

<b>COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS</b>				
<b>Council – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Received from</b>	<b>Executive Member Responsible</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1	Councillor Emily Fedorowycz	Councillor Smithers for Councillor Lloyd Bunday	What are we doing to proactively engage with SME in helping them sign up to the procurement process and see jobs out for tender?	<p>All information related to working with and applying for opportunities within North Northamptonshire Council are available on the Council’s website. This includes all of the links to advertising portals Contracts Finder (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder">https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder</a>) and Find a, Find a Tender Service (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/find-tender">https://www.gov.uk/find-tender</a>) and the e-tendering portal (<a href="https://intendhost.co.uk/nnc/asp/Home">https://intendhost.co.uk/nnc/asp/Home</a>).</p> <p>All of our opportunities are open to Voluntary Sector Organisations and SMEs and larger contracts are broken down into smaller Lots to ensure that smaller organisations are not excluded from bidding. We also opt for frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems to ensure that we are able to work with as many suppliers as we are able to support within our community.</p> <p>As per the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 we always consider how we are able to improve the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the area, during the procurement process when buying goods and services. At North Northamptonshire we strive to develop a resilient local supply chain, providing a consistent approach to procurements, ensuring that</p>

				<p>organisations are aware of and able to take advantage of procurement opportunities.</p> <p>We also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse the supply chain to identify specific areas of strength and opportunities to help develop specific sectors.</li> <li>2. Provide effective supplier engagement to help improve the capability of local organisations to bid for contracts in The Council. These opportunities can be found on contract finder.</li> <li>3. Deliver simplified and consistent procurement processes for organisations tendering for contracts in The Council.</li> <li>4. Raise awareness among suppliers for forthcoming opportunities to bid for contracts.</li> <li>5. Source more goods and services and works locally when best value can be demonstrated and in so far as legal requirements permit.</li> </ol>
2	Councillor Emily Fedorowycz	Councillor Harriet Pentland	What projects have been considered so far for this year's 22/23 budget allocated for climate change?	<p>Members of the Council have previously been advised that the development of a Carbon Management Plan is in its final stages, ahead of presentation to the Executive Committee. This plan, which has involved extensive data collation, will detail a variety of projects and ambitions for the Council to consider under a range of themes (e.g., buildings, fleet, carbon sequestration etc.). From this plan, the Council will seek to prioritise the use of the revenue budget to ensure the most carbon beneficial schemes are progressed. A matrix for evaluating projects has also been developed to support this aim. It is important that</p>

				<p>wherever possible the climate change budget is used as seed funding to obtain wider carbon reduction opportunities, rather than directed to one-off projects.</p> <p>The budget to date has also been used to provide Carbon Literacy training for Elected Members and Senior Officers of the Council, with 101 receiving the training to date and wider Phase 2 of activity using a Train the Trainer model to ensure all staff can undertake the training over the coming months.</p> <p>It is important to give careful consideration to the spending of this budget allocation to maximise the outcomes, in line with the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality.</p>
<b>3</b>	Councillor Emily Fedorowycz	Councillor Matt Binley on behalf of Councillor Helen Harrison	What is being done to support individuals and businesses through this energy crisis? How are we supporting community efforts such as warm rooms?	The Council is developing a plan to support communities and staff through the cost-of-living crisis, in conjunction with Voluntary and Community Sector partners. It is considering a range of initiatives such as warm spaces, targeted grant programmes for the VCSE, a communications campaign and the future use of the Household Support Fund. Further details will be shared with councillors as these programmes develop.
<b>4</b>	Councillor Charlie Best	Councillor David Brackenbury	Will the Council relax the planning rules for replacement windows on heritage and listed buildings in light of the current and worsening energy cost crisis? Technology today can provide windows and doors that appear period yet provide 21 <sup>st</sup> Century levels of performance. Time to change for the greater good.	The Council is not planning to prepare a local policy that relaxes its approach to new and replacement windows in properties of historic value. Policy 2 ( <i>Historic Environment</i> ) of the Joint Core Strategy seeks to protect, preserve and enhance heritage assets. The policy provides strategic overarching guidance for issues of heritage across North Northamptonshire.

				<p>When considering proposals for new or replacement windows, the Council uses the advice of conservation specialists, considering each proposal on a case-by-case basis and following guidance published by Historic England (Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading). The guidance has been in place for some time and applications can be granted for replacement windows where it is followed.</p> <p>Historic England is currently updating this guidance to reflect the current energy crisis and to take greater account of environmental considerations. This update is likely to increase the flexibility afforded to officers in relation to such determinations.</p> <p>In advance of this, the planning committee call-in procedure can be used in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation to bring an application to committee for determination where the officer is recommending refusal.</p>
<b>5</b>	Councillor Anne Lee	Councillor Jason Smithers	How many of the 78 members of NNC Council still request paper copies of the agenda?	Democratic Services have 11 councillors who have confirmed that they do not wish to receive hard copies of agendas. The remaining 67 are receiving hard copies.
<b>6</b>	Councillor Anne Lee	Cllr Matt Binley on behalf of Councillor Helen Harrison	Can a recruitment drive be held for new sponsors to accommodate refugees from Ukraine to highlight that many refugee families are nearing the end of their six-month stay? A press release may help to encourage new sponsors to come forward.	The Resettlement team have been contacting all existing sponsors to understand their intentions about continuing their sponsorship arrangements with their guests after the 6-month mark. They have also been reviewing the original list of sponsors provided by the Home Office who expressed an interest in sponsoring but have not yet been matched with a guest or group. Contact

				has been made with those who expressed an interest and action taken if the household remains interested. Once these activities are complete, the team will consider the value of launching a publicity campaign for new sponsors.
7	Councillor Anne Lee	Councillor Harriet Pentland	Can Full Council receive six-monthly updates on what NNC is doing to combat climate change, as originally envisaged? We need a strategic overview of the progress we make to cut carbon and to combat flooding.	<p>The Council continues to receive regular updates in respect of the work undertaken to tackle climate change, including within the period of time referred to by Councillor Lee and as part of the Climate Change, Environment &amp; Growth Executive Advisory Panel, which meets each month.</p> <p>As has been advised previously, a Carbon Management Plan is in the final stages of preparation, following extensive collation of carbon emissions data. At a meeting of the full council on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, it was unanimously agreed that the Carbon Management Plan should be reported to the Executive Committee later in 2022; this remains the case.</p> <p>In this report to full council, it was highlighted that the Carbon Management Plan would include data on the full range of emissions scopes and actions to reduce these.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Commission has identified, as part of its annual work plan, the work being undertaken on climate change by the Council and a future report will be presented when requested by members of that committee. It remains important that the Council's performance on meeting its agreed objectives to combat climate change are monitored in an open and transparent manner, and I will be</p>

				<p>glad to work with the Scrutiny Commission to this end.</p> <p>Moreover, as part of the monthly Performance Indicator Reports presented, it has been noted that, in line with the Carbon Management Plan, indicators measuring the Council's carbon emissions along, with other environmental projects will be reported on. Indeed, PFIs of this nature are already reported on as part of these monthly reports.</p>
8	Councillor Ross Armour	Councillor David Brackenbury	Why was the rebuild of Redwell Leisure Centre in Wellingborough dropped from the Council's suggestions in bidding for Levelling Up funding?	<p>The proposal to rebuild Redwell Leisure Centre was considered as a potential project for the Council's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid that has been submitted to government by the member panel that was created to consider our bid application.</p> <p>Taking advice received by the Council's specialist consultants who were tasked to look in detail at each of the bids, and based upon similar projects elsewhere, the rebuild project was not progressed to submission stage as it was not at a degree of readiness to ensure its inclusion, alongside the other bids. It was important, in this competitive bidding round, that the final bid submitted was as strong as possible to give the council the best possible chance of securing the monies it has bid for.</p>
9	Councillor Leanne Buckingham	Councillor Scott Edwards	According to Companies house the Children's trust had their current accounting period extended from October 21 to March 2022. I have been unable to find the published accounts to date since. Can you please advise Full Council on	The first set of accounts for the Children's Trust covers the 17-month period November 2020 to March 2022 and they are due to be submitted at the end of December 2022 in accordance with company house filing regulations.

			when we can expect to receive the up-to-date account details.	
10	Councillor Martin Griffiths	Councillor David Brackenbury	How many warehouse planning applications have been approved in the last 2 years, and how many have a condition to have solar panels on their roofing to assist in the supply of renewable energy?	<p>Planning records show that in the last two years, five sites have been granted permission for warehouses. Of these, one had a condition specifically relating to the provision and maintenance of solar/pv panels.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Council is not able to require developers to install solar panels on warehouse unit roofs through policy, it can however encourage or request their provision. The Joint Core Strategy includes two policies that requires development to demonstrate how they are satisfying high standards of sustainability, energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions. These are Policy 9 (<i>Sustainable Buildings</i>) and Policy 24 (<i>Logistics</i>). Use of solar panels on roofs can be one way, amongst others, of demonstrating how a scheme is meeting this policy requirement.</p>
11	Councillor Martin Griffiths	Councillor Jason Smithers	How are relationships, particularly in respect of shared services, between North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire councils, both from an officer and senior members perspective.	The relationships between the two councils continue to be professional and working together to ensure our shared services work well and disaggregation plans delivered.
12	Councillor Martin Griffiths	Councillor Jason Smithers	How many members of the Executive have started, or completed, the excellent LGA Leadership Academy programme, since vesting day of NNC?	No Executive Members have attended the Leadership Academy Programme. However, the LGA have facilitated a development session with Executive and another one is arranged to take place in the coming weeks.
13	Councillor Simon Rielly	Councillor Graham Lawman	You allocated an extra £1.5 million for potholes after the highways budget was already set. Has the work on putting this money to good use already started by identifying and filling in potholes across North Northants?	The further investment announced recently will address road and pavement defects, such as potholes, as well as vegetation clearance, sign cleaning and repair and white lining. The investment will also address some known flooding


				<p>hot spots which require improvements to the drainage systems in those locations.</p> <p>This programme to deliver further improvements to the highways network, above and beyond the Council's continual maintenance programme, had to be properly planned to maximise the value and focus on the most in-need areas and had to wait until the new Highways contract had started, but, it has now begun. Additional maintenance gangs are already working on the network as a result of this funding. They are currently carrying out works in villages and parishes and we have received messages of thanks and appreciation for their works. During the course of the coming months, it is intended that they will visit all parishes. Some larger schemes are still being worked up.</p> <p>As a result of these works, residents in villages and towns across North Northamptonshire will benefit from an improved and safer highways network for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers</p>
14	Councillor Simon Rielly	Councillor Jason Smithers	<p>What would we like to know, why there are so many different formats to the consultation process? Members of the public are confused. Can you explain how data is used from the consultation process. is there scoring system in place that supports the decision-making process of the executive?</p>	<p>Consultation and engagement activity is vitally important to the Council and as a result, it carries out a wide range of activities in these areas.</p> <p>As the Council provides a wide range of services to a broad range of stakeholders, the consultation and engagement carried out reflects this fact.</p> <p>Formal consultation to inform decision-making does follow a consistent format and process. The Council uses its <a href="#">Citizen Space Consultation and Engagement Hub</a> as a portal and publicises</p>



				<p>consultations according to the stakeholder groups targeted.</p> <p>The Council benefits from being a member of the <a href="#">Consultation Institute</a>, a not-for-profit best practice Institute, promoting high-quality public and stakeholder consultation. The Council monitors best practice and learns from the experience of other councils. The Council puts a lot of emphasis on making sure that it carries out consultations in ways that are reliable, transparent and stand up to scrutiny.</p> <p>Regarding decision-making, consultation activity is one of a number of important considerations alongside budget, legal, technological, and political considerations to name a few. It is normal practice for the Council to make its consultation results available in both a summary and detailed form to aid transparency, understanding and scrutiny of the Council's decisions.</p> <p>Reports considered at Executive include a specific section dedicated to consultation activity carried out. Where consultations have been carried out, reports will normally include a summary of the results, and an analysis of what they mean for the decisions being made. A link to the detailed consultation report is often included within the background reports section.</p>
15	Councillor Simon Rielly	Councillor Smithers for Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Unfortunately, during the cost-of-living crisis the residents of Corby & Kettering have seen, because of harmonisation, increase council tax, potential increase in taxis fares, potential charge for green bin waste. Can you explain why	The process of local government unitarisation and the harmonisation of services was never going to be easy. The Council is keen to ensure that every resident and business receives modern public services that meet their needs in a consistent way,

			<p>harmonisation process seems to be a process where residents in certain areas of North Northants pay more?</p>	<p>irrespective of where they live in North Northamptonshire.</p> <p>The aim is to deliver better value services through economies of scale and provide consistent and equal services to everyone.</p> <p>Harmonisation has affected all areas of North Northamptonshire and it is not the case that residents in certain areas always pay more. For instance, Corby and Kettering households witnessed a reduction in their council tax to the new harmonised NNC average of £1,460.04 (Corby was previously £1,474.92 and Kettering was £1,490.81) using 2020/21 Council Tax levels. Areas such as East Northants and Wellingborough were £1,434.07 and £1,441.30 respectively. Harmonisation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme to achieve a breakeven position across the new Unitary moved to a minimum payment requirement of 25% compared to a previous sum of 8.5% for Corby and 45% for Kettering. Both East Northants and Wellingborough were previously 20%. Similarly, there has been harmonisation of certain fees and charges and the impact varies across the previous Districts and Boroughs.</p>
<b>16</b>	Councillor Mark Pengelly	Councillor Jason Smithers	<p>Does the Leader of the council agree slot machine gambling casinos must be tightly controlled and regulated. With 400 plus suicides from Gambling addiction a year it is important we control these establishment.</p> <p>Does the leader like me welcome the Council policy "Statement on Licensing Policy" especially 11.1?</p>	<p>It is agreed that the provision of gambling activities should be regulated in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005, which sets out what the Licensing Authority can and cannot do. The Act states that a licensing authority shall aim to permit the use of premises for gambling as long as they are run in accordance with any relevant code of practice; Gambling Commission guidance; our local Statement of Gambling</p>

				<p>Principles and the licensing objectives which are aimed at:</p> <p>(a) preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime,  (b) ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and  (c) protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.</p> <p>Any application for a licence under the Gambling Act, would be expected to consider the contents of the councils Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles, and we would recommend that applicants consider the matters listed within paragraph 11.1 of this policy when undertaking their local risk assessments. Each application will be considered on its own merits and assessed in accordance with legislative and Government guidance requirements, as well as against the contents of the Statement of Principles.</p>
17	Councillor Lyn Buckingham	Councillor Smithers for Councillor Lloyd Bunday	In June of this year I asked a question about the development of a councillor's protocol to assist with casework of councillors by following set procedure and process, Councillor Bunday answered the question by saying this would be looked at asap could we have an update on where we are on this very important matter.	<p>It is accepted that there needs to be a clear corporate protocol for member enquiries to ensure that there they are allocated and dealt with in a way that adds the most value to residents. This will also ensure that there is consistency for response timescales. Members will obviously want to ensure that they influence the development of this policy and therefore it will be considered at the relevant Executive Advisory Panel as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Council has recently signed the contract to procure a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, it is envisaged that a module of</p>

				<p>this system will be appropriate for Councillor case management.</p> <p>In the meantime where members are unsure as to which officer to contact, they should email the complaints team at <a href="mailto:memberenquiries@northnorthants.gov.uk">memberenquiries@northnorthants.gov.uk</a> so that the matter can be passed onto the appropriate officer for resolution.</p>
18	Councillor Lyn Buckingham	Councillor Matt Binley	<p>This council has a duty to complete a HECA report this done in March 2021, please can you inform if a review has been completed or being completed, of achievements and slippages against the plan including the councils own housing stock, when will the next HECA report be published.</p>	<p>HECAs were completed under the previous sovereign authorities and a HECA report produced in May 2021 for NNC. The report is available on our council web pages on the following link <a href="http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/housing/housing-reports">www.northnorthants.gov.uk/housing/housing-reports</a> . More recently HECAs have been submitted on-line to BEIS prior to publication, however North Northamptonshire Council does not appear to have received a request to complete an on-line form for 2022. The council has contacted BEIS to query whether there is an expectation for completion of a HECA in 2022 and if so, have requested the online form to be sent in order for it to be completed for North Northamptonshire Council. The services responsible for performance around the various areas of the existing HECAs have been asked to provide a response to the questions regarding the plan and specifically the council's housing stock, that will be circulated to councillors once compiled</p> <p style="text-align: center;">   Home Energy  Conservation Act repc </p>

<b>19</b>	Councillor Jim Hakewill	Councillor Graham Lawman	When will future options for Knuston Hall be brought before Scrutiny so that its future role in North Northamptonshire's heritage is widely considered and evaluated?	The Executive considered a report on the future of Knuston Hall on the 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2022. The recommendations were agreed. Until bids are received it is difficult to know what the future options will be. The report considers the Heritage implications of the building and how this might be best secured. The building is also listed and is protected by planning obligations.
<b>20</b>	Councillor Jim Hakewill	Councillor Jason Smithers	When will meetings of the Executive (and other public NNC meetings) be filmed and available on YouTube so that anyone who wishes to see and listen to their Councillors making decisions can do so without having to give up their time to travel and attend?	The Executive that took place on Tuesday of this week was live streamed utilising the interim inhouse streaming solution. Today's Full Council meeting is also being live streamed, as have all recent Full Council meetings.  It is intended to roll out live streaming for all meetings held in The Cube on a gradual basis during the remainder of the Municipal Year. These will be rolled out as all members of the Democratic Services team are trained-up on the new equipment and all the functionality rigorously tested. Where a meeting is live streamed the Homepage URL will be included on Mod.Gov.
<b>21</b>	Councillor Jim Hakewill	Councillor David Brackenbury	Is the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) a policy or a background document informing the development of the SSP2 Local Plan, planned to be completed in December 2024 (as agreed by Full Council on the 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022)?	The GTAA is a background document forming the evidence to shape Council policy on Gypsy and Traveller provision.
<b>22</b>	Councillor Zoe McGhee	Councillor Helen Harrison/Councillor or Matt Binley	This Authority set out to work with the Poverty Truth Commission to explore support options for our 'left-behind areas'. Since then, we have learnt that work is being pursued in Queensway, Wellingborough. This is brilliant news for the community. North Northants, has 2 other areas also identified as 'left-behind', is there plans to	Progress is underway and ongoing work is being undertaken in mobilising the poverty truth commission. This will help to supplement the work undertaken within the Levelling-up Scrutiny Review and engage with wider partners on next steps. The final report of the Levelling-Up scrutiny review was presented to the Executive by the Chair of Scrutiny

			<p>pursue support for the residents of Avondale Grange &amp; Kingswood?</p>	<p>Commission on 25 August 2022 and resolved a number of recommendations including that the Executive “Supported the proposal for the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling up to take forward, with officers, the development of the Council’s Levelling Up plan.” This includes all three areas identified as left behind but will also look for opportunities to roll out successful schemes to other localities where opportunities exist to do the same</p>
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