



Labour

Clr Report Mar 2013

The Labour Group

In the council chamber the Labour group have been arguing for *Unitary Status* for Northampton. At present we are subject to two planning authorities; the borough for major planning developments and the county for highways. This means the planning authorities have a tendency to pull against each other.

The Tory administration is passporting back room services to a consortium made up of the County, Cambridge and Norwich. Under *LGSS* services will be retained within the public sector but there will be some job losses, which will be monitored.

We have also argued for the retention of *Neighbourhood Planning* and voted against the loss of the *Neighbourhood Coordinators*. These roles brought local people and organisations like the police, the wardens, and housing together to plan locally. The coordinators were also excellent fundraisers for local projects.

We have successfully pressed for an increase in *Wardens and Park Rangers* and for some of the park rangers to be mobile and able to service all the boroughs parks.

The Labour Group of councillors have held the Tory administration to account over the *Enterprise Contract* and forced a review of the service.

Labour councillors led the *opposition to Parish Councils* because our view was that they would incur more costs for services that should already be delivered by the borough.

We have also been monitoring the extremely serious situation with *Housing*. There is a very serious housing shortage in the borough with additional pressure coming from the London Boroughs displacing some of their housing need on to us. We are opposed to wholesale stock transfer.

We recently, successfully took a motion to council asking for the administration to support an *International women's day event on March 8th*. This was carried and will be held in the museum from 11 -2 pm.

At the budget setting meeting last month we presented *alternative priorities* for consideration. (More wardens, PCSOs, Park Rangers. And the Living Wage). We were supported by the Lib Dems but defeated by the majority conservative group

This month opposition business will be on the Welfare Reforms.

The ward

Castle ward continues to feel the effect of austerity measures with housing, jobs and services all under pressure. There are signs of growth and development however with the involvement of the university in the town centre, and the very welcome development of Castle station. There is a question mark over the Enterprise zone and that has still to prove the investment is worth the money in terms of attracting new enterprises and jobs.

Within the ward the councillors work with heavy case loads, with the biggest area of concern issues to do with housing. Other issues are to do with the environment, littering and flytipping. We are also contacted about anti-social behaviour, parking, community projects, planning and licensing. In addition there are a whole range of issues like schools, transport, social care, that we take up with the county. Some issues like immigration we take up with the MPs.

The ward councillors work closely with the residents associations and other groups. These organisations provide really important grass roots services to local people, including in the case of

the Family Centre a food bank. It is a sign of these very difficult times that food banks are becoming a necessity even for working people.

The sports development team and the play development officers are working with us to provide more services to young people in the ward. The team have just won a Dragons Den competition for £10,000 to develop play streets in the ward. Details will be worked through at residents association meetings so do come along.

The single biggest issue we face as Cllrs are the Welfare Reforms:-

The Bedroom Tax

The housing benefit cap means that tenants with an extra bedroom as calculated by the council will be penalised by 14% for one room and 25% for two rooms. This is extra money to find each week out of budget already hit by rising fuel prices, transport prices, food prices.

We estimate most households will have to find an extra £728 a year.

This move is trying to force people into small housing units to free up larger units for families. There is a problem with this as there are not enough smaller units for people to move to.

Who will be affected most?

Families of soldiers away serving our country are among those hit by the bedroom tax

A quarter of the people affected by the bedroom tax are single mums and single dads

The bedroom tax means households with disabled family members pay more for the space they need.

At the same time as the bedroom tax comes into effect, thousands of millionaires will get a tax cut of average £100,000 a year.

Council Tax Reduction

Everyone will also be affected by the reduction in Council Tax benefit. Households will have to find an extra 8.5% to pay their council tax. This will be about £98 a year for households on band D

Meet your councillors

Thursdays 2-4 pm Castle Hill Church

Saturdays 12 -2 pm Central Library

First Friday of the month 12 -2 pm –Open Door Centre Kettering Road.

Please Note:- There are three funds available for community groups to access.

Castle Community First

St Crispin's Community First

Community Foundation.

For more information please contact one of the ward councillors

Local Community Associations

Springs Family Centre
Hope Centre
Open Door Centre
Spring lane Sure Start Centre
William Street Partnership
Castle Hill Church

Residents Association

St Edmunds
Pemba
Colwyn Road
Double H
Thaw
Spring Boroughs

Councillor Empowerment Fund.

Borough councillors get £3000 to disperse in the ward annually. This is how I have dispersed it.

	3000	2012	
	Amount	Date	Bal
NSWAG	200	May	2800
SBOAPs	200	May	2600
Toy Library	200	May	2400
Baby Café	200	May	2200
Diwalli	200	May	2000
Carnival	200	May	1800
ANSS	200	May	1600
Open Door	200	May	1400
Sumaiya	200	Aug	1200
SBOAPs	200	Aug	1000
Double H	200	Sept	800
SERA	200	Sept	600
Street football	200	Sept	400
Sikh Youth Vols	200	Oct	200
William Street Partnership	200	Feb	000

Councillor Case Work Castle Ward from April 2012-Mar 2013

<u>Litter</u>	40
<u>Black bins</u>	4
<u>Fly tipping</u>	42
<u>Rubbish Collections</u>	23
<u>Street Lighting</u>	20
<u>Parking</u>	16
<u>Overgrown shrubs/trees</u>	8
<u>Housing repairs</u>	16+24(1 block in SBs)
<u>Housing waiting lists</u>	16
<u>Xchanges</u>	1
<u>Housing bonds</u>	6
<u>Housing evictions</u>	4
<u>School admissions</u>	3
<u>Immigration</u>	4
<u>Anti -social behaviour</u>	19
<u>Graffiti</u>	12
<u>Uneven pathways/potholes</u>	8
<u>Planning Objections</u>	14
<u>Licensing Objections</u>	8
<u>Mobility scooters</u>	2
<u>Play space</u>	7
<u>Youth Provision</u>	3
<u>Community spaces</u>	3
<u>Pest Control</u>	8
<u>Builders Rubbish left/area not made good</u>	8
<u>Public toilets</u>	2
<u>Crime and the fear of crime</u>	17
<u>Hate/racist crime</u>	4
<u>Social Care and Health</u>	4
<u>Community clean up and development projects</u>	7
<u>Community advice development projects</u>	11
<u>Funding</u>	26
<u>Benefit advice</u>	6

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