

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH JULY 2018 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee from Councillor Samantha Deakin

Can I thank Councillor Cottee for his diligence and interest in the campaign to make the roads around Forest Glade School, Sutton-in-Ashfield safer?

Councillor Cottee visited Cavendish Street and Clipstone Avenue - both un-adopted roads in my division. These roads are next to one of the entrances to the school. Residents were delighted that the Council plan to bring the roads up to standard to ensure the safety of pupils, local residents and all those who use the road.

Can the Chairman please indicate when the Communities and Place Committee will be considering proposals, the type of work proposed and the timeframe of works, if agreed by his Committee?

Response from Councillor John Cottee, Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee

As you are aware, following my visit, Via East Midlands are currently undertaking an options analysis to assess the scope of the required works, and of course the timescale for the implementation. As soon as this is complete they will confirm arrangements with me, and I am happy to share those with you at the same time.

Question to the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee from Councillor Muriel Weisz

Can the Chairman please advise members whether this authority has considered any contingency plans to support a shortfall in Adult Social Care funding if this government decides not to address the funding issue?

Response from the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee, Councillor Stuart Wallace

The budget set in February projected that we would have a total shortfall for the Council of £54.2m and that would take place over the next three years finishing in 2020/21. Of that sum £23.4m can be attributed specifically to Adult Social Care and Health.

We will respond to these challenges through our Medium Term Financial Strategy, bearing in mind that we have already moved forward into a rolling process rather than an annual budget review. This means that savings proposals are now brought to all committees as soon as they are ready to be considered and implemented, enabling us to realise efficiencies sooner and reduce the budget gap more quickly.

I acknowledge that nationally, there is still uncertainty around the funding of adult social care, with the much awaited Green Paper which is now due to be published sometime in Autumn.

As former US Secretary of State for Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, once said:-

There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know.

There are known unknowns. These are things that we know we don't know.

Then of course there are unknown unknowns and these are things we don't know we don't know.

Obviously, I do not control the situation and timing of the Green Paper from the Government, and there may well be 'unknown unknowns' contained within it, but when these proposals and the financial implications do become 'known', we will manage and respond to the budgetary challenges as appropriate.

And finally, could I just make a mention in passing that later today, we will be looking at approving further work on a unitary authority bid, and that bid would release 23 – 29 million pounds of public money through rationalisation of the local government structure and economies of scale. That small contribution would do exceedingly well in my budget.

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Does the Leader agree with the Parliamentary Select Committee's Report in June that criticised the decision to shelve the electrification of the Midland's Mainline in the East Midlands and would she agree to write to the Secretary of State for Transport supporting the re-categorising of the scheme cancelled in July 2017 from 'cancelled' to 'pending' as recommended by this influential Parliamentary Select Committee?

Response from Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE, Leader of the Council

As stated in my written reply to your question from the previous Council meeting, which is recorded in today's papers, this Council has always supported the case for electrification of the Midland Main Line and we were collectively disappointed when the proposals were shelved.

However, as I also stated in that reply, I believe the Council should keep an open mind on all options for future investment to improve rail services for Nottinghamshire, be that bi-modal trains, electrification, or anything else.

I am willing to write to the Secretary of State for Transport stating that we would support re-categorisation of the electrification scheme from 'cancelled' to 'pending', but I think we should also recognise the complexities involved.

I believe that it could be that if electrification comes back onto the agenda, a phased approach might be the most feasible, where the straight parts of the track are addressed first, including those around East Midlands Airport.

Question to the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee from Councillor Rachel Madden

Given the recent substantial increase in the Budget for Highways, together with the excellent "6 Aims" proposed in the draft Rights of Way Management Plan, could the Chairman of Communities and Place Committee outline how much money will be allocated for the Rights of Way section over the next few years?

Response from the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee, Councillor John Cottee

The Rights of Way budget for staff is £420,000 and for maintenance and enforcement works is £320,000 per annum. This also includes contributions from the Local Transport Plan for general improvements and signing.

In addition to this, the Rights of Way team have secured an extra £200,000 for the maintenance and replacement of footpath and bridleway bridges.

As identified in the draft Nottinghamshire Rights of Way Management Plan, the Authority aims to deliver its vision and objectives by working with and involving partners and stakeholders to help assist with its duties in maintaining and recording the County's public Rights of Way network.

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Errol Henry JP

Having raised the Windrush Immigration issue at last Full Council, I am aware that many of our affected Nottinghamshire residents are having to access over stretched services provided within Nottingham City boundaries, as no such support exists for county residents. Therefore could the Leader inform members what support this authority is providing to its own residents, and additionally how we are signposting available support services that are local to these valued members of our community?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE

All relevant staff in the Registration Service for births, deaths, marriages and other services have been advised of guidance provided by the General Register Office section of Her Majesty's Passport Office. The guidance makes reference to the announcement by the Home Secretary regarding a Commonwealth taskforce set up in the Home Office to help those affected.

If Registration Officers are asked to advise individuals, especially in respect of a lack of documents, they will direct them to the Commonwealth taskforce on Freephone number on 0800 678 1925.

Alternatively, registration staff are aware that the taskforce can be contacted by email to commonwealthtaskforce@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk and that further information is available at www.gov.uk/windrush.

This information has also been passed to the HR duty desk and the Customer Services Centre, for use by advisers dealing with enquires from employees and members of the public.

As of 28 June 2018, no enquiries have been raised and I understand that you have had a meeting with officers yourself and that no enquiries were raised by yourself either directly to those places and those are the place you can go to. I think you had a written answer last time and I am happy to give you the written answer this time to get the correct information in relation to the websites.

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Michael Payne

A recent National Audit Office report has highlighted that due to the poor implementation and associated negative impact of the £1.9bn Universal Credit (UC) programme, additional costs have been created for other local services such as foodbanks, advisory and advocacy services. Have the County Council attempted to collect any local data from such services to establish the impact of UC being rolled out on our Nottinghamshire residents?

Response from the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee, Councillor Stuart Wallace on behalf of Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE, Leader of the Council.

Thank you for your question, Councillor Payne, which I shall take in my capacity as Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.

Universal Credit was introduced under the 2012 Welfare Reform Act and will replace six existing legacy benefits, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

Existing claimants are expected to be migrated over to Universal Credit starting in January 2019 and to be completed by the end of March 2023.

Universal Credit is currently being rolled out for new claimants across the county with the completion expected by the end of November.

So far, Universal Credit for new people has been rolled out to the Retford, Worksop and Newark Jobcentres

I appreciate that the introduction of Universal Credit may have an impact on the people in Nottinghamshire. We will monitor this through our Benefits and Advice Team and if people are in hardship we will support people through our existing Emergency Pathway process. The evidence so far is largely anecdotal and it is important we deal with the facts.

Claimants will also be able to request an advance payment, but this will need to be repaid later.

As part of the introduction process, each Job Centre is required to produce a Complex Needs Plan which supports claimants with such needs. This will signpost claimants towards voluntary groups such as MIND and MENCAP and, where appropriate, the County Council's social care services.

There are also a number of other things we are doing as part of the roll out to minimise the impact. These include:-

- Awareness sessions for staff on Universal Credit;
- Supporting service users to prepare for migration over to Universal Credit by ensuring they have the necessary photographic ID, a bank account, email address and a mobile phone number; and
- Working with Inspire to set aside dedicated IT session time for claimants;

If Councillor Payne or indeed any County Councillors have more detailed queries in relation to Universal Credit, our Deputy Director for Adult Social Care & Health, Paul McKay, will be happy to arrange a briefing.

Question to the Chairman of Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee from Councillor Jason Zadrozny

The problem of drugs like 'Spice' and 'Black Mamba' are reaching epidemic proportions in many places in our County. This is putting our emergency services under intolerable pressure.

Places in some parts of Ashfield and Mansfield for example resembling real life horror films – with users walking around like zombies or lying unconscious in public places.

What is this Council doing to deal with this increasingly serious issue and what discussions has it had with other agencies like the NHS and Nottinghamshire Police to implement a multi-agency approach to help users?

Response from the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee, Councillor Stuart Wallace.

It is a sad reality that the abuse of drugs is nothing new to our society, and the long-term effect on addicts, particularly of harder drugs, is very well known.

However, as your question suggests, the New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) like 'Spice' and 'Black Mamba' have effects which appear particularly visible and obvious to the public as they go about their daily business, with some of the users of these drugs, as you quite rightly identified, literally collapsing comatose in streets, parks and other public places. Not only is this a very distressing experience for those witnessing such incidents, but it goes without saying that the users themselves are left in a most exposed and vulnerable position.

According to 2016 national statistics from the Home Office on drug use in England and Wales in 2015:-

- The prevalence of NPS use was generally low among adults aged 16 to 59. Fewer than 1 in 100 (0.7%) adults had used an NPS during that year, equating to around 244,000 adults.
- Use of NPS was concentrated among younger people aged 16 to 24, with around 1 in 40 (2.6%) taking the substance, equating to around 162,000 people, and was particularly prevalent amongst young men.

Our own service data is more up-to-date, covering the period April 2017-May 2018. It shows that the number of referrals received where NPS is listed as 'Drug 1, 2, 3 & other' in each district is as follows:-

Ashfield	14
Bassetlaw	40
Broxtowe	3
Gedling	4
Mansfield	48
Newark and Sherwood	14
Rushcliffe	3
Total	126

We have this data because Nottinghamshire works hard to monitor and tackle the problem of New Psychoactive Substances as effectively as we can and we do that through:-

- Change, Grow, Live (CGL), the contracted provider of Nottinghamshire County Council's substance misuse treatment and recovery service, who are supporting individuals who use NPS problematically, with each individual given support to stop them using NPS productions;
- Nottinghamshire County Council also engages with partners including local NHS and the Police through the Safer Nottinghamshire Board Community Safety Partnerships; and
- The Safer Nottinghamshire Board has recently reviewed the role and contribution of 5 Assertive Outreach workers in place across Nottinghamshire, posts which are currently being funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with additional funding provided by District Councils and Nottinghamshire County Council.

These outreach workers cover all the districts, working with the most vulnerable adults in local communities, many of whom are living on the streets and visibly using NPS drugs. The outreach workers provide care co-ordination to ensure these individuals can get access to the critical services they need.

Efforts are being focused in particular on those districts where NPS use is most visible, namely Mansfield and Bassetlaw, but as your question and our data illustrates, no borough or district is unaffected by this problem, including Ashfield.

The evidence and feedback from the Assertive Outreach Workers across the county is that housing and mental health are primary issues, with substance misuse being a result of these problems.

We will continue to work with other agencies to address the issue, whilst continuously reviewing the effectiveness of our strategies at a time when we all know resources are under pressure.

Question to the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee from Councillor John Peck JP

Would the Chairman please provide members of this Council with an update on the outcome of the consultation regarding the tender for the East Midland rail franchise, in respect of the proposal to extend the Robin Hood Line to Ollerton?

Response from the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee, Councillor John Cottee.

The Department for Transport published its responses to the East Midlands Rail franchise consultation in June 2018.

The response recognises that “Nottinghamshire County Council would like to see the freight line and test track between Shirebrook and Ollerton opened to passenger services.”

There were 1,807 responses to the question about whether the line should be opened to the public, with 90% of respondents in favour of re-opening the line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains.

The Department for Transport’s response was therefore that:-

“The operator will be required to submit a business case to the Secretary of State once they have started to operate the franchise to demonstrate the case for opening the line for passenger service. Bidders are incentivised to propose schemes which include proposals to invest in railway infrastructure. Similarly, Bidders are incentivised to work with third party organisations to deliver investments, potentially via third-party funding.”

Officers will therefore work with the successful Bidder to pass on the findings of the County Council-funded studies into the reopening of the line, once that Bidder has started to operate the franchise.

Question to the Chairman of Communities and Place Committee from Councillor David Martin

Could the Chairman of Communities and Place Committee tell me when the roll out of the digital electronic apparatus for advanced notification of the arrival of buses will be coming to Selston Parish?

Is it perceivable that the Robin Hood card payment system will ever be deployed across the whole of Nottinghamshire to make it easier for residents beyond its current limitations to enjoy the multiple benefits of that system?

Response from the Chairman of the Communities and Place Committee, Councillor John Cottee

Nottinghamshire County Council and bus operators continue to invest in making Real Time Information available to the travelling public via on-street displays, the web and on mobile devices. This has included investment in over 630 displays, funded from bids to Government as well as from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Measures block. We have also worked with smaller operators to help them to be able to provide Real Time Passenger information to their users. This will be completed by October 2018.

The County Council will continue to look for opportunities to support the further rollout of Real Time displays elsewhere in the County, including Selston.

We are working with bus operators to roll out integrated ticketing across the County, as outlined in the Integrated Ticketing Strategy, which includes the expansion of the Robin Hood Card to include communities beyond the Nottingham conurbation. Parallel to this work with the Robin Hood Steering Group, the County Council has facilitated the introduction of a smart integrated ticket for the Pronto service, which will provide the foundation for further integrated ticketing products in Mansfield and, in the medium term, other Market Towns in Nottinghamshire.

Question to the Chairman of Personnel Committee from Councillor Kate Foale

Thank you for your written response to my question last time about enabling more women to be in a position to apply for senior positions in this County Council.

Can Councillor Clark please identify what this Council is actually doing to ensure the hidden restrictions preventing highly qualified and talented women from entering our workforce and progressing to senior roles within this authority are being addressed to enable Nottinghamshire County Council to illustrate its commitment to equality of opportunity for all?

Response from the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Neil Clarke MBE

To be frank, I would have thought that my written reply to Councillor Foale's previous question at the last Council was fairly comprehensive. It is set out in the white pages of the Council book from today's Council, where I set out the various ways the Council is seeking to ensure that more women have the opportunity and encouragement to apply for senior positions, from both inside and outside the organisation.

I specifically explained that work is being undertaken through the Personnel Committee to:-

- raise awareness of any potential for unconscious bias at the point of recruitment;
- ensure that posts are open to flexible working wherever possible; and
- provide a diverse range of role models and coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities to support female employees who aspire to move into senior managerial roles.

A further report will be brought to the Personnel Committee next January to update Members on the progress being made with all of these initiatives, and Members will of course have the opportunity to suggest any further measures they believe this Council should be taking.