

## **District Cllrs Karen Roberts and Peter Harris Report for November 2024**

**Details are on the Council's website - see The Council - Calendar of Meetings for links to each of the papers and reports.**

### **Full Council Oct 15**

A lengthy meeting had four motions tabled. These took two hours of debate. A motion on installing solar panels on buildings rather than agricultural land was agreed. A motion raising concerns about the cessation of the winter fuel allowance for those pensioners above the pensioner credit level was agreed. A further motion expressing concern about violence to women and girls was agreed unanimously too, as was a motion about trying to improve the example that councillors demonstrate in their behaviour.

As a result, the analysis of the Cabinet papers by back bench councillors was significantly curtailed. This is the only opportunity to analyse the decision making of the Council - all of these being delegated to the Cabinet. Peter Harris was the only councillor to raise matters and only able to ask four questions.

**The Community Grant Scheme** has been opened for applications to support district based registered charities and community groups. Although grants are available up to £20,000 with any award over £5,000 50% match funded, smaller grants will be considered sympathetically. Applications will demonstrate a local need for the project, how the project contributes to one or more of the council's community plan objectives with financial information to support application. The main thrust of the grants will be to overcoming the cost-of-living crisis, and/or contribute to public protection by reducing crime or anti-social behaviour and/or improving bio-diversity or contributing to reducing climate change. We are concerned that there may be few applications from Southwell so you are encouraged to publicise this opportunity.

### **Policy and Policy Improvement Committee Oct 28 and Nov 25**

The Committee will hear and update on the Climate Emergency. A number of Council buildings - but not including the Southwell Leisure Centre [alone of the N&SDC's Leisure centres] - but not the social housing will have solar panels installed. A new initiative is a Local Area Energy Plan [LAEP] part funded by the East Midlands Mayor. More details of this will be announced later. £800k has been identified with a grant to carry out work to 65 properties for retrofitting with energy efficiency measures - a further £585k for this work will come for the EM Mayor. The Council is working to determine whether we can include the social housing stock in the 2035 net zero target and Keith Melton - councillor the Trent valley is working on how to achieve this with four other councillors and officers. The Council is moving to use Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil [HVO] rather than fossil based diesel fuel in its fleet.

There was a report on the improvements to Tenant Engagement where the tenant voice is heard. The Council is now in the top quartile of performance after being below this in past years. There are now regular Local Influence meetings - usually in Southwell - where tenants views are heard

A survey of residents highlighted; some issues including anti-social behaviour and litter were raised as concerns for residents across the District. There are no localised break down of these statistics from a fairly small number of responses

There was a presentation by Councillor R. Cozens, the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts with her views on how she saw this being developed. However, most of her attention is to support this in Newark.

The Agenda for the Nov 25 meeting has not been published at the time of reporting back. However, it will include a presentation by Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity & Environmental Services, a Review of the Housing Revenue Business Plan assumption.

The Committee will review the projected General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts and the Council's Capital to the end of the year. The Newark Town Fun, the significant monies available just for Newark Town Centre will be examined. There will be an update on Kerbside Glass Recycling. The future of the Kidney Stones that could be erected at Castle House is also to be discussed.

### **Active Travel Plan**

A Plan costing £44k has been published. There are 23 schemes being proposed for supporting walking and cycling across the District. Unfortunately there are no plans for improving cycling or walking in Southwell or the villages - apart from a 'new bridge' across the Trent to facilitate inter town cycling to Newark - rather than using the narrow and potentially dangerous Kelham Bridge. Peter Harris and Cllrs from Balderton and Rainworth are asking that local plans for developing intra area cycling are incorporated. Southwell's plans need to be sent to the N&SDC - or otherwise the N&SDC and NCC will may not support them - with resources being allocated in the revised Local Transport Plan being diverted to the 23 schemes in the consultant led paper.

**Karen Roberts and Peter Harris**