



KETTERING AT WESTMINSTER



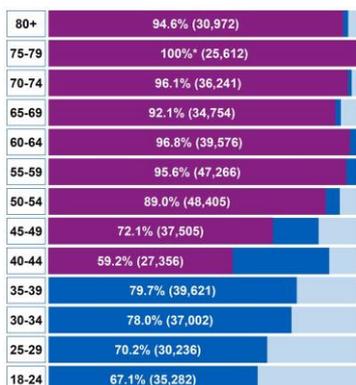
... MAKING SURE THE CONCERNS OF LOCAL PEOPLE ARE HEARD AT THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT

Northamptonshire Vaccine Roll Out Success



The vaccine roll out in Northamptonshire has been a tremendous success. The graph below (dated 15 July) shows those locally who have been single jabbed in blue and those who have been double jabbed in purple.

All over-18s have now been offered vaccination and across the country two thirds of adults have now received both doses. This is one of the very best vaccine roll outs in the whole world. Booster jabs will start to be rolled out from the autumn together with parallel vaccination against flu.



Kettering General Hospital

Philip Hollobone MP writes: Kettering General Hospital is now the first hospital in the country to go through the initial enabling works process of the New Hospitals Programme (NHP) and has won permission to combine its £46m Urgent Care Hub development with its £350m allocation under the NHP to create a single hospital redevelopment scheme.

KGH is in the unique position of having successfully won access to two separate funding streams for the redevelopment of the hospital. The first is for £46m to build a new onsite Urgent Care Hub (UCH) to replace and enhance our A&E, which is one of the most overcrowded in the country, and the second is for £350m of funding (due in the period 2025-30) for a phased rebuild of the hospital on the existing site as part of the national New Hospitals Programme (NHP) to build 40 new hospitals around the country.



The problem was that under strict and rather arcane HM Treasury funding rules KGH was being told it could not combine the two together as one scheme. I held a special Parliamentary debate on the floor of the House on this issue on 8 June and over the last few months, together with the neighbouring MPs for Corby and Wellingborough, have lobbied face-to-face the Hospitals Minister, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Health Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the PM himself over the issue.

The problem with not combining the two funding schemes was that if the UCH went ahead on its own there would not be enough room onsite for the additional rebuilding scheduled for 2025-30 and KGH might have to drop out of the extra investment.

The good news is that as a result of the special Parliamentary debate and the lobbying KGH has now been told officially that it can proceed with a combined scheme and that early enabling works can start the required approvals process. KGH is the very first hospital in the country to go through this initial enabling works assessment. An essential part of these enabling works will be the procurement of a new net zero energy plant for the hospital so that the high risk old steam boilers can be replaced and the power systems needed for the wider hospital rebuild can be installed. Much of this work will involve site preparation and foundation works, but if all goes well and there are no hiccups in the business case approvals process then above ground construction should be visible in early 2024.



IN THE HOUSE Standing Up and Speaking Out for Kettering

Just a sample of the issues Kettering MP Philip Hollobone raised in the Commons recently

6 July: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: With some 30 major wind turbines and several solar farms, the Kettering constituency is doing its bit for renewable energy. Last year, how much renewable electricity was produced in Kettering? How many homes would it power?

Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Energy Minister: As at the end of December 2019, the east midlands region produced more than 5,500 GWh of electricity from renewable resources, including nearly 1,600 GWh from offshore wind. To break that down, 1,534 of the 88,000 renewable electricity installations were in the Kettering constituency, including photovoltaic, onshore wind, anaerobic digestion, landfill gas and plant biomass. This is generating 173 GWh, or enough power to power 45,000 homes.



24 June: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: At half-past 3 last Sunday morning, police officers responded to a call about a man vandalising a bus stop in Kettering town centre. Officers were surrounded by a gang as they arrived at the scene, and an unruly mob turned on them. A 22-year-old man was arrested for attempting to kick one of the officers; a 21-year-old man was also arrested on suspicion of assault. That sort of violence against police officers going about their duty in difficult circumstances to protect the public is completely unacceptable, but sadly it is a growing problem. I know that the Government have recently increased the penalties for assaults on emergency workers, but may we have a statement from the Government that the courts will not shy away from applying those stiffer sentences when perpetrators are brought before them?

Rt. Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, Leader of the House of Commons: My hon. Friend raises a very serious and troubling matter. It is disgraceful that these attacks on the police should take place. As he knows, clause 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will increase the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker from 12 months' to two years' imprisonment. The aim is to ensure that the law provides emergency workers with sufficient protection to enable them to carry out their duties and that the options available to the courts to sentence offenders who assault emergency workers are proportionate, reflect the seriousness of the offences committed and provide the victims with a sense that justice has been done. Naturally, the courts are independent, but it is right that my hon. Friend raises the matter in the House so that the general public concern is taken on board across the nation. I will certainly pass on his concerns to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor.

10 June: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: Protecting the glorious English countryside from unsuitable, unplanned and unwelcome development in the wrong places is one of the key functions of our planning system, yet it would appear that, under the Planning Inspectorate's interpretation of the Human Rights Act 1998, one group of people—Gypsies and Travellers—seem to be exempt from the rules and regulations that apply to everyone else, and they can effectively build whatever they want wherever they like. Can we have action from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to allow local planning authorities to effectively enforce against intentional, unauthorised development in the open countryside by Gypsies and Travellers without being overruled by a warped interpretation of the Human Rights Act?

Rt. Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, Leader of the House of Commons: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising this issue. Local planning authorities already have a wide range of enforcement powers, with strong penalties for non-compliance to tackle such situations. However, as set out in our recent planning White Paper, we intend to strengthen those powers and sanctions, including around intentional unauthorised development. Under planning law, national planning policies and local planning policies to guard against unsuitable development apply equally to all applicants who wish to develop. Planners may also take into account the specific needs of individual groups when making decisions on the development, and every case needs to be treated on its merit. On the subject at hand, I hope that my hon. Friend is assured by the progress of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which will give the police additional powers to remove unauthorised Traveller encampments. We must be careful of spurious human rights claims; otherwise, we will have people in the City of London saying that it is their human right to build 100-storey tower blocks, and that would be ridiculous.

20 May: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: For what reason the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute the organiser of a large funeral held in breach of covid-19 regulations in Kettering in November 2020?

Lucy Frazer QC MP, Solicitor General: I understand my hon. Friend's concern about this issue, which he has already brought to my attention. The CPS makes its charging decisions independently, with every case judged on its own merit, based on the tests set out in the code. In this particular case, my understanding is that the CPS reviewed it and determined that there was insufficient evidence to continue with the proceedings. That was because there was no evidence that the suspect was responsible for the excess numbers present outside the church.

Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: There is widespread dismay and outrage in Kettering that the organiser of that huge Irish Traveller funeral, held during the covid lockdown, has in effect got away with it. Clearly, however, the Crown Prosecution Service cannot successfully prosecute on any criminal case unless it is provided by the police with sufficient formal evidence against the accused. Given that the court hearing was held five months after the funeral took place, will the Solicitor General confirm when the CPS received the case file from the police?

Lucy Frazer QC MP, Solicitor General: I understand the concern of my hon. Friend's constituents, as of many around the country who are abiding by the rules, which is what has managed to get our infection rates down. To answer his specific question, the first hearing was at the Northampton magistrates court on 19 April. The police had not previously sent the file through to the CPS due to a technical error on the part of the police. The file was received at 11.30 am on the morning of the hearing.

