

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Church from Cllr Malpas

Can the Portfolio holder tell me

1. How many new bus passes has there been issued?
2. How many were issued to senior citizens?
3. How many were issued on the grounds of disability?
4. Using the answer from question 3, how much would it cost this authority if we were to allow those with a disability to travel at no cost 24hrs a day, 7 days a week?

Answer:

1. *Total applications for new national concessionary bus pass submitted to the suppliers, the majority of which will have been received by applicants*

Total 24,133

2. *To date, applications for Residents aged 60 and over*

Total 22,686

3. *To date, applications for Disabled residents*

Total 1,447

4. *The research required on the cost of unrestricted concessionary travel is subject to a decision by Overview and Scrutiny 1 on commissioning consultants to carry out the exercise. They have agreed to set up a task and finish group on Concessionary Fares*

Councillor Richard Church
Portfolio Holder - Regeneration

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Beardsworth from Cllr Palethorpe

On at least two occasions the portfolio holder for housing has informed the council that she has put in place a strategy for reducing the level of arrears and for collecting outstanding arrears from former tenants.

Will the portfolio holder also provide a written explanation of the following:

1. The accumulated total of arrears recovered from former tenants under the new scheme, and the number of tenants involved.
2. Has the high level of arrears been discussed with NTACTION?

Answer:

The total amount of arrears recovered since the new housing computer systems (IBS) went live in October 2007 is £1,322,181

The number of former tenants currently stands at 2,020 and we are actively chasing this debt.

In the last quarter, a significant reduction in current rent arrears was achieved representing a £220,000 increase in collection rates compared to the same period last year and this will clearly have a positive impact on the amount of former tenant arrears accumulating this year.

There are regular liaison meetings with NTACTION representatives where performance information is shared and discussed including the current position relating to rent collection.

**Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Portfolio Holder - Housing**

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Crake from Cllr Larratt

A few weeks ago the borough council was informed that the public bench on the junction of St. Edmunds Street, Alfred Street and Stockly Street was in need of repair. Many people walking to and from the hospital used the bench as a place to rest, but rather than repairing it, the council removed it.

Would the portfolio holder please inform me what plans they have to replace the bench, and inform me of a date by when a replacement will be installed?

Answer:

The bench had become dangerous due to age and had to be removed following complaints. An order for a replacement was issued straight away and is due to arrive and be in place early in August.

Councillor Trini Crake
Portfolio Holder - Environment

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Glynane from Cllr Palethorpe

During the CEFAP funding allocation meeting held March 2008 the Deputy Leader responded to a question from the voluntary sector representatives on the panel that he was not aware of the reasoning behind the additional £10,000 grant to Northampton Rape and Incest Crisis Centre, and promised to respond to them in writing. Can the Deputy Leader of the council confirm that he has indeed written to the voluntary sector representatives, and will he undertake to provide a copy of his response to the CFAP committee members?

Answer:

The Deputy Leader of the Council has not written to the voluntary sector representatives on CEFAP (Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel) to provide information on grants to the Northampton Rape and Incest Crisis Centre. The minutes of the meeting do not record any undertaking to provide information on this matter.

Councillor Tony Woods
Portfolio Holder – Partnerships & Improvement

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Crake from Cllr Flavell

There is an ongoing problem in St. Crispin ward of surplus trade refuse being left at the junction of Hood Street and Colwin Road by nearby food outlets. This has persisted despite numerous complaints to the council. I believe there are currently provisions in the budget for two Section 47 enforcement officers, but it would appear that no action has been taken to resolve this.

Can the portfolio holder please tell me what the council has already done to prevent this nuisance, and what additional action it intends to take to stop it once and for all?

Answer:

I am aware of problems in this area. Officers have contacted local businesses and action under Section 47 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 will be taken if the problem persists.

Our enforcement activities are being reorganised to strengthen enforcement. The additional officers will be employed as part of this reorganisation.

Councillor Trini Crake
Portfolio Holder - Environment

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Beardsworth from Cllr Flavell

Three years ago the borough council installed security gates in properties at Portland Place following complaints from residents who had found that the area was being littered with used needles and drug paraphernalia. I have recently received similar complaints from residents on the Bouverie Estate, one of which being serious enough to gain national media coverage. Despite this I have been told that an investigation conducted by the borough council found that there was no demand for security gates at this location.

Will the portfolio holder please provide details of this investigation and inform me as to which member, officer or committee made the decision?

Answer:

The budget for this work is limited given that our priority is to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Consequently, we will be spending the majority of available funding on improving our housing stock. However, there is an installation programme for security doors and gates and all requests are evaluated against set criteria before being included in the programme. All decisions relating to prioritising work programmes are made by officers working within the property maintenance section of Housing

**Cllr Sally Beardsworth
Portfolio Holder - Housing**

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Glynane from Cllr Reeve

It is requested that the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety provide the Council with a detailed breakdown of the April 2006 – March 2007 and April 2007 – March 2008 crime figures (not percentage, actual reported crimes) in Northampton for the following categories:

- Violent crimes
- Thefts of & from motor vehicles
- Robberies (including those involving threats or violence)
- Burglaries

Answer:

The figures for Northampton for each category of recorded crime are as follows -

Violent crime:

2006-7	5,078 crimes		
2007-8	5,367 crimes	289	5.69%

Thefts of and from motor vehicles:

2006-7	3,854 crimes		
2007-8	3,232 crimes	-622	-16.14%

Robberies:

2006-7	688 crimes		
2007-8	538 crimes	-150	-21.80%

Burglaries (of dwellings)

2006-7	1,897 crimes		
2007-8	1,933 crimes	36	1.90%

2006-7	11,517 crimes		
2007-8	11,070 crimes	-447	-3.88%

Councillor Brian Hoare
Portfolio Holder - Performance

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Beardsworth from Cllr Palethorpe

It is requested that the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing provide the following information:

1. A breakdown of the April 2008 homelessness figures including those in temporary accommodation, in Northampton Borough Council housing stock, private landlord stock, RSLs and B&B.
2. A breakdown of the homelessness and temporary accommodation data for the period April 2007 – March 2008.

Answer:

These figures are being calculated manually between April 2007 – March 2008 as the information required pre dates the new housing computer system (IBS).

1. April 2008 homelessness figures are as follows:-

Applications	42
Accepted	28
Intentional	9
16/17 year olds	3
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	2
Friends no longer willing to accommodate	3
Partner Non Violent	3
Violence/Harassment	6
Loss/Termination of tenancy	11

2. At the end of April 2008 there were 58 households in temporary accommodation.

22 in Registered Social Landlord stock
20 in Private sector leased accommodation
8 in Council housing stock
8 in Bed and Breakfast (average length of stay 1 week)

The number of homeless preventions last year was 916

Homeless and temporary accommodation data for the period April 07/March 08

Applications	428
Accepted	307
Intentional	37
16/17 year olds	153
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	58
Friends no longer willing to accommodate	44
Violence/Harassment	78
Loss/Termination of tenancy	126

There were a total of 463 households in Temporary accommodation during this period with an average of 80 in any one week and an average stay of 9 weeks.

It has not been possible to break down this information further as this predates the implementation of the IBS open housing system when such reports were unavailable.

Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Portfolio Holder - Housing

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Crake from Cllr Scott

How many cases of flytipping have been reported to Northampton Borough Council in the last six months?

Answer:

During the period 1st January 2008 to the 30th June 2008, Northampton Borough Council received 3,164 reported instances of fly tipping.

**Councillor Trini Crake
Portfolio Holder - Environment**

Questions for Full Council Monday 21st July 2008

Question to Cllr Church from Cllr Scott

Could the administration state whether planning permission was required for installing the arrow and spheres on the racecourse and if not why not?

Answer:

If the work had been carried out by the Borough Council this would have been Permitted Development and so would not have required planning permission.

FoNR asked the Council if planning permission would be required for the artwork and notice boards (spheres) and were advised that it was not. A detailed consideration by planning and legal officers now concludes that technically, as the work was carried out by the Friends of Northampton Racecourse (FoNR) and not the Borough Council it may not be classified as permitted development under Part 12 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted) Development Order 1995 and therefore planning permission may have been required. However, the position is not entirely clear and Officers are conducting further investigations on the exact status of the art work..