

## Ward councillor's report (Barby & Onley) June 2024

### WND/2024/0993 Toft Hill Construction of 4 dwellings and 2 bungalows

The latest update from the case officer is that the application will not go before the North Planning Committee before next month. The date of the July meeting is 10<sup>th</sup> July.

### Local Government Association Peer Challenge – WNC

The recent WNC Town and Parish briefing made reference to the positive feedback received from this independent review. West Northants as a location in the centre of the country with a large range of businesses and low unemployment is described as having *many advantages which would be the envy of other areas, including massive potential for economic and housing growth.*

The briefing article did not include any of the eight recommendations on how services WNC provides could be improved. Among these recommendations are developing an overall vision for West Northants (*partners are keen to work with the council but not yet clear of the new council's strategic ambitions and aims*); developing a plan to manage medium to long term budget pressures (*General Fund budget gap of £53.4m identified for 2025/26.. unclear how the council plans to tackle these budget gaps for future years*); considering an overhaul of the website (*difficult for customers and staff to navigate*). The review also commented that town and parish councils as a collective group *feel largely disconnected from the business of the new council and feel unable to bring influence on developments on the group, for example what will happen on transfer of assets.* [West Northamptonshire Corporate Peer Challenge | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

The annual report of WNC's external auditor has also made three key recommendations relating to significant weaknesses in the council's financial sustainability, its internal audit arrangements and financial statements. The auditor's view is that the council's financial reserves are low (the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 58 unitary authorities) and should be increased to enable it to withstand any future financial shocks. WNC does not agree. The report can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Audit and Governance Committee, 05/06/2024 18:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

### Daventry Masterplan Consultation

WNC is consulting on a Masterplan to revitalise the heart of the town by boost economic growth, upgrading the public realm and delivering homes close to the centre. Daventry Town Council have expressed frustration that the Masterplan has overwritten the town centre Vision adopted in 2021 and have objected to the sale of a significant tranche of green space next to Eastern Way for housing development.

The land has previously been identified as a potential new canal arm off the Grand Union Canal, and for major new retail provision. Both schemes were abandoned and a new secondary school proposal was also dropped. The draft Local Plan describes the site as offering a *genuine opportunity to link the town centre to Daventry Country Park and Daventry North East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)*. The allocation of this SUE is included in the West Northants Joint Core Strategy. An an outline planning application for 3,400 dwellings

has been submitted to WNC. The proposal for the land in the Masterplan includes dwellings for senior living, a community square and green and play streets.

The consultation closes on 13<sup>th</sup> June [Your views on Daventry Town Centre Masterplan 2024 - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#)

### **General Election 4<sup>th</sup> July**

The official Notice of Election will be published on 4<sup>th</sup> June, with prospective candidates required to submit their nominations and deposits by 7<sup>th</sup> June. The Conservative candidate for the Daventry constituency replacing Chris Heaton Harris was announced yesterday as Stewart Andrews, former MP for the now abolished Pudsey constituency. For the Liberal Democrats, Jonathan Harris, a ward councillor for Brixworth, will be standing, for Labour Marianne Kimani and for the Reform party Daventry town councillor Scott Cameron.

Residents not yet registered to vote must register by 18<sup>th</sup> June via the gov.uk website. The last date for a postal vote application is 19<sup>th</sup> June and for a proxy vote application 26<sup>th</sup> June.

There is more information at: [Electoral services | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

Cllr Rosie Humphreys

7<sup>th</sup> June 2024