

## Questions to Council

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### Norman Adams, 3 Redruth Close, Northampton to Cllr Beardsworth

In a recent reply regarding Sheltered Housing, the portfolio holder confirmed there were 2,181 units.

Of that 2,181 units (as at 1 December 2008) how many were occupied, AND in terms of floating support what number were receiving the following;

- 1) Level One
- 2) Level Two
- 3) Level Three

### Answer

There are currently 2,187 Council properties that are designated for Sheltered Housing. Of these, 2,148 were occupied at 29<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

Of those occupied, 1,176 received support services at level 1 (one visit per month), 903 received level 2 services (three visits per week) and 69 were assessed and received services at level 3 (daily visits)

Each individual resident's support service is determined by a support plan. This plan is a comprehensive document that is formally reviewed twice every year. In addition to this, Sheltered Housing Coordinators regularly identify changing support needs and amend support packages to suit, either on a temporary or more permanent basis.

2.

### Cllr Joy Capstick to Cllr Brendan Glynane

The Council was conducting an options appraisal on the future of Brookside Community Centre, which is now in a state of disrepair. Can the portfolio holder tell me whether the options appraisal has been completed and if it has what was the result?

### Answer

The Council has not completed a full options appraisal of the future of Brookside Community Centre. The Centre was closed because of serious structural problems and it would be uneconomic to repair. Officers have nonetheless reviewed issues related to the physical state of the property, the Council's wider ownership of land within the vicinity and have considered whether earlier suggested re-development proposals should be re-visited. As Councillor Capstick is aware, given the configuration of the premises it is not sensible to look at the future of the closed building in isolation from the surrounding local facilities.

The Chief Executive, at the request of the local Residents Association, visited the area in November. He is arranging for an officer group involving Neighbourhood Management, Asset Management, Housing, Regeneration to consider the scope for a wider re-development of the locality that would incorporate the community centre and aim to help the area as a whole to regenerate. This work will take into account wider community objectives. I have asked the

Chief Executive to report back on the matter to the residents and ward councillors once the possibilities have been scoped.

**3.**

**Cllr Joy Capstick to Cllr <sup>Glynane</sup> Brian Hoare**

The Liberal Democrat manifesto said in May 2007;

*"We will review the operation and structure of Overview and Scrutiny and will seek to increase the resources available so it can be more effective".*

Is this administration still committed to allocate more resources to Overview and Scrutiny for it to be more effective? And if so, will he push for two full-time Overview and Scrutiny Officers as agreed by cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2007?

**Answer**

The resourcing of Overview & Scrutiny forms part of the budget considerations now in progress.

I understand that the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee are reviewing the arrangements for Overview & Scrutiny in this council and will be making recommendations to Cabinet in due course taking into account the changing needs of Scrutiny, changing legislation and proposals for county wide Scrutiny of the Local Area Agreement. Once these recommendations are received Cabinet will be better placed to determine the level of support required.

**4.**

**Cllr Tess Scott to Cllr <sup>Cake</sup> Brendan Glynane**

The Liberal Democrat manifesto 2007 said;

*'Over the course of the next 4 years we will further extend the scheme so that all areas of the town have at least one dedicated neighbourhood warden'*

The current budget consultation says;

*'Reorganise the neighbourhood wardens and enforcement on environmental issues to improve co-ordination and effectiveness'*

Can the portfolio holder give an assurance that however the neighbourhood wardens are 'reorganised' the administration is still committed to the election promise quoted above?

**Answer**

It remains the administration's aspiration to have a Neighbourhood Warden allocated to each area of the town. We are currently reviewing the Warden service to ensure they are better integrated into the organisation.

5.

**Cllr Christopher Malpas to Cllr Richard Church**

Because members are prohibited from asking questions in council on specific planning applications, and may only address the planning committee on agenda items, applications are currently not open to adequate scrutiny. Would the portfolio holder please investigate how this situation may be resolved?

**Answer**

I am keen to ensure that Councillors have ready access to information about planning applications throughout the town. At present, councillors are notified by email on a weekly basis about new applications, presented by ward for ease of access.

We are looking at changing this so that committee and delegated decisions will be clearly identified.

I would like to remind councillors that they can ask for an application to be determined by the committee if they have a sound planning reason for doing so. I welcome the use of this 'call-in' facility where it is clear that determination by the committee in public with the public right to speak will ensure an open and transparent outcome

Planning Committee discussed notification of appeals at the meeting on 19th December. It was agreed that all appeals be notified to each meeting and will be an item for information on the agenda. It appeared this month for the first time. Any decisions received after the agendas are printed will be notified verbally and then in print at the following meeting.

A number of constitutional issues around the operation of delegated powers have been raised and will be considered by the constitutional working party. I would ask councillors to raise any relevant constitutional concerns they have with members of the working party

6.

**Cllr Christopher Malpas to Cllr Sally Beardsworth**

It has come to my attention that notification for the council run development workshop on 12<sup>th</sup> January was not received by residents in Bellinge until a few days before the event. As a result, many residents were unable to attend, and the meeting was not as effective as it could have been. The way in which this council communicates with the public has been identified as one of its weaknesses, so could the portfolio holder please tell me what has been done to improve the situation, and what will be done to prevent similar problems arising in the future?

**Answer**

Cllr Malpas has already received a full reply on this matter from officers.

Given the proximity of Christmas it was considered inadvisable to send out invitations to this meeting too early as they would have to be repeated. The decision was therefore taken to provide approximately one weeks notice of the meeting. 8 residents attended the meeting.

This was the first of a number of consultation events that will be arranged if our PFI Expression of Interest receives government support so residents will have other opportunities to comment on proposals.