public confidence and the justice awards, the Beacon Approach for Staffordshire, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Electronic Tagging and the Police Agenda.

Gerard Veenstra, Chief of the Crown Prosecution Service and Chair of the Criminal Justice Board of Flevoland said: "Our work and challenges are similar enough to want to learn from each other. We are especially interested in the way the CJS in Staffordshire is trying to speed up procedures and to find ways of reducing crime to enhance public safety.

"We have learned more about subjects like the work of the Youth Offending Teams, persistent offenders, domestic violence and the way the work of the justice systems is linked to the work of local organisations and local councils."

The day was rounded off with a civic reception at the offices of Lichfield District Council where visitors were met by Councillor and Chair Janet England, Councillor and Council Leader David Smith and Councillor and Community Issues Portfolio Leader Valerie Richards.

Councillor Janet Eagland, Chairman of Lichfield District Council, said: “It was an honour to welcome our distinguished visitors. It is always a pleasure to introduce Lichfield to new people as I am so proud of our beautiful district. I hope they found their visit constructive and I would like to thank them for their generous gifts.”

On day two further presentations included information about Community Resolution - an initiative of the Stoke-on-Trent Youth Offending Service, Tackling Domestic Abuse and Persistent Offenders.

The visitors were then split in to groups to visit the premises of various local criminal justice agencies and partners, to meet practitioners in the Youth Offending Services in Lichfield, HM Prison at Swinfen Hall, Lichfield, Victim Support in Lichfield, the Staffordshire Area of the National Probation Service in Stafford and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership team from Staffordshire County Council, in Stafford. The visit concluded with a trip to Lichfield Cathedral.

Harry Ireland, Vice Chair of Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board, said: “The agencies that make up our Board work together to ensure that the system is being rebalanced in favour of the law-abiding majority and we’re delighted that our efforts have drawn the attention of the Flevoland Criminal Justice Board.

“We have been very interested to hear about how criminal justice is delivered in Holland and are eager to see how the processes from successful programmes can be adopted here, particularly to improve sharing data via our information technology systems.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Flevoland is a province of the Netherlands located in the centre of the country at the location of the former Zuiderzee. The province was established on 1 January 1986, the twelfth province of the country, with Lelystad as its capital. The province has approximately 370,000 inhabitants and consists of 6 municipalities.

After a flood in 1916 it was decided that the Zuiderzee, an inland sea within the Netherlands, would be enclosed and reclaimed. In 1932 the Afsluitdijk, was completed which closed off the sea completely. The Zuiderzee was subsequently called IJsselmeer Lake (at the end of the river IJsselorks).

The first part of the new lake that was reclaimed was the Noordoostpolder

(North-east polder). This new land included the former islands of Urk and Schokland (formally part of the province of Overijssel). After this other parts were reclaimed, the South-eastern part in 1957 and the South-western part in 1968. The municipalities on the three parts voted to become a separate province in 1986.

Flevoland was named after Lacus Flevo, a name recorded in Roman sources for a large inland lake. Draining the Flevoland polders found many wrecks of aircraft that crashed into the IJsselmeer during World War II and also fossils of Pleistocene mammals.

2. Please see attached photographs:



Pic 1 – From left to right: Councillor Janet Eagland, Chairman of Lichfield District Council and Gerard Veenstra, Chief of the Crown Prosecution Service and Chair of the Criminal Justice Board of Flevoland.



Pic 2 – From left to right: Vera Jagesar, Personal Assistant to Gerard Veenstra; Gerard Veenstra, Chief of the Crown Prosecution Service and Chair of the Criminal Justice Board of Flevoland, Michael McAuley, Business Manager, Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board; Rob Mandley, Chief Officer, National Probation Service, Staffordshire and John Tate, Director Youth Offending Services, Stoke-on-Trent.



Pic 3 – From left to right: Members of the Flevoland and Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board.

3. The Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board was set up in April 2003 to manage the CJS at a local level. It, along with the other 41 Local Boards covering each county or metropolitan area across England and Wales, reports to the National Criminal Justice Board which supports them in their work to meet Public Service Agreement targets at a local level and reduce crime in Staffordshire.
4. Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board brings together the chief officers of criminal justice agencies including the Courts Service, Crown Prosecution Service, National Probation Service, Police Service, Prison Service and the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Services. The agencies share the responsibilities of reducing crime and the fear of crime in Staffordshire.
5. For further details, please contact Martine Redpath, Communications and Marketing Manager, Staffordshire LCJB on 01785 232587 or email: martine.redpath@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk
6. Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board is responsible for the running of the Criminal Justice System in the county of Staffordshire. For further information please visit: www.lcjb.cjonline.gov.uk/Staffordshire