

APPENDIX B

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER 2016 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, from Councillor Roger Jackson

Whilst I note that the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) programme is on track to deliver superfast broadband to 95% of premises in the county this year and 98% by 2018, is the Committee Chairman aware of public concern that service speeds can vary considerably between properties in the same village even after roll out has taken place?

The Corporate Director, Place reported to Economic Development Committee on 7th June 2016 that 'Speeds of up to 80 megabits per second (Mbps) are available depending on how far the property is located from its serving green street cabinet', but is it true that some properties are not connected to the nearest/newest green cabinet, but to other cabinets further away, meaning those residents do not benefit to the extent they might expect?

When BT installs a new cabinet at a particular location, do they automatically classify that area as 100% covered under the roll out plan, when in reality the standard of service for some might not be as good as it should be?

Response from Councillor Diana Meale, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee

I am aware of the concerns that speeds can vary between properties within the same village because speeds are very dependent on properties distance from the serving broadband cabinet.

I am also very well aware because many members such as Councillor Dobson raise those issues with me, as well as residents. Now it is true that some properties are not connected to the nearest or newest green cabinet. Whether a property will be connected to a new cabinet depends on the route of the existing copper network. What we are doing is upgrading an existing old system and in some areas the cost of rearranging the copper network to enable connection on some of the properties for the new cabinet would be prohibitively expensive.

Also a disparity can appear to be present within an area if residents have not upgraded their service. Deployment of a cabinet does not automatically result in greater speeds for connected properties. Residents are required to upgrade to a broadband service from their chosen Broadband provider. I can see you recognise that, but not everybody does. What we have done is quite a campaign with Parish Councils to make sure residents are aware that is that what needs to happen. Those experiencing low speeds are advised to check with their Internet service provider to determine if better speeds are available.

For those with the slowest speeds, that is less than 2Mbps, the Council has made available the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme. Where residents can apply for a connection voucher for satellite or wireless broadband. Ensuring that almost no-one, I am not going to say no one as there is always an exception, is left behind and all Nottinghamshire residents have access to some level of broadband.

Addressing your third point here, it is not true that when BT installs new cabinet in a particular location they classify that area as 100% covered. Coverage is calculated from the number of properties not the broad area which can actually connect to a broadband cabinet. However, some of the properties connected as you have alluded to will have less than superfast speeds, where superfast is defined as 24Mbps. The programme focuses on delivering broadband to those who currently have none but also on delivering improvements to those who have less than superfast speeds and in particular on the second contract we are just entering into that Councillor Dobson has referred to a bit earlier on in her constituency speech, some of the properties without a good connection will have an upgrade and the second contract seeks to deliver speeds of a minimum of 15Mbps. So hopefully people who are experiencing lesser speeds at the moment will have an upgrade under the second contract. That may still leave people with a problem and through our gain share system with BT we are developing a fund whereby those more expensive and more intractable problems can be addressed.

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Richard Jackson

Is the Committee Chairman aware of the concerns about cyclist safety on tram tracks, highlighted in the local media earlier this week by the comments of John Melia, who suffered serious injuries when his bicycle wheel got trapped in a stretch of track on Chilwell High Road and led to him being hit by a car.

Does he share my concern at the reported 48 injury accidents relating to the tram tracks at this location alone and would he inform the Council what steps he is taking to improve safety around the tracks on Chilwell High Road and elsewhere?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

I am aware of the issue that Councillor Jackson refers to. The problem is concentrated on the High Road, Chilwell. This is likely to be because of the popularity of the route with cyclists, and because of the narrow nature of the highway corridor which restricts the available space for all users despite the demolition that took place to install the tram.

This year we have been working closely with Tramlink, the tram operator, Nottingham City Council and the tram authority, Anna Soubry MP and other interested parties to devise and assist with the implementation of remedial measures following John's accident. These comprised of an overhaul of the signs and road markings to assist cyclists in this area, and were installed in March. Since finalised in June, I understand that these have been well-received locally. The safer route for

cyclists is now much clearer, and the extra markings really do help cyclists to avoid the worst hazards at the tram stop.

Prior to construction of the tram system, we presented an educational package to over 4,000 school children in the area to warn them of the risks, and we will continue to support Tramlink and the City Council with the operation of the tram and its associated infrastructure

Question to the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee, from Councillor John Wilmott

Will the Chairman of Adult Social Care and Health Committee tell this Council how many elderly residents in Nottinghamshire's two main hospitals are waiting to go home after treatment, but are having to wait because a service plan has not been agreed with our Social Services Department?

Response from Councillor Muriel Weisz, Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee

Thank you for the question which does give an opportunity for us to focus briefly on Social Care's contribution to the people's hospital journey which I know is of public interest. I have the up to date figures, but I just want to put those in a brief wider context. The Council provides dedicated hospital social work staff to support discharges for service users who might need new, different or additional services to enable them to go home safely after hospital care. To do this, we work closely with service users and their carers, as well as with a wide range of health staff and other partners including colleagues from District Councils, who often can resolve the housing-related problems arising with additional needs, and also with the voluntary sector. Daily meetings are held where appropriate to discuss the people who are ready for discharge and what needs to be done that this happens on time.

For elective surgery, that planning frequently goes on even before admission. At a strategic level, the Council is involved in transformation work throughout the County to review current discharge processes so that we can improve those arrangements. A key focus of this work is to offer more short-term services to promote people's independence and provide alternative options to hospital care, such as crisis response, intensive support at home that can be called almost home first, that should be the first focus for thinking, and a wider range of short term assessment places and flats, to support people to recover away from hospital. Each area also has integrated care teams where all professionals are working directly together to proactively prevent unnecessary attendance and admissions to hospital and care placements

Despite all this careful planning, some people do get delayed in hospital. For example, sometimes people reject the various offers of home care or residential care that are made to them and families may have a different view of what is needed. Test results can be delayed so that medical staff are unable to decide if the person can be discharged or not. Sometimes the patient has to wait for adaptations to be made to their home or for a physiotherapy assessment to be carried out, to ensure

that they will make a safe return. There could also be difficulties in arranging a home care package and getting it in place in time, or to find a nursing home that will take the person for a short period of recovery, or a permanent placement.

The number of days that are spent in “delay” as it were, for people who were well enough to be discharged from hospital is monitored monthly by the Department of Health. This information shows that the number of days of delay for reasons attributable to social care, across all care settings, and this has dropped significantly in Nottinghamshire over recent years. The indicator is in fact the average number of people whose hospital discharge is delayed per day, per 100,000 of the population. So this is the broader picture; in March 2015 the rate of delayed days for social care reasons in the County was 2.23. In April 2016 the rate of delayed days for social care reasons was 1.17.

Nottinghamshire is 55th in the country out of all 152 Local Authorities, for the number of delayed days recorded for social care reasons back in March 2016. The data includes all adults and the majority of all social care delays for Nottinghamshire people are for people who are waiting to leave Mental Health or Learning Disability hospital placements.

The Council performs very well in supporting discharges for people at Kings Mill Hospital, Queens Medical Centre and the City Hospital. Since April 2015, the number of requests for assessment from social care has increased by 19% in the south of the County and 48% in mid-Nottinghamshire. The hospital teams are doing extremely well I believe, to respond to this increasing demand within existing resources.

In August the Sherwood Hospital social work team received 209 requests to assess people who had additional needs to be met upon discharge. Out of this group there is a total of eight days delay for Social Care reasons. Similarly in August in NUH hospitals the number of requests were 276. So you can see the level of demand is substantial. To take one particular week as an example, at the Nottingham University Hospital Trust from Friday 2nd September for the week to Thursday 8th, there were 33 people discharged from hospital having had some involvement from Adult Social Care. That is just a random week. Out of this group of people there were five people who delayed for the following reasons: three people were waiting for a nursing home placement of their choice, one person was waiting for a permanent residential placement and declined to be moved into a temporary place until that permanent place was available and one person required a more detailed assessment of need on the ward, before final discharge plans could be made.

In the same week in Sherwood Hospitals Trust there were nine people who were referred formally to the hospital team. Six of these people were discharged on time, of the other three people, one person was delayed for four days due to a suitable care package not being available and two people stayed in hospital because they did not want the alternative care placement while a long term placement was put into place.

Overall in the context of this continuing increasing need and its complexity, the performance of the authority is very good. We continue to work closely with the

Health Service to implement national best practice in this area. We are not complacent of that continuing need to improve integration and the quality of service which is person centred. However as many of you may have heard on the radio this morning, this is all in the context of a growing crisis in funding identified by the Kings Fund today. Ironically the drastic reductions in local authority budgets are challenging the very effective integration that we are all working towards.

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Stuart Wallace

In October, Severn Trent Water contractors will begin a major project to overhaul Newark's Victorian sewer pipe system, to end the misery of up to 1,000 people regularly affected by sewer flooding in the town. These improvements are welcome, but it is inevitable the work will cause significant disruption and add to the severe traffic congestion which has afflicted Newark for many years.

Would the Committee Chairman explain what plans are being made by Via to coordinate our own highways maintenance, engineering and improvement plans with Severn Trent's work, and that of other utility companies?

Would he agree it is important for all stakeholders to work together to ensure that, when this project is complete in 2020, Newark residents and visitors can finally look forward to an era of fewer delays and less inconvenience?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

As Councillor Wallace indicates, Severn Trent Water are undertaking a major project to bring relief to many people who experience repeated flooding at their properties and to ensure that the sewer systems are brought up to appropriate standards.

At £60 million the project is the largest in this nature that has ever been undertaken in this region and will include the renewal of over 20km of pipes over a three year period.

Severn Trent has recognised from the outset that this work cannot be undertaken without significant impact on the community and has been working closely with Nottinghamshire County Council, and more recently Via, to develop a working method and programmes to reduce the inconvenience to road users, businesses and residents in Newark.

All parties are committed to coordinating works and planning to minimise disruption.

Work will start in November 2016, when the majority of the activity will be underground or in areas away from the town centre located off the highway.

The part of the project which is expected to be most disruptive to the town has been programmed to start in January 2018 for a period 17 weeks, thereby avoiding the busiest seasons.

Severn Trent has also engaged with the local community including businesses and have kept them informed of the proposals through a public forum as well as the public exhibition held in Newark Town Hall earlier this week, which was extremely interesting.

From these discussions Severn Trent Water has committed to using tunnelling extensively to include techniques which will cause less disruption, even though it is a more costly solution.

They have also taken the opportunity to incorporate work on the fresh water network in Newark to ensure it can meet the increasing demands as Newark expands. This approach provides opportunities to coordinate the work of water supply and disposal.

The project is currently at the start of a detailed design stage and all the options or opportunities of collaborative working are now being fully investigated. This includes opportunities for joint working or phasing with other utilities or other surfacing programmes. It is anticipated that where other utility apparatus needs will be diverted to facilitate the sewer works there will be the opportunity to ensure that subsequent maintenance is averted.

Question to the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee, from Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Would the committee chairman wish to express to the Council his regret for causing such public outcry and sad debacle over his schools admissions policy?

Response from Councillor John Peck JP, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee

I am grateful to be given the opportunity to answer the question by placing my answer within the context of some background information which may be helpful to Councillor Zadrozny and to other elected members. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Zadrozny personally for the support his Party at the time, the Liberal Democrats of which he was the Leader, gave to this change to the admissions criteria. This change had cross party consensus and members of all parties on the Children and Young People's Committee; Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats of which he was the Leader and Independents voted unanimously for the change. So the support of Councillor Zadrozny and his then Party was extremely important in maintaining this cross party consensus. Therefore I am rather surprised to receive this question from Councillor Zadrozny today as not only did his then Party under his leadership support the change to the arrangements, but even since the break with that Party, at no point has he indicated to me any change in that support, nor at the point when the arrangements were published, nor indeed on offer day which was back in April when parents received the offer of school places. Nor at any point between then and now has he made any representations to me. Only now asking a question in this Chamber several months after the parents have received the offer and after the children have actually started their new schools last week. But no matter, let me place my reply in some context.

The arrangements to which Councillor Zadrozny refers, are the County Council's school admission arrangements. The decision about determining arrangements is delegated to the Children and Young People's Committee which has all-party representation. The arrangements were determined by the Committee on 9 March 2015, and they are definitely not the 'Chairman's' arrangements, indeed the suggestion did not come from me at all, but came from a member of one of the other Parties.

The decision to remove the priority for out of catchment area siblings from the oversubscription criteria for Nottinghamshire community and voluntary controlled schools, gained cross party agreement and it was underpinned by a need for fairness. This was a local decision made by the Council for residents across the whole of Nottinghamshire. To try and explain, if I take say Hucknall as a good example, where you might get a situation where an out of catchment area parent has got their first child into a school. That parent may have moved away from the area or maybe some considerable distance from the school. But some years later it could be, they have a subsequent child, a sibling, they may then apply for a place at that school and get that place. But other out of catchment area parents who are much nearer, they might even be able to see their school from home, because schools are not in the centre of their catchment necessarily, are precluded from getting a place. So these are concerns that were made to my Committee.

In 2014, there were concerns that children living outside catchment but close to a school were sometimes unable to secure places at that school because places had been allocated to children who lived further away – sometimes at a considerable distance – but had a sibling attending the school and therefore had priority within the oversubscription criteria.

Councillors were also aware of the report from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) in 2013 which echoed the concerns outlined above that had already been clearly articulated within Nottinghamshire. We were of the view that the existing priority for out of catchment area siblings needed to change if schools were to best serve the needs of local families. There are sufficient school places for all Nottinghamshire children who need one, and we have been very good in creating those places. But, like all resources, school places are finite, and giving priority to one group of children, means that a different group of children will have a lower priority.

High priority within the oversubscription criteria is still given to children living in catchment and who have a brother or sister attending the school or the linked school. This supports families who wish their children to attend the same publicly funded local school.

The Council published the consultation for the 2016-2017 arrangements, the present arrangements, and gave people the opportunity to respond to the process which included publishing details on our website, advertising in the local press, briefing head teachers and chairs of governors and placing it on school governing body agendas where parents and governors were in attendance. We received very few responses.

As Council will be aware, an objection has been submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) about the consultation process for these arrangements, and we await the decision of that Adjudicator, but that refers to the process rather than our right to make such a decision.

In summary I do have every sympathy both as a parent and a former head teacher, with any parent who does not get a place for their child in their preferred school. I fully understand and sympathise with the difficulties where parents have their children in different schools. However, and you need to understand this, it has always been the case under the previous criteria that every year there were some families that were out of catchment and did not get the preferred school for their child or siblings, and it has always been the case that in some cases siblings have had to attend different schools. There has never ever been any guarantee, either under the new criteria or the previous one, given to any parent who lives out of the catchment area that even if they get their first child into their preferred school subsequent siblings would get a place.

To conclude, there are some important statistics that I just want to draw to Councillor Zdrozny's attention, and may interest other Members. This County Council has again been extremely successful in ensuring that the vast majority of parents get a place for their child at the school of their choice. So 91.5% of parents obtained their first preference school for their child. 97.8% obtained one of their preferences. Furthermore, Nottinghamshire has been extremely successful in creating additional school places to meet that demand. This year 1,500 extra places were created by building new classrooms and schools and that makes 5,500 extra places created since 2013, at a total investment of £70 million. And a further, I think off the top of my head, some 1,500 further places are in the pipeline as we speak.

One final statistic which is very important, and is a clear indication that the numbers of families, despite what you may have read in the press, that the numbers of families affected must be extremely small and that for every out of catchment area family that is affected under this revised scheme, there is also an out of catchment area winner, under this. But let me tell you, last year in 2015 the number of appeals submitted to this Local Authority was 424, and this year it was 443. A difference of just 19, which members will appreciate is a figure of absolutely no statistical significance. So we are talking about a very tiny number of families that may have been affected adversely. But as I say to counter that there are other families who have benefited in the same areas.