

## Ward councillor's report (Barby & Onley) March 2025

### Barby Sporting Club planning applications -update

I met with the Eamon McDowell, the case officer and Simon Ellis recently to try and get some clarity as to the inordinate delays in bringing the applications to committee. Simon Ellis having told me last month that the report for the additional bunds application might be ready by next month "*at the earliest*" a decision in April is clearly totally unrealistic. The case officer is still waiting for a highway condition report on Barby Lane from his own highway authority.

At the Cabinet meeting last week the Leader Cllr Adam Brown commended the planning service on its improved performance in the last 18 months as regards the processing of planning applications within the government timescale targets or within timescales agreed with applicants. WNC's target for this is 70% and in the last quarter, October -December 2024 91% were processed within these timescales.

I have now written to the Leader to make him aware of the Sporting Club applications which are not being processed in a timely way, highlighting the frustration and anxiety these delays are causing the communities of Barby and Kilsby. I have requested his intervention in expediting the highway condition report.

### WNC Corporate Plan Performance Report

The planning statistics referred to by the Leader are part of whole range of performance statistics that are published every quarter by WNC and which come to Cabinet ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 04/03/2025 18:00](#) WNC monitors performance across all services and clearly some services are functioning better than others and the key indicators do not cover every aspect of their performance. For example, the housing waiting list currently has well over 4,000 applications awaiting assessment owing to the backlog incurred by amalgamating three housing allocation schemes. In the latest Corporate Report the scorecards concerning the housing service relate only to prevention of homelessness (15% of households in the last quarter against a target of 50%) new council homes built (0 and "No target") and affordable homes completed (84, above the target of 76).

### Children in care

The reduction of children in WNC's care (down from 649 to 623) in the last quarter is good news and indicates that the increase in early intervention is having some effect.

Northamptonshire has a lower than national average of numbers of children in care. Only a very small proportion of children in West Northants are placed in care on account of their behaviour, the principal reason is their family circumstances or neglect.

Some lengthy casework concerning community relations between a children's home and immediate neighbours had a very positive outcome. After a lot of challenges on both sides neighbour relations are now positive and importantly this has benefited the children being cared for at the home. The experience has fed into a new "Belonging" Charter that children's home providers will have to sign up to, which includes undertakings to engage with neighbours from the very beginning of the process of setting up a home. Residents and I spoke recently at the launch of the Charter by the Children's Trust about how the challenges

and how out of a negative situation the community and the home are now a close and thriving neighbourhood.

The Children's Trust has an independent visitor scheme of volunteers who befriend and spend time with young people, acting as friends and mentors. Volunteers and children or young people are matched up according to their interests and training and support is given to the volunteers: [Independent Visitors | Northampton Children's Trust](#)

Cllr Rosie Humphreys

9<sup>th</sup> March 2025