

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 1**

#### **Question to Cllr Hallam from Mr Appleyard**

Are there any small mini brakes clauses built in the contract with Veolia?

#### ***Response***

There are provisions in the contract for variations to be made in the event that the council's requirements change. As the council is no longer in a joint arrangement with Daventry District Council, its ability to be flexible around the needs of local communities is much greater.

Councillor Mike Hallam  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 2**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Mr Appleyard**

Considering the possible consequences to Kingsthorpe High street from the impending movement of the University, and the possibility of traffic gridlock, should the Orbital road not open concurrently with the Relief road. Are there any plans now to examine the possible effects on Kingsthorpe high street?

#### ***Response***

The Council is advised that the new Northampton University Waterside Campus will open in September 2018. The Council is not aware that this should make traffic conditions worse on Kingsthorpe High Street.

In any event, matters relating to the Highway Network and its performance, are within the purview of Northamptonshire County Council, which is the Highways Authority, and this question should really be addressed to them.

Councillor Tim Hadland

**Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**

## Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### Question 3

#### Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Smith

While the Night Shelter has been able to offer temporary, emergency shelter, is there now a very urgent need and priority to provide more permanent solutions? Should we now be moving to a Housing First policy?

#### **Response**

Since opening its doors in February 2017, the Nightshelter has proved particularly adept at engaging with, stabilising, motivating and securing move-on for people who have previously been very chaotic and caught up in a seemingly endless cycle of repeat homelessness.

Many of these people have been let down by local services that have failed to provide them with the help and personalised support that they need in order to sustain their tenancies.

'Housing First' is an evidence-based approach to providing homeless people who have high needs and histories of entrenched or repeat homelessness with a stable, independent home and intensive personalised support and case management. No conditions are attached in relation to the person's 'housing readiness' before they are offered a home because secure housing is viewed as a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed.

I believe that 'Housing First' can play a vital role in our multi agency strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton. However, in order to realize its full potential, 'Housing First' must complement, and not duplicate, the excellent work of the Nightshelter.

As the success of 'Housing First' is dependent on the provision of intensive personalised support and case management, securing long-term funding will be the biggest challenge.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing**

## Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### Question 4

#### Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Ashraf

Overcrowding is a serious issue in the town. When are we going to agree minimum space standards for social housing, HMOs and private sector housing?

#### **Response**

I agree with you that overcrowding is a serious issue in the town. However, the adoption of minimum space standards on their own could make the situation worse, rather than better, if it has an adverse effect on the amount of affordable housing available to families.

#### Social rented housing

When they are initially offered social rented housing, applicants on Northampton's Housing Register are offered accommodation that is of a suitable size to meet their assessed housing needs in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy.

Overcrowding may occur when the size of the household is subsequently increased due to the birth of a child and/or additional adults or children joining the household. Unless this results in statutory overcrowding (as defined under the Housing Act 1985), the tenants will not be prioritised, under the Housing Allocations Policy, for a transfer to a larger home.

When the Housing Allocations Policy is revised later this year, social housing tenants who are severely overcrowded (defined as having at least 2 bedrooms less than their assessed needs) will be prioritised, under the Policy, for a transfer to a larger home.

#### Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Housing Enforcement Team is already enforcing the standards in the Council's 'Facilities and Amenities Good Practice Guide for Landlords' and prohibiting the use of rooms that are unsuitable to be used as single/double bedrooms.

During the HMO licensing process, the Housing Enforcement Team has been very strict in ensuring that HMOs are only licenced for the appropriate number of people, taking into account the amenities and the size of rooms specified as sleeping accommodation.

Officers have recently reviewed and updated the existing Facilities & Amenities Guide and, when the Government has confirmed the new minimum room sizes, the Guide will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Fortunately, it is relatively rare for families with children to be living in overcrowded conditions in HMOs. However, when such situations are discovered, a multi-agency approach is adopted to ensure a swift and appropriate resolution of the problem.

#### Private sector housing

In the case of single family dwellings, the Housing Enforcement Team has the power (under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004) to use the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System to tackle overcrowding and to take appropriate action to address and resolve it.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 5**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr Duffy**

When is the problem of motorbikes on pathways on housing estates going to be resolved?

#### ***Response***

All incidents of motorcycle nuisance should be reported to the police, using the contact info below. Alternatively, residents can be encouraged to report motorcycle nuisance at [operationneutrino@northants.pnn.police.uk](mailto:operationneutrino@northants.pnn.police.uk) This email is picked up by the Police motorcycle riders, who are trained to pursue and able to react directly to reports.

Councillor Anna King

**Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 6**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr Davenport**

Community Safety is compromised when residents have to wait for 40 minutes and more when they dial 101. What can the Borough do address this issue with the police?

#### ***Response***

The police are aware of the waiting times for residents when calling 101 to report crime and anti-social behaviour. As an alternative, residents can be encouraged to report crime and incidents (if they have already occurred) online at <https://www.northants.police.uk/webform/report-crime> .

It is also worth noting that you can provide confidential information should you wish to remain anonymous. These calls can be made to the Independent Charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

If a resident requires an immediate response or a crime is in progress, they should always be encouraged to call 999.

Councillor Anna King

**Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety**

## Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### Question 7

#### Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Haque

Will we be insured against the risk of Veolia following Carillion into economic decline and bankruptcy?

Are the new vehicles low emission?

When will we see the £2 million programme of work to clear up the town?

Have you got the schedule?

#### **Response**

The council will be insured via a parent company guarantee in the event Veolia that Veolia goes into liquidation during the lifetime of the contract.

The new vehicles are low emission.

The improvement programme will begin on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and will last for three months. We are currently working with Veolia to develop a detailed plan in readiness for 'go live'.

Councillor Mike Hallam

**Cabinet Member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 8**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr Birch**

Around the town there are a number of public spaces used for events run by commercial companies e.g. Town Show, Fun Fairs, parking charges in the parks. These reduce access to a public amenity for the residents, cause noise and traffic congestion and can damage the grass. What charges are made to these businesses for the use of the town's facilities?

#### ***Response***

The council has a scale of fees / charges and event hire terms and conditions for hiring council land which all event organisers must abide by.

The council has supported charity and community groups for many years by not applying any park / land hire charge including Carnival, Diwali, Umbrella Fair and more.

The council charge fairs / circuses a daily fee of £300 per event operational day but no fees for setting up or taking down there showgrounds.

The council has for many years worked with local event organisers to hold events on council land for local residents and with new events the council has supported these events by contributing in kind by providing the park hire for free. These new events would have local interest, community engagement and support local providers.

Where commercial agents look to deliver events on the councils land the council charge up to £1000 per operational day.

All event organisers are charged with ensuring their event area is cleaned and tidied and all waste removed from site and should any land damage occur the council would charge the event organiser with making good the appropriate repairs or charge for the repairs to be undertaken.

Councillor Anna King

**Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety**

## Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### Question 9

#### Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Davenport

What are you doing to challenge inspectors that overturn the democratic decisions of our planning committee.

#### **Response**

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) states that:

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision making.

For decision making this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- Where the development is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:
  - Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted”.

Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework goes on to state that:

“Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

Sometimes the Planning Committee will decide to refuse planning applications and if that is against Officer advice, then the Committee must produce sound planning reasons for refusal because there is a risk that decisions can be appealed.

The Planning Inspectorate, a body quite separate from the Council, plays a very important role in the planning process, as it considers appeals made by applicants when their applications have been refused.

When determining appeals, Inspectors consider the same material planning considerations as Officers and the Planning Committee, and can decide to attach different weight to these, if appropriate, and they may come to different conclusions as a result. It is important therefore that all decisions made by the Council are based on material planning considerations in order to ensure that these decisions are robust and capable of being defended at appeal. Officers continue to ensure that all relevant recent appeal decisions are reported to the Planning Committee and taken into account when determining similar applications. By operating in this way, the Council will continue to make robust, balanced and transparent decisions.

The Council has very limited powers to challenge decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate, but the relevant Secretary of State has powers to over-rule the decisions made by Planning Inspectors.

Councillor Tim Hadland

**Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 10**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Ashraf**

Please can you update me on what is happening to the Bus Station on St James Road? Is the Church's development going ahead. If so when?

#### ***Response***

On the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Officers advised you that the Council had not yet received any planning application in respect of the redevelopment of the site and that remains the position.

Councillor Tim Hadland

**Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 11**

#### **Question to Cllr Eldred from Cllr Davenport**

At the last DHP meeting you advised there will be additional monies for this fund. Please can you confirm how much it is, when it will be made available and where it is coming from?

#### ***Response***

Cllr Eldred stated at the meeting that there was an awareness that toward the end of the financial year, the funds allocated to Discretionary Housing Payments would, as expected run low, as NBC endeavours to maximise the use of the grant made available

In 2017-18 government funding was £545,641 of which, we have paid out £524,003 and committed to pay a further £21,096 before the end of March. This leaves just £542 uncommitted.

We will review any further requests received and if necessary, permit a modest 'overspend' in this area, which would be offset by underspends in other service areas. We do not plan to formally allocate any additional funds, this late in the Financial Year.

Councillor Brandon Eldred  
**Cabinet Member for Finance**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 12**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Beardsworth**

Are regular Health and Safety inspections carried out at Northgate Bus Station ?

#### ***Response***

Yes.

Regular Health & Safety Inspections are undertaken on North Gate and involve the Councils H&S team.

H&S is monitored daily by staff and security.

The Parking Manager undertakes weekly visual inspections.

Our Town Centre Manager inspects the site every 2-3 months.

We have quarterly meeting with the bus operators to discuss H&S.

All incidents are reviewed.

We have risk assessments in place which are reviewed on an annual basis.

Councillor Tim Hadland

**Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 13**

#### **Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Beardsworth**

There is an extra £2m in the new Environmental Services Contract in 2018/19 *for mobilisations and to rectify current problems*. Have communities been asked to identify “Grot Spots” needing attention or is the bulk of the money to be used in the town centre?

#### ***Response***

Communities have not been asked to identify grot spots and the funding will not be mainly used in the town centre as the purpose of the extra funding is to bring everywhere in the town up to the standard set out in the contract within the first three months of its inception.

Councillor Mike Hallam  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 14**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr Beardsworth**

Was an equality impact assessment carried out on the effect of the £94,000 reduction in the 2018/2019 budget for Voluntary / Community Funding?

#### ***Response***

Yes.

Councillor Anna King

**Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Question 15**

#### **Question to Cllr Larratt from Cllr B Markham**

According to the NBC website the Citizens Account will close at 5pm on Friday 30 March and yet our Medium Term Financial Plan ( MTFP) says the council will increase efficiency and make financial savings by:- *Use of IT/Digital channels – to reduce transaction costs and increase staff productivity through the use of technology.*

Is the council about to replace the Citizens Account with new online payment processes and if so when?

#### ***Response***

A decision was made by the supplier of the Citizens Account to no longer provide the service. The Citizens Account provides customers with an electronic copy of their bill. As soon as we received notification we have been working on an improved replacement service. During this transitional period all customers will receive correspondence through the post. Online payments will continue to be available throughout this period.

The MTFP efficiencies will be achieved throughout the financial year by a range of initiatives including an improved and enhanced website with an online bookings facility and improved applications for services.

Councillor Phil Larratt  
**Deputy Leader of the Council**