



PHILIP HOLLOBONE MP



KETTERING AT WESTMINSTER



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

Kettering CPF Changes the Law



KCCA's Conservative Political Forum (CPF) meets every six weeks at Crown Street to discuss national political themes and to feedback ideas to Conservative Party HQ. Ably chaired by Cllr Paul Marks (pictured right) all members are welcome to attend.

At a recent meeting on deregulation KCCA Treasurer Jonathon Smith (pictured left) suggested that non-compete clauses be banned. Non-compete clauses are included in employment contracts to restrict an individual's ability to work for a competing business after they have left. There is no set maximum period for a non-compete clause.

In response to KCCA's CPF submission, Jonathon was invited to Westminster to discuss his proposal and now HM Government is going to limit the length of non-compete clauses to three months.

Jonathon said: "That is great news! I wish they had gone the whole hog and totally banned them rather than allowing three months, but hopefully it's a stepping-stone to doing that in the future."

GOOD NEWS ON FOUR BIG PIECES OF KEY LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Philip Hollobone MP writes: The last few months have brought good news on four big pieces of key local infrastructure thanks to effective action by Kettering's Conservative MP and Conservative-led North Northamptonshire Council.

Kettering General Hospital: At the end of May the Department for Health confirmed that KGH's place in the national New Hospitals Programme is secured with an enhanced, fully funded budget for a redeveloped, improved and expanded hospital due on the existing site by 2030 in line with the original timeline. With main construction due to start on schedule in 2028, the construction of a £34m net zero new power plant for KGH is due to start in spring 2024. The larger hospital will include a new urgent care hub to replace and enhance the existing A&E. The Hospitals Minister Lord Markham visited KGH in June to see the plans for himself.

Hanwood Park Secondary School: In May the Department for Education reversed its original decision of February 2021 to designate the Hanwood Park Free School as boys-only and confirmed that it had re-designated the school as co-educational. Persuading HM Government and the Orbis Education Trust to change their minds on the designation of the school has been a major achievement and will be to the lasting benefit of thousands of residents and schoolchildren for many years to come. Over 600 local parents responded to the public consultation, over three quarters of whom supported a mixed sex school. Located between Kettering and Cranford, Hanwood Park is the fourth largest Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) in the country and will ultimately comprise 5,500 dwellings, with 1,200 having already been built.

Junction 10A on the A14 between Barton Seagrave and Cranford: In March the Department for Transport announced that most new major road projects scheduled for 2025-30 would be pushed back five years to start after 2030. Following intensive lobbying by Kettering's MP, it was confirmed that Junction 10A would stay in the roads programme for completion on its original timeline of 2025-30. Junction 10A requires just £20m funding from the DfT, is the only major roads project to be 50% developer-funded with £20m provided by the developer, and has an impressive benefit:cost ratio of 3.

Kettering Leisure Village: Thanks to prompt and effective action by Cllr Jason Smithers, the Leader of Conservative-led North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) Kettering Leisure Village has been saved from closure. In April Compass Contract Services announced it was surrendering its lease to run the centre and that Balance Health Club, the Lighthouse Theatre and the Arena sports centre would all close in early July. NNC successfully negotiated with the prime leaseholder Phoenix Leisure to keep KLV open and ensure that the health club, theatre and sports centre have a bright future.

KCCA at No. 10! KCCA at No. 10! KCCA at No. 10!

In July, KCCA Chairman Cllr Mark Rowley, KCCA Deputy Chairman Pamela Goodman and KCCA Patrons Club Chairman Natalie Hollobone all attended events at No. 10. Congratulations!



IN THE HOUSE *Standing Up and Speaking Out for Kettering*

13 July Public Sector Pay Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: I welcome the Chief Secretary's statement. Would he be kind enough to confirm for teachers in Kettering that the 6.5% pay increase recommended by the independent pay review body will deliver the biggest pay increase for teachers in 30 years, that the new starting salary for teachers of £30,000 will be at its highest ever level and that the Government will be fully funding the pay award so that schools do not have to raid their own budgets to honour it?

Rt. Hon. John Glen MP, Chief Secretary to HM Treasury: As ever, my hon. Friend is spot on. Everything that he said is absolutely correct. This is a significant pay settlement for teachers, and I hope that in due course we will learn that striking workforces will end their action and we can look forward with confidence to the autumn term.

13 July Doctors' Strikes Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: The Leader of the House will be concerned to learn that every three-day doctors' strike costs Kettering General Hospital a quarter of a million pounds, and every five-day strike costs it more than £400,000. That money could be better spent on reducing the waiting lists and improving patient care. Will she make a statement urging the doctors to withdraw their completely unrealistic 35% pay demand and to get back to work so that Kettering General Hospital can get back to work on cutting the waiting lists and improving patient outcomes?

Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP, Leader of the House of Commons: My hon. Friend raises understandable concerns. I hope that we will soon see an end to this type of action. I do not think it helps the situation. It is political cynicism of the worst kind. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that people are back working, doing the jobs they love, and that we bring these issues to an end.

13 July NATO Summit Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: I thank the Prime Minister for his tireless efforts leading from the front in NATO's support for Ukraine. The United Kingdom is NATO's largest European defence spender, spending more than 20 other NATO allies combined. We are meeting our commitment to NATO to spend 2% of GDP on defence, but far too many are not. When does the Prime Minister expect all NATO allies to have met the 2% floor?

Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister: As soon as possible is what I would like to say. Hopefully, next year we will see very significant progress in the number of countries in the alliance meeting the 2% target - forecast to be almost two thirds next year on a rising trajectory. It is important that we keep the pressure on. The threats that we face are only growing in their scale and complexity, and we need to invest more to protect ourselves against them.

13 July Questions to the Department for Transport Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: The Roads Minister will know that the proposed £40-million junction 10A on the A14 at Kettering is crucial for the future prosperity of the town. Can he assure me that National Highways is working expeditiously with the Hanwood Park developer and North Northamptonshire Council to ensure that the project is delivered as soon as possible after 2025?

Richard Holden MP, Roads Minister: I can provide my hon. Friend with that assurance. Having visited his constituency and met him near the project, I know how important it is to him. National Highways is working to do everything possible to see the project come to delivery.

6 July Ticket Office Closures Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: Staff at Kettering railway station are superb; they are friendly, polite, efficient and dedicated to simply outstanding customer service. Given that Kettering is one of the stations potentially affected, will the Rail Minister encourage rail passengers in Kettering to take part in the public consultation promoted by East Midlands Railway? Can he confirm that if the changes go through, a passenger who turns up at Kettering railway station with cash to buy a ticket will be able to do so?

Huw Merriman MP, Rail Minister: Yes, I can give my hon. Friend the assurance that cash purchases would remain across the network. If there is a machine that is not working for cash, passengers can enter the train, safe in the knowledge that they can then purchase their ticket on the train or at the end of their journey. We are looking at the ticket office as a place that people are not accessing any more, but the ticketing staff are brilliant. All we want to do is utilise them more, so that they can see more people and use their expertise. Passengers want their ticket office staff to be more accessible, so that they can gain that expertise, and that is exactly why we want to put them in the places where the passengers are.

6 July Questions to the Department for Environment Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: The Farming Minister will know that in north Northamptonshire we have some of the best farmers in the country who are facing challenges, like every other farm up and down the land. Would he be kind enough to visit Kettering to meet a large group of local farmers - perhaps in early September in between harvesting and drilling?

Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer MP, Minister for Farming: That is a very kind invitation. It is always a pleasure to visit Northamptonshire, and, if my diary allows, I will of course meet my hon. Friend and his farmers. [NB: The Minister is coming on Friday 1 September]

29 June Appeal Court Ruling on the Rwanda Plan Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering: My constituents in Kettering are completely fed up with Labour's opposition and delay to the Illegal Migration Bill, and with the courts frustrating the Rwanda plan. Will the Home Secretary answer this question for my constituents: how on earth can Rwanda be deemed not to be a safe country, when the UN Refugee Agency itself has its own asylum scheme, part funded by the EU, to send asylum seekers to Rwanda?

Rt. Hon. Suella Braverman KC MP, Home Secretary: My hon. Friend makes a very good point and I refer him to the dissenting judgment of the Lord Chief Justice. The Lord Chief Justice finds that there are strong grounds to disagree with the other judges and that there is no real risk of people who are being relocated to Rwanda being treated in an unsafe or unlawful way. I take a lot of confidence from his dissenting judgment.