

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd March 2015

Question 1

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Mason

Did Northampton Borough Council join the Credit Union SORTED programme and if not why not?

Response

After careful consideration, it was decided that the Credit Union's proposal to NBC in respect of its SORTED programme was not the best way forward for our tenants (as they were at the time) . It was clear to us that although some tenants would benefit from NBC entering the programme on a corporate basis, many did not require the support offered by the SORTED programme. As those who did require the services of the programme were able to enter it individually, we decided that we could best support our tenants by raising awareness of the Credit Union and by directing customers to their services when appropriate to do so. We did this by providing free space in our One Stop Shop and a sign posting service through our contact centre and web site.

**Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

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Question 2

Question to Councillor Hallam from Councillor Stone

Full Council requested on 10th March 2014 requested that the air pollution in Abington Street be monitored before the work was done to open it up and afterwards.

Please can we have the results of that?

Response

The national guidance for air quality sets out conditions where a more detailed consideration of air quality is needed beyond that of basic screening. This would include busy roads or junction networks where the annual average daily flow is in excess of 10,000 vehicles, and that there is also exposure in the area. Exposure will normally be regarded over the average for a year at the facades of housing, schools or hospitals, although it can include areas where members of the public could be exposed for more than 1 hour (which has to happen more than 18 times per year) such as outdoor dining areas, e.g. cafes/bars/restaurants). Exposure normally needs to occur within 5 – 10 metres of the edge of the road.

At this time we do not have any concerns about air quality levels along the recently de-pedestrianise Abington Street.

Since its re-opening I believe the flow of vehicles along Abington Street has been quite conservative that it would fall outside of the screening criteria and monitoring would not be justified. With regard to the objective that exists for pollutants linked to road transport, where we have identified high levels these have been roads such as Harborough Road, Victoria Promenade and St James. By comparison these are significantly busier roads than Abington Street, and so this gives a flavour of the sorts of locations where the potential harm from poor air quality needs to be considered.

The objective for exposure over 1 hour would also be disregarded. There is a rule of thumb which can be used to highlight potential concerns. Where the average for a year is high (in excess of 60 micrograms), this could indicate problems with the hourly limit. In the areas I have mentioned above I cannot recall a single measurement above 60 for the year that we have needed to investigate further. Again, this suggests the sort of circumstances where the objective might need to be taken into account, and why it is very unlikely to need to apply to Abington Street.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd March 2015

Question 3

Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Stone

St Edmunds hospital site is privately owned. Why has the borough put Northampton Live design posters up on the site and how much did it cost?

Response

Northampton Borough Council is working with both public and private partners to regenerate Northampton. The Northampton Alive banner is one that brings these projects together and helps to promote the town, increasing visitors and encouraging investment.

St Edmunds is one of the Northampton Alive projects and we are working with the owner of the building to bring this project forward, helping to regenerate what has been a derelict and run down building in Northampton for some time.

NBC want to ensure that the public are aware of all of the work that is being done and the projects that are being delivered to improve our town. Alongside the website, an important part of this is to use signage to create a visual reminder of these projects that are being undertaken around the town.

The St Edmunds signage cost a total of £2,444 for design, manufacture and installation.

Councillor Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

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Question 4

Question to Councillor Markham from Councillor Stone

36% of families in Spring Boroughs are socially overcrowded. This means they are using the living room as a bedroom and children are sharing a room with parents.

When are we going to monitor this situation in terms of the damage it is having on the physical, emotional and mental health of the parents and the children and the impact it is having on the achievement of children in schools?

Response

Socially overcrowded families who are not otherwise eligible for the housing register can apply to the Council to be in the low demand scheme. This scheme allows for them to be offered the hard to let properties that cannot be let through choice-based lettings. There are 9 families in Spring Boroughs currently on the low demand scheme. There are 23 families on the housing register from Spring Boroughs.

Staff attended a forum in Spring Boroughs in December to explain what these affected families could do to address their housing need and we will continue to work with these and similar families.

The development of new family housing is an option for the Little Cross Street site, currently under consideration.

**Councillor Mary Markham
Cabinet Member for Housing**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd March 2015

Question 5

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Marriott

At the Cabinet meeting on 18th February 2015, the Leader claimed town centre footfall was increasing. Would therefore explain why the recent figures show a trended decline over the past 3 quarters?

Town Centre Footfall 2014/2015

Quarter 1: 3,895,189

Quarter 2: 4,176,018

Quarter 3: 3,666,041

Abington Street Footfall 2014/2015

Quarter 1: 2,550,771

Quarter 2: 2,726,476

Quarter 3: 2,055,213

Response

Town centre footfall is indeed increasing. In 2013 the recorded footfall figure was 14,125,324. In 2014 the recorded footfall figure was 14,476,969. There was therefore an increase of 351,645 between the two years.

An in-year comparison between quarters does not give an indication of whether footfall figures are increasing or decreasing. Some times of year are always busy, other times are less so. The more sensible comparison, if one wishes to look at quarters, would be to make a year on year quarterly comparison, as provided below:

	2013	2014
Jan – Mar	2,845,239	2,739,721
Apr – Jun	3,912,997	3,895,189
Jul – Sep	4,002,676	4,176,018
Oct – Dec	3,364,412	3,666,041
Total	14,125,324	14,476,969

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council

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Question 6

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Marriott

Would the Leader explain what the Borough Council is doing to assist the police in tackling the local increase in violent crime?

Response

NBC continues to enjoy a close working relationship with the Police on all matter relating to Community Safety. In order to address issues of violent crime a number of pieces of work are being undertaken in partnership with a range of agencies:

- Multi-Agency Town Centre Task group that looks at, and provides a joint response to issues such as Street Drinkers and Legal Highs
- Joint agency visits to licensed premises
- Taking swift action against those licenced premises that are connected to violent incidents
- Establishment of School Pastors at The Academy, rolling out to other schools over the next 12 months
- Funding of specific domestic abuse projects ranging from support and counselling for victims, to counselling and engagement with perpetrators to address their behaviour.
- Target Hardening of properties for victims of domestic abuse
- Currently reviewing new ASB legislation in order to address ASB that can lead to violent crime
- Partnership Strategic Assessment for 2014/15 is focussing on Violent Crime and specifically perpetrators. This will inform the activities and service delivery of the Community Safety Partnership for 2015/16
- NBC Overview & Scrutiny are also undertaking a of domestic abuse in order to review and inform its future responses

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council