

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 MAY 2023 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities from Councillor Nigel Turner

Given my background working with local community groups in the Bassetlaw area over the past 20 years, could I ask the Cabinet Member to explain how voluntary organisations and community groups across Nottinghamshire will be able to benefit from the new financial support soon to be made available through the Local Communities Fund?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor John Cottee

Thank you for your question, Councillor Turner, and also thank you for the good work you do in your area. I'm aware of the things you do up there, so thank you for the question.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to talk about more than three quarters of a million pounds of new funding that will be distributed to voluntary organisations and community groups across Nottinghamshire to help improve health and well-being for our residents.

Through our fantastic Local Communities Fund, applications are currently being invited for cost-of-living grants, capital grants and revenue grants, with the application process open until Sunday 4 June. I know, Councillor Turner, that you have already encouraged and assisted bids from some groups in your division of Worksop South.

We are making available £150,000 in Cost-of-Living Grants, open for a second round, where eligible groups can apply for up to £5,000 to support residents most in need. There are two types of grants:

- one to help people who are struggling to buy nutritious food, to help improve health and well-being and build resilience; and
- another for those in need of a contribution towards rising energy bills, for instance to help groups keep their welcoming and warm centres and halls open across the county.

We have also earmarked half a million pounds in Capital Grants to be distributed between April 2023 and March 2024, where groups can apply for up to £20,000 to make improvements to facilities that help improve health and wellbeing, as well as projects with an environmental focus. These include:

- Improvements to sporting facilities;
- Play areas and equipment;
- Green horticultural improvements to open spaces;

- Heritage improvements, signposts and information boards to improve the visitor experience.

And Chairman, an annual pot of £100,000 of Revenue Grant funding has also been set aside, where eligible groups can apply for up to £5,000 to help with their day-to-day running costs such as paying wages and bills. Applications from a range of projects are welcomed, including:

- Summer play schemes;
- Projects that tackle digital exclusion, good neighbourhood schemes, dementia-friendly communities and food/lunch clubs;
- Encouraging local networks where people help themselves and each other to be resilient, neighbourly and safe;
- Increasing volunteering opportunities;
- Addressing climate and environmental change;
- Improving access to existing community-based services (for example, advice and signposting) for our most vulnerable residents.

Eligible groups can apply for all four types of grants to help meet specific needs in line with the criteria. Each application will need to clearly explain how the money will be used, if successful.

All applications for revenue and capital funding must provide a supporting statement from an elected Nottinghamshire County Councillor for the area in which the proposed project will be delivered.

To help simplify the process, groups now have two opportunities during the year to apply for capital and revenue grants. Following this current window, the next application window is expected to be open from 2nd October 2023.

Details of the eligibility criteria and how to apply are published in the Local Communities Fund section on the County Council website.

This demonstrates, once again, our commitment to helping our local communities at a time when we know cost of living pressures are significant.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health from Councillor Paul Henshaw

As part of its plan to 'fix' Social Care, in 2021 the Conservative Government promised £500 million to fund training and qualifications to develop the Social Care workforce.

On April 3rd it was announced that only half of that money has been allocated and funding to digitise some Social Care services has been reduced.

With existing challenges to care sector recruitment and retention in Nottinghamshire, will the Cabinet member challenge the Government's decision and speak up for those working in care roles who aspire to undertake further training and obtain qualifications?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Councillor Matt Barney

Thank you, Chairman and thank you Councillor Henshaw. You'll be delighted to know that the very simple answer to your question from me is, absolutely "yes", but I'm sure you would probably appreciate me elaborating slightly, so if you're happy to indulge me I will do that.

Last month, the Government announced that:

- £250 million of extra funding is being provided to fund a new care workforce pathway and hundreds of thousands of training places, including a new Care Certificate qualification - aiming to increase opportunities for career progression and development;
- £100 million is also being made available to accelerate digitisation, including investment in digital social care records, so staff have the latest information at their fingertips to meet the needs of care recipients.

This forms part of a total £2 billion allocation which also includes:

- a new innovation and improvement unit, backed by £35 million, to explore creative solutions for improving care, such as supporting local authorities to reduce care-assessment waiting times and using best practice from areas where waiting times have already been cut by a third;
- a £1.4 billion Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund, which local authorities can use flexibly, including to increase the rates paid to social care providers or reduce waiting times;
- £102 million over two years to help make small but significant adaptations people need to remain at home, stay independent and avoid hospital - including grab rails and ramps, small repairs and safety and security checks; and
- £50 million to improve social care insight, data and quality assurance - including person-level data collections and new Care Quality Commission assessments of local authorities to improve poor performance on social care and identify where further support is needed.

Alongside these reform commitments, the Better Care Fund, designed to help older people and those with complex needs to live at home for longer, will increase from £7.7 billion in 2022 to £8.1 billion in 2023 and £8.7 billion in 2024. That fund includes £1.6 billion to improve hospital discharge arrangements - £600 million next year and £1 billion the following year.

This is part of the Government's wider commitment to support adult social care services, backed by up to £7.5 billion over the next 2 years to help local authorities address waiting lists and workforce pressures, announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

We should acknowledge and welcome this significant investment, but fundamentally I agree with you Councillor Henshaw that local authorities with social care

responsibilities, like Nottinghamshire, will still require more resources going forward, not least for the measures he describes to support recruitment and retention.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his Autumn Statement last year that he had “heard the very real concerns from local authorities” about inflationary pressures, and about the practical and financial challenges of introducing eight pieces of social care reform. It is helpful that he decided to delay the implementation of these reforms for two years, effectively freeing up resources for councils to spend on our most immediate social care priorities.

We welcome this room for manoeuvre, but it is fair to say there are still significant questions to be answered at national level about the long-term, sustainable funding of social care.

Through our various channels of communication with the Department of Health & Social Care, we continue making the case for the release of more funds to invest in new models of care, training and workforce resilience that will further improve the lived experience of people and their carers and develop community services closer to home.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families from Councillor Bethan Eddy

Would the Cabinet Member for Children and Families make a statement on the outcomes of this year’s primary school admissions process?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Councillor Tracey Taylor

Thank you Chairman and thank you for your question, Councillor Eddy.

Yes, I’m happy to update Members, indeed I’m pleased to note that the Council Leader also made brief reference to the outcomes of this process in his Executive Report earlier today.

Nottinghamshire County Council contacted thousands of parents on Monday 17th April to advise them which school their child has been offered for either a reception or year 3 primary school place.

This year, 96.3% of Nottinghamshire children were offered their parents’ first preference school for a reception place this September (2023). That is 7,767 out of a total 8,062 who applied on time for a school place.

Overall, 99.6% of Nottinghamshire children were offered a place in one of their preferred schools. 99.6%.

Communication of such information is of course key, and now there are a variety of ways to apply and to receive the outcome. While parents who applied on time using the online portal were able to log on to their account to see their offer, parents who provided an email address received notification by email, and all others were sent their outcome by post.

Those who were happy with the school place offered had until Monday, 1st May to accept. Parents who were unhappy with the place that their child had been offered were guided to the Nottinghamshire County Council website for more information on the school admissions process, including how to appeal.

I am very pleased that almost all children have secured a place at one of their preferred primary schools for September 2023. It is the council's aim to continue to work closely with schools to ensure there are enough high-quality school places throughout the county, and a figure of 99.6% suggests that we are doing well.

I'd like to thank everyone who applied on time, and all those who have provided feedback on the process. We are constantly striving to make the admissions procedure as accessible as possible, within the statutory rules that we must follow, and we will continue to do so.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health from Councillor Paul Henshaw

At the Governance and Ethics Committee Meeting on 3rd May it was confirmed that this Council was found at fault when a resident with dementia was moved from one care home to another without a written risk assessment.

How many care home residents have been moved in the last 12 months and how many did not have a written risk assessment, as was the case in this instance?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Councillor Matt Barney

Thank you Chairman, and thank you again, Councillor Henshaw.

As we are all aware, we have seen higher than usual numbers of care homes close in recent years due to the direct and indirect impact of the Covid Pandemic. Fortunately, this has stabilised due to work in care homes with our support. In the last 12 months, six care homes in Nottinghamshire for the over 65s have closed and this has impacted on 91 people.

Each person and each home has a unique set of circumstances, and whilst we are responsible for supporting their work, we are not responsible for each individual. We work very closely with our Integrated Care Board, the Care Quality Commission and the placing Local Authorities to close homes and support any resulting moves safely, focussing on the individual.

We have robust and well-established processes that we have agreed with partners and that guide our staff when managing these stressful, disruptive, and frankly unsatisfactory circumstances.

However, I acknowledge, as did Officers in Governance and Ethics Committee where the complaint to the Ombudsman you have highlighted was scrutinised, that we do not get this right on every occasion.

We did not undertake a risk assessment in that case, as you quite rightly reference, but from it we have learnt how we can make our processes more robust and more secure with additional checks on our professional practice.

We have a long track record of managing home closures safely, often in emergencies, and both myself and our Corporate Director are deeply saddened that we let this person down.

We now work much more closely with Primary Care Networks to ensure the right information gets passed to the right place. We also now check after moves to ensure that the move was successful and that we have undertaken all the necessary work to make the move a success.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families from Councillor Bethan Eddy

Would the Cabinet Member for Children & Families join me in welcoming, and indeed promoting, the launch of the Nottinghamshire 4Uth Awards for 2023?

Would she agree with me that these awards continue to be an excellent opportunity to recognise and celebrate the efforts of young people who have overcome challenges in their lives and made a real difference in their community?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Councillor Tracey Taylor

Thank you, Chairman and thank you Councillor Upton for your question.

Absolutely yes, I will join you in welcoming, and promoting, the latest edition of Nottinghamshire County Council's 4UTH Awards.

This is the 12th year we've run these awards, enabling us to celebrate the achievements of young people who have overcome significant hurdles in their early life and yet have been able to show the courage and responsibility to help loved ones and their wider community, despite or sometimes even because of those challenges.

Previous winners have overcome major challenges such as bereavement, trauma and illness, and yet have raised thousands for charity, cared for friends and relatives, and helped others.

We want to recognise the achievements of young people from all seven districts in the county. We are seeking nominations from anyone in Nottinghamshire who thinks they know a young person deserving of this special recognition, whether those nominations come from friends, family, schools, youth groups, voluntary organisations or indeed councillors in this Chamber.

Nominations are open now until Monday 5 June 2023.

District youth panels will shortlist three top nominees and select district winners who will then receive their awards at a special awards ceremony in November, where this

year's overall 4UTH Award winner will be selected from amongst those seven district winners.

Full details of eligibility, and how to send in nominations, are available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website.

The 4UTH Awards not only give deserved recognition to the nominees and winners, but their success will hopefully inspire other young people to make a similar contribution to their community.

I know this award scheme has become close to the hearts of many colleagues in this Chamber and beyond, and it's nice that we see so many from around the Chamber at those awards ceremonies.

So, thank you Councillor Upton for your question and the opportunity to give these awards the attention they deserve.