

Full Council 23rd June 2022 – Councillor Questions

QUESTION 1

Councillor Martin Griffiths

“Over a year ago many members of this council campaigned for election with a manifesto pledge to “ Support the building of our NEW local hospital and Urgent Care Centre ”

Can we now be honest with the electorate over the likelihood of a NEW hospital and what steps THIS council, not local MPs, are taking to help deliver improved facilities at our existing hospital in Kettering.”

Councillor Jason Smithers

The Council is working closely with the Hospital Trust in support of its Hospital Infrastructure Plan (HIP2) bid for the site’s redevelopment. Please find below key bullet points:

- The Council has been working with the Hospital Trust in the preparation of a Local Development Order (LDO) for the Hospital site.
- The LDO will provide permitted development rights for specified types of development in specified locations, thereby negating the need for certain planning applications – this will help accelerate development and simplify the planning process in delivering the significant redevelopment package.
- Officers are also working with the Trust on its programme of enabling works, ahead of progressing the main redevelopment of the Hospital

In addition, the Council has also been supporting the Hospital Trust in other areas:

- Working with the Hospital Trust to formalise permissions for development undertaken using special powers during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Colleagues have supported the preparation of a Travel Plan for Kettering General Hospital. This identifies ways to make travel to and from the site more sustainable, healthier and safer for staff and visitors.
- Representatives from the Hospital have been fully engaged in the preparation of the Kettering Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Measures to improve accessibility to the hospital site by walking and cycling have been high on the agenda.
- Colleagues have worked with Voi to make provision for scooter and bike hire at the hospital and have supported training events to promote sustainable travel alternatives to and from the hospital.

QUESTION 2

Councillor Anne Lee

“How many Housing repairs are outstanding for both Corby and Kettering, how long is the backlog wait and what is being done to remedy the situation?”

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Councillor Matt Binley

Thank you for asking this question. The number of housing repairs that are outstanding for both Kettering and Corby are detailed below. I have tried to ensure some additional explanation where necessary to provide context:

Kettering:

Job Priority	Number of jobs awaiting completion	Of which, number outside of target timescale
24 hours	0	0
7 days	162	157
28 days	637	537
90 days	1134	193
Total	1933	887

Corby:

Job Priority	Number of jobs awaiting completion	Of which number outside of target timescale
24 hours	13	0
30 days	3934	3515
Total	3947	3515

- The systems used do not consistently report the reasons as to why a repair may have exceeded timescale, some jobs may have multiple explanations. Not all reasons are within the control of the service and some examples of this include but are not limited to:
 - Tenant may cancel/rearrange appointment on a number of occasions e.g., due to work commitments, may be away or in hospital etc
 - Parts ordered, awaiting delivery
 - No answer when trying to arrange appointments
- The service is developing further proposals to address and work through the backlog and create stability in the trades aspect of the service moving forward.

QUESTION 3

Councillor Anne Lee

“How Many repairs have been cancelled by the repairs service in the past six months where the tenant has not been in when the repairman called?”

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Councillor Matt Binley

Since 1 January 2022, the figures are Kettering - 99 and Corby - 418.

Until such point that harmonisation of the service is completed, there are different approaches, agreed by the previous sovereign authorities, that have been inherited by North Northamptonshire Council that may go some way to explaining the higher numbers for the Corby area. It is important to recognise that jobs are closed not cancelled, the tenant is able to re-open the job by following the instructions on the calling cards left.

Kettering area

Emergency Repairs

24 hours is the required timescale to respond to emergency repairs. The tenant is advised that an adult is required to be in the property for the 24-hour period or until the repair is completed within that timeframe. If an operative attends and there is no access to the property, a calling card is photographed being pushed through the letterbox and the order is returned to the dispatchers as no access. The job card would then be closed until the tenant contacts the service to re-arrange as per instructions on the calling card.

Urgent - 7 day and Routine Jobs (28 or 90 day)

In Kettering for non-emergency repairs these are arranged by letter and 3 attempts will be tried. If at all three attempts the trade are unable to gain access to the property the job card is closed but would be re-opened when the tenant makes contact as per the instructions on the calling card left.

Corby

The following process is used for repairs:

- Appointment booked with tenant.
- Operative attends, if no access the works Planner is notified.
- Planner calls tenant to advise the appointment will be rearranged or asks for them to go to the property.
- If the team are unable to contact to rearrange the appointment a card is posted through the letterbox stating that the job is cancelled.
- The Trade Operative updates the PDA with timings that the job was carded.
- The Planner then manually updates the job on the system as carded and completes the job.
- If/when the tenant calls back the job is reraised and rebooked.

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Question 4

Councillor J McGhee

“What has happened to the Councillor Development Charter and training programme it has now been a year since we signed up?”

Councillor Jason Smithers

Thank you for raising this question, I am pleased to update members on progress following the resolution of Council.

Following the resolution, there have been several very informative councillor training and development events held over the last 12-months. These events have assisted in broadening the knowledge of councillors across a range of service areas and topics. The events have been attended by a significant number of members and have focused on key priorities such as budget, transformation planning and carbon literacy to name a few.

To support wider development and delivery of the charter, officers have initiated initial planning meetings to develop a programme of member training that will be presented to the Member Development Group for comment and approval. If agreed the policy will be recommended by the group to the Democracy and Standards Committee for further consideration. The final draft version will then be presented to full Council. Officers have drafted documents that will underpin delivery of Councillor training, including (a learning needs analysis, a learning and development policy and Councillor self-assessment template). Going forward the project will also be supported by the newly appointed Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and East Midlands Councils.

Councillors are advised that the process leading to the awarding of the charter is likely to take several years as there is a requirement to submit a portfolio of evidence however the work towards it will ensure that the Council supports its members in the best way possible.

QUESTION 5

Councillor Lyn Buckingham

“Why is there no clear protocol in place for resolving councillor queries? Can this please be reviewed and a protocol with realistic timelines be put in place?”

Councillor Lloyd Bunday

The Council has a set of values that apply to everything that it does. These values include the desire for the Council to be ‘customer focused’ and ‘efficient.’ These values apply to the resolution of member queries just as they do to customer queries and those of staff. We would expect the queries of elected members to be acknowledged and responded to in a timely and effective manner.

We will look at establishing a more defined protocol and share this with members once finalised.

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QUESTION 6

Councillor Lyn Buckingham

“What if any equality impact assessment was completed on the proposed Towns Fund cycleway project for Corby that leads to a set of stairs to get to the railway station, and therefore doesn’t fulfil the original aim of connectivity?”

Councillor David Brackenbury

An Equality Screening Assessment has been carried out for the Town Fund - Town Centre to Train Station Link Road project (please see attached). The steps are an area that is specifically referenced in the assessment. Further investigations will be conducted on this area in the next stage of the project, centred on detailed design work. Prior to this, an assessment of the ramped access to Railway Station Carpark will also be conducted over the summer, including key stakeholder liaison.

QUESTION 7

Councillor Lyn Buckingham

“Is there a possibility that someone could attend a council meeting to update us on the plans for Towns Deal funding?”

Councillor David Brackenbury

Following the creation of NNC and award of £19.9m funding, the terms of reference for the previously created Corby Town Deal Board were reviewed, and a report was taken to Executive in June 2021 to confirm these terms of reference and the NNC membership. The board includes a representative from Corby Town Council, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Economy amongst a range of other stakeholders. These board meetings are scheduled every 6 weeks. Following discussions at these Board meetings a number of reports have been taken to Executive and Executive Advisory Panel’s to ensure members are kept up to date on progress of the work. This includes:

- In November 2021, a paper was presented at Executive to approve the early release of this fund (£995,000) award to the Capital Programme to fund the design work, feasibility studies and business case development.
- The Multi-use Building project was considered by the Executive Advisory Panel for Health, Wellbeing and Vulnerable People on 3rd December 2021. Key points raised regarding the need for a health and wellbeing hub to be considered, how this will be incorporated will be investigated in the feasibility study, including discussions with various stakeholders.
- 17th March 2022, a report approved at Executive on the Corby Town Fund - Sixth Form College to give delegated authority to prepare and submit the Business Case Summary Document to the Executive Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy.
- The Corby Station Link and Smart and Connected Corby were taken to the Executive Advisory Panel for Climate Change, Environment & Growth on 27th

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April 2022 for discussion. Key points raised included the stair access to the train station and accessibility. This will be looked at again in depth in the detailed design phase. Consultation will also be conducted with various stakeholders this summer.

- 16th June 2022 – a report on the Corby Town Fund Station Link and Smart and Connected Corby projects was taken to Executive and was approved giving delegated authority to prepare and submit the Business Case Summary Document to the Executive Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy.

Further work on each of the projects is continuing with an engagement plan for residents and stakeholders for the Station Link currently being drawn up for consultation over the Summer.

We can provide a member briefing if this would be helpful and will look to arrange this. We are planning to provide an update to Corby Town Council at the end of the summer as this has been previously requested.

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