



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET AGENDA

Monday, 3 September 2007

Jeffery Room, Guildhall

6:00 pm

Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor: Tony Woods (Leader of the Council)

Councillors: Brendan Glynane, Sally Beardsworth, Richard Church,
Trini Crane, Brian Hoare, Malcolm Mildren

Interim Chief Executive John Edwards

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact Annie May or Tel: 01604 837355
or Email: AMay@northampton.gov.uk

PORTFOLIOS OF CABINET MEMBERS

CABINET MEMBER	PORTFOLIO TITLE
Councillor A. Woods	Leader Partnership and Improvement
Councillor B. Glynane	Deputy Leader Community Engagement & Safety
Councillor S. Beardsworth	Housing
Councillor R. Church	Regeneration
Councillor T. Crake	Environment
Councillor B. Hoare	Performance
Councillor M. Mildren	Finance

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at the Jeffery Room, Guildhall on Monday, 3 September 2007 at 6:00 pm.

J. Edwards
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES
3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Members of the public wishing to address the Cabinet must register their interest by 12 noon on the day of the meeting by contacting Annie May 01604 837355 or by e mail to amay@northampton.gov.uk.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
6. NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL MEETING 30TH JULY FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET

Public concern exists over the doubt surrounding the continuing provision offered by the Northampton Door to Door Service with the organisation having to vacate their current premises later this year and the likelihood of the service being discontinued if they cannot find appropriate accommodation. There is also serious concern over the sustainability of the service under the current funding structure which prevents long term planning regarding the provision of vehicles.

In order to provide for a sustainable service this Council requests Cabinet to consider as a matter of urgency implementing the following actions:-

1. To enter into an appropriate 5 year Service Level Agreement with the Northampton Door to Door Service to secure both the provision of the service and agree the appropriate level of funding.
2. Remove the Northampton Door to Door Service from the current voluntary sector funding arrangements.
3. To transfer and ring fence the agreed level of funding for the Northampton Door to Door Service to the General Fund.

7. ALLOTMENT STRATEGY
Report of Director Customer and Service Delivery (copy herewith)
8. CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN
Report of Director People Planning and Regeneration (copy herewith)
9. PERFORMANCE
 - (a) Budget Monitoring 2007/08 – Period 4 – Report of Director of Finance (copy herewith)
 - (b) Performance Monitoring – Report of Interim Chief Executive (copy herewith)
10. PARKING CONCESSIONS
Report of Director of Customer and Service Delivery (copy herewith)
11. COUNCIL'S SEVERANCE POLICY
Report of Interim Chief Executive (copy herewith)
12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

THE CHAIR TO MOVE:

“THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF SUCH CATEGORIES OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED BY SECTION 100(1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS LISTED AGAINST SUCH ITEMS OF BUSINESS BY REFERENCE TO THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH OF SCHEDULE 12A TO SUCH ACT.”

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

**Exempted Under Schedule
12A of L.Govt Act 1972
Para No:-**

13. FORMER MORRIS MAN PUBLIC HOUSE SITE KINGS (3)
HEATH
Report of Director of Finance (copy herewith)
14. GARAGES DRYLEYS COURT LUMBERTUBS (3)
Report of Director of Finance (copy herewith)

Appendices
2



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Allotment Strategy
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	Monday 3 rd September 2007
Key Decision:	YES
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Directorate:	Customer and Service Delivery
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Trini Crake
Ward(s)	Boughton Green, Kingsthorpe

1. Purpose

A strategy that will take us forward in allotment provision over the next 5 years, although this will be a live document and will evolve through the next five years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopt the Allotment Strategy at appendix A in principle.
- 2.2 That any of the recommendations within the strategy with financial implications are not implemented but considered as part of the medium term planning.

3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 The Allotment Strategy was drawn up as a result of an Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Group and represents essentially Northampton Borough Council's first strategy for allotments across the borough.
- 3.2 The strategy examines the current options available for supporting and strengthening allotments in the borough taking into account current demand, the existing provision and looking at proposals to upgrade existing facilities and capacity.
- 3.3 The allotments represent an opportunity to engage with communities across the Borough and offer people the chance to participate in a healthier lifestyle. The proposed strategy does focus on upgrading facilities but recognises that the additional funding cannot be easily met by NBC. It therefore recommends that a partnership approach would be required from all involved including allotment holders, specialists and NBC officers by forming a steering group. This group would be required to oversee the implementation of the strategy and develop a five-year action plan for upgrading the existing allotments and identify new and additional sources of external funding.
- 3.5 Cabinet can adopt this policy in principle and allow further evaluation of the financial implications as part of the medium term plan. The proposed Steering Group would also be able to identify alternative sources of funding to support the options for upgrading and enhancing existing facilities.
- 3.6 NBC would continue to own the sites and be responsible for letting arrangements and its statutory responsibilities.

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

If Cabinet adopts the Allotment Strategy it will be putting in place a new approach to the policy towards the operation and provision of our allotments. Key to this will be the new partnership approach wider than simply NBC to provide and develop existing and new allotments. It would represent changes in the growth agenda. In addition the strategy would introduce guides for good allotment practice that would be issued to all allotment holders.

4.2 Resources and Risk

The main financial risk is the proposal to introduce concessions for allotment holders phased over a 3-year period.

Year 1 = 10% reduction = £728.96 reduction in Year 1 rent income.

Year 2 = 20% reduction

Year 3 = 20% reduction

Current annual rented income is £37,000 approximately.

The result is that certain prescribed groups, over 60's and disabled, will by year 3 pay 50% of the annual charge.

As part of the partnership approach, NBC will also be expected to invest capital into the allotments, as they neglected for a number of years. Opportunities, NBC will rationalise all of the current sites, which in turn will allow land to be made available for alternate use or for sale, this could represent a large capital receipt for NBC.

4.3 Legal

None specifically arising from the report.

4.4 Equality

By changing the amount payable by certain groups, and improving disabled access to sites as appropriate the Strategy aims at improving equality of access to services.

4.5 Equality

By changing the amount payable by certain groups, and improving disabled access to sites as appropriate the Strategy aims at improving equality of access to services.

4.6 Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal: Streetcare & Environment Manager, Task & Finish Group

External: Northampton Allotment Network

4.6 How Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

Clearly supports the Cleaner, Greener Safer agenda and the proposal focuses on increased partnership working to facilitate delivery of any enhanced facilities.

4.7 Other Implications

Nothing specific arising from this report.

5. Background Papers

Northampton Borough Council Allotment Strategy, April 2007.

Tony Spiezick, Street Care & Environment Manager
EXT: 8929

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

FOREWORD

It gives Northampton Allotments Network (NAN) great pleasure to present this, Northampton's first Allotment Strategy.

It is timely, because there is a country-wide upsurge in interest in allotment gardening.

Evidence shows that not only is the concept of allotments alive and well, it has many new supporters. In fact, the Northampton Borough Council (NBC) is presently unable to meet the demand for plots in some areas, such is their enduring appeal.

In this strategy we emphasise the need for the NBC to be committed to retaining and increasing allotment capacity.

It is now recognised that allotments deliver a wide range of benefits. These include being sources of fresh fruit and vegetables and the improvements that they make to diet, thus making a contribution to a healthy and active lifestyle, and also providing reservoirs of biodiversity, and opportunities for creativity and learning.

The advantages of the allotment in the modern day environment are well described in this document, and the strategy seeks to make these more widely available.

The pressure on NBC land resource for housing and other development is well known. This makes it difficult to secure land for the provision of new allotment sites which are needed to meet demand, both present and future. Therefore creative solutions are required, ones which the NBC cannot provide on its own.

The strategy proposes a number of ways of promoting both traditional and new types of allotments. To deliver these a partnership approach is required, perhaps involving some agencies and individuals not previously involved in this specific scene.

In particular, it suggests that new partnerships are needed to deliver the important potential benefits.

The purpose of creating this strategy is to guide the management and development of Northampton's allotments over the next five years.

At the end of this period this document should be reviewed.

The strategy has the following overarching aims:

- ◆ To ensure a sustainable future for Northampton's allotments
- ◆ To develop the quality and quantity of allotment provision
- ◆ To adopt and promote best practice in terms of design and management of allotments
- ◆ To develop a constructive and ongoing partnership between the NBC and stakeholders – allotment holders and the wider community – that will provide opportunities for all to participate in allotment development in varied ways.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Allotments are an opportunity for all people to engage in a healthy lifestyle all year round that is active, socially inclusive and sustainable.

In common with the rest of the UK, most allotments in Northampton have had little investment for some time. Northampton has a waiting list in some areas and, on the other hand, over capacity in others.

The benefits will not be confined to just the promotion of health and well being of the individual allotment holder.

Communities will be strengthened through:

- ◆ Active participation
- ◆ Landscape quality will be improved
- ◆ Biodiversity will be enhanced
- ◆ Innovative approaches to site design and management will be encouraged.

Funding will be required for the upgrading of existing allotment sites and the provision of completely new facilities, and the NBC cannot realistically meet this commitment alone. A partnership approach is required.

A Steering Group should be formed from the allotment holders' representative body locally (NAN), from specialists in various fields and from council staff. It will oversee the implementation of the strategy. The group will be pro-active both in developing a **five year action plan** for the upgrading of existing allotments and also identifying new sources of external funding.

This could include future funding via a trust fund. It will oversee the publication of a new Good Practice Guide for allotment holders and co-ordinate a training programme for stakeholders.

NBC will continue to be responsible for letting arrangements on all of its allotment sites, other than those with devolved management, and maintain its statutory responsibilities.

The development of an allotment site, such as Harlestone Road, has already had initial commitment given to it and it is suggested that this site be developed as a demonstration of good design and management practice incorporating green technologies. The site will represent a model of good practice.

NBC will support the development of this strategy by making additional staff time available for community development work associated with allotments.

This Strategy is compiled by the NAN Executive after consultation with its members.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Allotments are a unique resource. Allotment gardening provides the opportunity for a year-round healthy lifestyle which is active, socially inclusive and which reflects the ideals of sustainability and well-being.

Unlike other leisure activities, it provides not only exercise, mental relaxation and lifelong learning opportunities, but also the fresh fruit and vegetables that benefit healthy living.

Allotment gardening, fundamentally, is about healthy living.

- 1.2** Also allotment gardening has the capacity to benefit the wider community. Allotments are multi-dimensional places where benefits are not only confined to fresh fruit and vegetables and a healthier lifestyle for the allotment holders.

Allotments have a significant role to play in the protection and promotion of biodiversity.

They represent an important opportunity for community interaction and in particular where Senior Citizens are concerned.

- 1.3** Like other categories of public open space in the UK, there has been a long period of under-investment in allotments. The resulting deterioration in the condition and appearance of sites contributes to the general assumption that “allotment gardening is an activity where marginal benefits accrue to a few”.

A strategic approach is required to counter this attitude and to ensure that the benefits of allotment gardening are properly recognised and valued.

- 1.4** Allotments are an important asset to Northampton, providing a wide range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment.

- 1.5** Allotments are not just a great way of producing good low cost food, though this certainly remains important.

They also offer a variable recreational role involving healthy exercise, social contacts, and the fun and challenge of growing competition vegetables, fruit and flowers.

1.6 Allotments are a valuable green sustainable open space - part of the urban culture. They contribute to the retention of traditional skills and wisdom, as well as being highly beneficial to the wildlife of the town.

1.7 Current house building trends are towards smaller gardens, as pressure increases to optimise building land. Those who live in flats often have no individual garden. Allotments provide an opportunity to adjust this imbalance.

1.8 The provision of allotments, by local authorities is a statutory duty.

NBC will continue to provide and promote allotments not only because of this statutory requirement but because:

- ◆ Allotment gardening can make a valuable contribution to the town's sustainability by providing health, social, economic and environmental benefits
- ◆ Allotments are an important recreational facility with benefits to both physical and mental well being

1.9 These benefits can be increased significantly over the period of this strategy.

Fundamental to this is the marked increase in the number of people involved in allotment gardening.

The overall objective of this strategy is to optimise the number of people using allotments. - This is broken down into five target areas:

- ◆ Ensuring sufficient allotments
- ◆ Promoting allotment gardening
- ◆ Encouraging sustainability
- ◆ Cultivating good administration
- ◆ Maintaining adequate resources

2. THE VALUE OF ALLOTMENTS

- 2.1** The benefits provided by allotments are more varied than may at first be appreciated. In terms of individual and social wellbeing they offer physically active outdoor exercise, mental refreshment and stimulus and the production of good value, nutritional fruit and vegetables.

Less obvious are the wider benefits. Allotments form a part of the open space resource of the borough, and can be a focus for education, public enlightenment, and neighbourliness. Allotment sites also make a contribution to the increasingly significant areas of biodiversity and sustainability.

- 2.2** It is worth noting that family members and friends often join in with the activities on the allotment and/or share the produce. The value of having an allotment is therefore not confined to the individual allotment holder but spreads outwards in a ripple effect.

- 2.3** A selection of comments from allotment holders give us an impression of the value of their experiences in having an allotment:

"I love my allotment."

"we (a husband and wife partnership) love our allotment."

"I love gardening"

"an escape from the humdrum of life, routine and drudgery, counterbalances employment, a sanctuary, an oasis"

"total satisfaction, peace, quiet, tranquillity, relaxation, a calming influence, constructive, therapeutic, and good for mind, body and soul"

"it is great being outside in the fresh air, with plenty of physical activity and exercise"

"enjoying the fruit of one's labour, and being productive, a reward for all the hard work coupled with a feeling of achievement"

"it is to combat loneliness, a reason for getting out, good community spirit, good company and companionship"

"solitude, being able to get away from it all"

"total freedom, space and greenery, a little bit of ground and being able watch things grow, and then on most occasions being able to eat the produce"

"the wildlife, it is like being out in the country, with natural surroundings"

"being surrounded by birds and insects "

"simply growing your own fruit, herbs and vegetables, and knowing what you are eating"

"being able to avoid chemicals, eating healthily, with good value for money food, and feeding your family well"

Recommendation:

A participatory approach to the management and development of allotments will be adopted as a guiding principle

2.4 In a survey* existing allotment holders indicated that the three most important improvements to allotment sites were:

- ◆ Better water supply
- ◆ Better security
- ◆ Toilets

*These findings were consistent with surveys carried out by other local authorities and the National Society Allotments & Leisure Gardens (NSALG)

3. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

3.1. It is the intention of the NAN/NBC to create a strong and productive partnership with the stakeholders in allotments. These stakeholders are identified as the following:

- ◆ The owners/managers of the allotment land (including NBC)
- ◆ The wider community – (elected councillors)
- ◆ NAN – as the federation of the allotment site associations locally and allotment holders
- ◆ NSALG – as the national body offering a wider perspective and expertise

3.2. There are compelling reasons for the partnership body to encompass both NBC owned and privately owned allotments.

Firstly, a forum where non NBC allotment managers can communicate with each other, or with other stakeholders, does not exist and it is suggested that they may find such a body useful.

Issues such as biodiversity and landscape quality are common to all allotments and the partnership group will allow specialists from these fields to have an input in a structured way.

Secondly, if NBC is to act as a leader and enabler with regard to allotments, a broad forum will be essential to carry forward this role.

3.3. It is suggested that the creation of a strong, representative and inclusive partnership body is fundamental to the process of implementing this strategy and advancing the development of allotments in Northampton.

This Steering Group should be formally established as soon as is practicable and invited to take ownership of the strategy.

3.4. The Steering Group must be representative. This means that its members must have both a recognised mandate and the means to communicate effectively with those whom they represent. It should be inclusive in that it seeks the support of the stakeholders in the widest sense, including those whom, for whatever reasons, may not wish to participate.

Stakeholders who indicate that they do not wish to participate, for instance, in site management, do not also as a matter of course abdicate any rights that they may have.

Similarly, those who choose not to be members of bodies, such as NSALG for instance, must not be excluded from the partnership process on that basis.

- 3.5.** Wider membership of the Steering Group is a matter for discussion between the key stakeholders. As a guide, it is suggested that representatives of certain wider community themes could be co-opted onto the group as required.

Neighbourhood community interests should be taken into account at site association level, rather than at the partnership group.

- 3.6.** The Steering Group will meet at quarterly intervals, or more often as required.

There will be an “open” annual meeting, where progress in implementing the strategy can be presented, thereby allowing stakeholders to monitor progress.

Recommendation:

A Northampton Allotment Steering Group that represents stakeholders’ interests will be established and accept responsibility for taking forward the strategy.

- 3.7.** The partnership approach will have the benefit in dealing with external agencies and should therefore be extended.

Issues such as healthy living suggest mutually productive partnerships, with health authorities and trusts, biodiversity similarly with conservation bodies, such as English Heritage.

Site developments could attract sponsorship from businesses. The Steering Group is the ideal body to form such relationships and may open the door to new sources of funding.

Recommendation:

Partnerships with relevant external businesses/agencies will be explored by the Steering Group.

4. DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS

MEETING PRESENT DEMAND

- 4.1. NBC currently provides and manages 17 allotment sites. In addition, there are a number of privately owned and managed allotment sites.

It is recognised that there is unmet demand for plots in certain areas, particularly in the south and west of the town. Currently there are a number of people on the waiting list for NBC allotments.

- 4.2. It is probable that there is also a level of latent demand, which could add significantly to this.

It seems academic to put resources into attempting to measure this demand when, currently, a great deal needs to be achieved to significantly reduce the existing waiting lists in some areas, particularly south and west of the town.

- 4.3. Since the majority of allotment holders live under two miles from their sites, expanded capacity would best be provided within a similar distance. It would also be good practice to encourage allotment holders to walk or cycle to their site, rather than using private cars. The development of any new site should progress on a phased basis, to allow careful engagement of unmet demand.

Recommendation:

A survey of available land for new sites will be undertaken especially to the south and west of the town.

Recommendation:

Due to the demand to the south and west of the town, Mereway, which is currently a temporary site should be given permanent statutory status.

Recommendation:

Targets for reduced waiting times will be agreed in conjunction with the Steering Group.

5. CURRENT PROVISION

THE PRESENT ALLOTMENT ESTATE – Site Maps are available at Appendix 1

- 5.1. At the outset, it is necessary for NBC to confirm that it is committed to retaining the existing number and area of allotments under its management and, further, to increase allotment capacity in the south and west of the town.
- 5.2. WNDC/NBC will consider the provision of allotments when considering development through the planning process.
- 5.3. There continues to be a large number of closures of local authority sites which are reported to be surplus to requirements.

It is clear that there is widespread unease among NBC's allotment gardeners and their representatives about the possible future closure and disposal of allotment sites.

- 5.4. The protection of allotment sites should strongly be reinforced by a clear planning policy. The commitment of NBC to allotments is evidenced by its support shown by the Water Charges on Allotments Report and incorporating to the local development framework.
- 5.5. Where development is deemed on balance to be beneficial, there is a need to require the developer via a Section 106 Agreement to provide a suitable alternative allotment facility.

This will serve to reassure allotment holders that NBC and WNDC are committed to the protection of the borough's allotment estate.

Recommendation:

That NBC formally confirms its commitment to retaining the existing number of allotments, and where necessary, expanding capacity.

Recommendation:

Further commitment and confirmation is required for NBC through WNDC, as appropriate, to increase its allotment estate to the south and west of the town.

Recommendation:

That NBC ensures that when local development plans are drawn up and/or revised they give due cognizance to allotments and their protection.

Recommendation:

At the planning stage of new developments, provision for allocation of land for allotments must be taken into consideration, and enforced, by means of a Section 106 Agreement.

6. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

UPGRADING OF EXISTING CAPACITY WHERE NEEDED

- 6.1. It is clear that a number of developments are required in respect of existing allotments as per this strategy.
- 6.2. More detailed plans for the upgrading of individual sites are not extensively explored in this strategy. What allotment holders feel is required, is likely to vary from site to site. However, an open process for designing and undertaking upgrading work should be adopted, in which allotment holders are consulted and given the opportunity to become involved in the process.

It is logical, therefore, that the Steering Group will be the body that is responsible for agreeing and overseeing the implementation of an upgrading action plan. It is suggested that a **five year plan** be created so that it can be made clear to all where the priorities lie.

Recommendation:

A five year action plan for the upgrading of existing sites will be drawn up on a site by site basis.

- 6.3. The survey of allotment holders, discussed in Section 2 yielded data that will be useful in compiling the action plan.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Toilets:

Survey - respondents said that there should be toilet facilities on sites. This is particularly important to all gardeners.

Recommendation:

Toilets and washing facilities will be provided on all sites.

Water:

All allotment sites' water infrastructure will be replaced with 50mm piping at the very earliest opportunity (as agreed by the NBC Cabinet in October 2006 in response to the Overview and Scrutiny Water Charges on Allotments Report) and stand pipes put in place at the end of each plot, (see Task and Finish Group Report).

All gardeners who have roofed structures will be encouraged to install roof guttering and water butts (water conservation)

Recommendation:

All sites to have a piped water supply (50mm)

Site hut:

All allotment sites will have structures for meetings and secure storage.

Recommendation:

All sites will have a site hut and secure storage facilities.

Notice boards:

All sites will have a notice board for the site committee, NAN, NBC and NSALG notices.

Recommendation:

All sites will have a water tight, lockable notice board of adequate size.

Composting facilities:

All plot holders will be encouraged to regularly compost waste. Fallen leaves, and any other suitable materials that can be composted, collected from the NBC estate should be made available for allotment composting.

Recommendation:

Each site will have the option of a communal composting facility to make use of park deposits of fallen leaves and other biodegradable materials.

Car parking:

Allotment holders consider car parking provision - fairly, to very important.

Recommendation:

All sites will have car parking where there is space available.

Rubbish facilities:

All sites will have appropriate rubbish collection facilities, (i.e. cages) as agreed by NAN/NBC

Recommendation:

All sites will have appropriate rubbish collection facilities, (ie cages) as agreed by NAN/NBC.

Access and provision for the less able-bodied:

Provision of facilities for less able-bodied people will be made, after consultation with appropriate organisations.

Recommendation:

Provision for the less able-bodied will be prioritised on the basis of demand.

PROVISION OF NEW ALLOTMENT CAPACITY

- 6.4. There is clearly a need to provide additional capacity, especially in the south and west of the town.

The creation of new allotment facilities will go some way to alleviating the backlog, and more provision will be required to reduce waiting times to an acceptable level.

- 6.5. It has been argued above that a variety of types of allotments may represent the best way forward, given land values in Northampton. Options for the increase of allotment capacity are summarised as follows:

- ◆ New allotment sites on land already owned by NBC – one is already planned at Harlestone Road.
- ◆ New sites created as a by-product of large-scale developments such as that at Avon – Ransome Road and subsequently managed by NBC.
- ◆ Suitable land that may be available by other bodies (English Heritage etc)

Note: It is suggested that all of the above will require active consideration.

As mentioned above, funding should be allocated towards the creation of a new allotment site at Harlestone Road No 2.

This development is in effect a replacement for the former site at Harlestone Road No 1.

It is suggested that this project be developed as a demonstration of good practice, and that specialist advice is sought at an early stage to consider which aspects of good design could be integrated (incorporating such things as green technologies etc). The site should represent a model of good practice.

Features to be considered will include:

- ◆ Design of plots to fit well with the existing landscape
- ◆ Provision of a communal building and secure storage facilities

- ◆ Provision of sheds
- ◆ Creation of a safe and secure environment
- ◆ Enabling good access
- ◆ Use of tree planting and screen hedging both around and within the site to enhance biodiversity and landscape quality
- ◆ Setting aside part of the area as a communal garden/facility (communal orchard etc)
- ◆ Use of sustainable or green technology in building and site design, such as:
 - Timber construction;
 - Banked earth for insulation;
 - Maximising use of natural light;
 - Wind/solar/geothermal power sources;
 - Toilet facilities;
 - Water conservation facilities
 - Creation of biodiversity features such as a pond fed by site drainage, log piles etc.

Recommendation:

The rationalized new site at Harlestone Road will be developed in an innovative way and will represent a model of good practice.

- 6.6.** The creation of new allotments, as an integral part of large scale developments, is an area where WNDC and NBC can have influence through the planning process and provide advice through early consultation with the appropriate Corporate Manager/Director.

Pursuing objectives under this option must be a matter for discussion with the Head of Planning.

Recommendation:

The advice of the Head of the relevant Planning Authority will be sought on the feasibility and processes involved in creating allotments as part of large scale developments.

7. NBC MANAGEMENT

- 7.1. NBC Management can have a direct influence on the financial position of the allotments service through effective letting arrangements.

In particular, the efficient collection of rents and the prompt re-allocation of vacant plots will assist in increasing revenue, the latter by increasing the proportion of plots under cultivation.

- 7.2. It is suggested that there will continue to be a full time NBC official to manage allotments and to assist with the implementation of the Allotment Strategy.

Recommendation:

NBC will continue to employ a dedicated member of staff committed to letting and allotment management under the auspices of the Allotment Strategy.

Note: Should Trust Management be adopted and Devolved Management ensue this position will require reviewing

8. SITE AND PLOT MANAGEMENT

- 8.1. An Allotment Good Practice Guide in the form of a handbook will be produced and made available to all allotment holders (in hard copy or via NBC website).

Its content will be agreed by the Steering Group and contain clear advice on the following:

- ◆ Safety on site
- ◆ A brief description of good practice in terms of plot cultivation and site management
- ◆ Good practice in terms of biodiversity and the environment
- ◆ References for further information
- ◆ Contacts for NAN, site associations and an explanation of their roles
- ◆ The allotment inspection arrangements and the termination procedure
- ◆ All plots will preserve an open aspect (ie no solid fencing around plot boundaries)
- ◆ The Guidelines for Hens and Rabbits

- 8.2. A shorter guide for the prospective allotment holder will also be produced and made available.

It will contain information on the following:

- ◆ Allotment sites available in Northampton and a brief description of each (in hard copy or via NBC website)
- ◆ The application process (in hard copy or via NBC website)
- ◆ What is expected of allotment holders and what their likely commitment in terms of time is required to maintain a five or 10 pole plot
- ◆ The opportunities for participation in site management

Recommendation:

Guides for good allotment practice are to be produced.

Recommendation:

A Guide is produced for prospective allotment holders.

9. DEVOLVED MANAGEMENT

- 9.1. The process of devolving management is one that is likely to proceed at a differing rate, as sites' circumstances will vary. The extent to which management is devolved may vary from almost total, to nothing at all, as it depends upon the willingness of volunteers to devote time, effort and expertise to this issue.

It is a process which must be handled with sensitivity, where the key objectives are as follows:

- ◆ The Steering Group will work towards the enabling/empowering of site associations
- ◆ Devolution must be inclusive – those who do not wish to participate do not sacrifice their rights to be consulted
- ◆ NAN is the interface between associations and NBC and will encourage the sharing of good practice in this area

Recommendation:

Stakeholder participation in the management of allotments will be fostered. It should be handled sensitively and in the knowledge that the outcomes will vary between sites.

10. FORM OF TENANCY AGREEMENT

10.1. A copy of the current NBC Form of Tenancy Agreement is reproduced and can be found at Appendix 2.

The Tenancy Agreement is in need of revision and updating.

Recommendation:

The form of Tenancy Agreement will be reviewed at the earliest opportunity by NBC in consultation with NAN and agreed by the Steering Group.

11. UNDER-UTILISATION OF SITES

- 11.1. Given the inability of the present allotment estate to meet demand, under-utilisation needs to be countered wherever it occurs to ensure that sites are cultivated to their full potential.

Necessarily, this will involve careful site inspections, investigation as to the reasons for under utilisation and action where appropriate.

Recommendation:

Surveys on a site-by-site basis will be carried out to identify under-utilisation and an action plan be prepared by NBC in agreement with NAN and the Steering Group to deal with this issue.

12. **SITE INSPECTIONS AND TERMINATIONS**

- 12.1.** It will be the aim of NBC to reduce terminations to the absolute minimum through effective communication with allotment holders.

In conjunction NBC/NAN will review site inspections, termination and appeal procedures.

The process that is agreed will be clearly set out in the allotment Good Practice Guide.

Recommendation:

Site inspections, termination and appeal procedures will be reviewed by the NBC/NAN.

13. WAITING LISTS

13.1. At present, prospective tenants may register on the waiting lists of a number of sites.

In order to keep the list current, these registrations of interest will be reviewed quarterly and data produced for the Steering Group only, on a site by site basis.

The prospective tenants will be given full information on all sites and their position on the waiting lists.

Those on the waiting list have expressed strong frustration over not knowing where they stand.

Annually, one month prior to the renewal of Tenancy Agreements, all allotment holders will be asked might they wish to share, or use a half-plot, thus possibly reducing the waiting list.

Recommendation:

Waiting list positions will be communicated quarterly to both the Steering Group and prospective allotment holders, this to include field managed sites.

Recommendation:

Allotment holders will be invited to share or divide their plot upon renewal of their tenancy as a matter of course.

14. PRACTICE, DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT

- 14.1.** This document will not deal with the detail of what constitutes good practice or design. However, it is necessary to raise some of the issues that require consideration.

How these are resolved depends in some cases on the individual circumstances of the site.

The Steering Group should take on the key role of identifying, agreeing and publishing good plot and site management practice through the guides previously recommended and the provision of supplementary information.

In this regard, the document “Growing in the community – a good practice guide for the management of allotments” (produced by the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, The Greater London Authority plus the Local Government Association) is an excellent source of advice.

15. LANDSCAPE QUALITY

- 15.1.** There is no doubt that the landscape impact of some allotment sites needs to be addressed. A run-down appearance may create antipathy amongst some agencies and members of the public, which acts as a barrier to the further development of allotments.

Advice from landscape specialists will be sought and incorporated into the **five year action plan** for the upgrading of existing sites.

Clearly, landscape quality is an issue of high priority in the design of new and existing allotment sites.

Recommendation:

Expert advice will be sought on the landscape impact of allotment sites and action to address this incorporated in the five year action plan.

16. BIODIVERSITY

- 16.1.** Expert advice will be sought on how allotment site management and the cultivation of individual plots can make a positive contribution to the enhancement of biodiversity.

Of equal importance is to identify practices that may have a negative impact.

In both cases, communications and awareness raising are critically important.

Advice and actions will be incorporated into the **five year action plan** and basic information for allotment holders included in the Good Practice Guide produced for allotment holders.

Recommendation:

Expert advice will be sought on how allotments can contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, and actions to address the issue included in the five year action plan.

17. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

- 17.1. At the heart of communication is information. Trust can suffer when there is lack of effective communication between parties.

It is essential, therefore, that data relating to allotments be communicated in an atmosphere of trust and understanding of shared objectives.

- 17.2. At a minimum, the allotments data base should cover:

Borough wide:

Number, area, ownership and location and planning designation of all allotment sites

At site level:

Allotment holders' details (Data Protection Act 1998 applies to personal information):

- ◆ Comprehensive and detailed site maps – available at Appendix 1
- ◆ Overlay plans and background information relating to drainage water supply and other services
- ◆ Survey plans and notes
- ◆ Site history

Recommendation:

This information will be updated on the data base annually.

- 17.3. It is for the Steering Group to decide what communication is required and stakeholders will advise them. However, the adoption of an open and transparent approach by NBC is a prerequisite for the formation of a strong and effective partnership.

It should be appreciated at the outset, there is some information such as personal details that must be held centrally and not communicated for unauthorised purposes, but otherwise much information is effectively in the public domain and should be shared.

- 17.4. The creation of the allotment Good Practice Guide and prospective Allotment Holders Guide referred to above will go some way to developing communication channels. There are a number of linkages that need to be

considered in detail.

The following are suggested for discussion by the Steering Group:

Linkage	Methods
NAN – NBC	Allotment Overview and Policy
NBC – Allotment holders board	Good Practice Guide, letter, notice board
Allotment holder-Allotment holder	On site facilities, common room, etc
Site Association–Site Association competitions	Website, exchange site visits,
Site association–local communities	Open days and guided tours, school visits

Recommendation :

The Steering Group will consider communications as a matter of priority and agree a methodology to be followed.

Recommendation :

NBC will adopt an open and transparent approach as far as possible given the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 17.5.** An important part of the enabling work referred to above is training. The need for training applies to allotment holders, site committee members, Steering Group members and council staff.

Training needs will not be restricted to horticulture but may include biodiversity, green technology, organising meetings, desktop publishing, among other topics.

An assessment of training needs requires to be carried out, followed by an audit of available skills – it may well be that among allotment holders there is a willingness to share skills at no cost.

Financial Management on allotments should be of a transparent nature and, where possible, adhere to good accounting practice – See Appendix 3

Recommendation :

The Steering Group will carry out a training needs assessment and a skills audit of all allotment holders as a prelude to embarking on a prioritised training programme.

FINANCE

18. CAPITAL BUDGET

18.1. Capital spend in most cases comes from the sale and disposal of allotment land.

Areas other than the disposal of allotment land will be explored for future capital funding requirements.

The establishment of a Steering Group and the demonstration of widespread support for allotment developments may increase the possibility of successful capital bids.

Recommendation :

The Corporate Director/Manager will continue to bid for NBC capital funds with the support of the Steering Group.

Recommendation :

Other avenues for the obtaining of Capital Funding will be explored.

19. REVENUE BUDGET

- 19.1.** Wherever possible, breaking even is the ideal objective of all local authorities in their public services.

Local authorities have experienced declining revenue budgets for parks and open spaces maintenance for some considerable time.

The only source of income in respect of revenue expenditure on allotments is rents.

Recommendation :

The Corporate Director/Manager will review the revenue budget provision after discussion with the Steering Group.

20. RENT

- 20.1. The Overview and Scrutiny for Allotment Water Charges Task & Finish Group 2006 have covered this area adequately.
- 20.2. Fair and equitable rent will be set by the Steering Group and levied on a pole by pole basis.

Note: It should not be assumed that rental income will be increased annually, as currently Northampton allotment holders pay above the national average.

21. NEW SOURCES OF INCOME

21.1. It is also necessary to seek funds from new sources.

The possibilities for new partnerships with external agencies have been discussed briefly above and some of these may lead to new sources of funding.

The wide-ranging demands on its financial resources mean that NBC cannot alone bring about the transformation required in Northampton's allotments.

The success of NBC and the Steering Group in effecting this change will depend to a large extent on their ability to attract outside funding.

Creation of new allotment sites is likely to be "capital intensive" and the following in-exhaustive sources are a sample of those which could be considered:

- ◆ New Opportunities Fund
- ◆ Shell Better Britain Campaign
- ◆ Heritage Lottery Fund
- ◆ Esme Foundations

21.2. Each site could be encouraged to engage in fundraising activities, the revenues from which could be used to support the development of the site

Such activities could include:

- ◆ Guided tours of individual sites – such as Open Days
- ◆ Sponsorship from garden centres, seed merchants etc.

Recommendation :

The search for funding will be extended as widely as possible and include encouraging allotment sites to undertake fundraising, as is the current practice.

22. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) A participatory approach to the management and development of allotments will be adopted as a guiding principle **Page 9 ~**
2.3
- (2) A Northampton Allotment Steering Group that represents stakeholders' interests will be established and accept responsibility for taking forward the strategy **Page 11 ~**
3.6
- (3) Partnerships with relevant external businesses/agencies will be explored by the Steering Group **Page 11 ~**
3.7
- (4) A survey of available land for new sites will be undertaken especially to the south and west of the town **Page 12 ~**
4.3
- (5) Due to the demand to the south and west of the town, Mereway, which is currently a temporary site should be given permanent statutory status **Page 12 ~**
4.3
- (6) Targets for reduced waiting times will be agreed in conjunction with the Steering Group **Page 12 ~**
4.3
- (7) That NBC formally confirms its commitment to retaining the existing number of allotments and where necessary expanding capacity **Page 13 ~**
5.5
- (8) Further commitment and confirmation is required for NBC through WNDC, as appropriate, to increase its allotment estate to the south and west of the town **Page 14 ~**
5.5
- (9) That NBC ensures that when local development plans are drawn up and/or revised they give due cognizance to allotments and their protection **Page 14 ~**
5.5
- (10) At the planning stage of new developments, provision for allocation of land for allotments must be taken into consideration, and enforced, by means of a Section 106 Agreement **Page 14 ~**
5.5
- (11) A five year action plan for the upgrading of existing sites will be drawn up on a site by site basis **Page 15 ~**
6.2

- (12) Toilets and washing facilities will be provided on all sites
6.3 **Page 15 ~**
- (13) All sites to have a piped water supply (50mm)
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (14) All sites will have a site hut and secure storage facilities
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (15) All sites will have a water tight, lockable notice board of adequate size
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (16) Each site will have the option of a communal composting facility to make use of park deposits of fallen leaves and other biodegradable materials
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (17) All sites will have car parking where there is space available
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (18) All sites will have appropriate rubbish collection facilities, (i.e. cages) as agreed by NAN/NBC
6.3 **Page 16 ~**
- (19) Provision for the less able-bodied will be prioritised on the basis of demand
6.3 **Page 17 ~**
- (20) The rationalized new site at Harlestone Road will be developed in an innovative way and will represent a model of good practice
6.5 **Page 18 ~**
- (21) The advice of the Head of the relevant Planning Authority will be sought on the feasibility and processes involved in creating allotments as part of large scale developments
6.6 **Page 19 ~**
- (22) NBC will continue to employ a dedicated member of staff committed to letting and allotment management under the auspices of the Allotment Strategy
7.2 **Page 20 ~**

- (23) Guides for good allotment practice are to be produced
8.2 **Page 22 ~**
- (24) A Guide is produced for prospective allotment holders
8.2 **Page 22 ~**
- (25) Stakeholder participation in the management of allotments will be fostered. It should be handled sensitively and in the knowledge that the outcomes will vary between sites
9.1 **Page 23 ~**
- (26) The form of Tenancy Agreement will be reviewed at the earliest opportunity by NBC in consultation with NAN and agreed by the Steering Group
10.1 **Page 24 ~**
- (27) Surveys on a site-by-site basis will be carried out to identify under-utilisation and an action plan prepared by NBC in agreement with NAN and the Steering Group to deal with this issue
25 ~ 11.1 **Page**
- (28) Site inspections, termination and appeal procedures will be reviewed by the NBC/NAN
12.1 **Page 26 ~**
- (29) Waiting list positions will be communicated quarterly to both the Steering Group and prospective allotment holders this to include field managed sites
13.1 **Page 27 ~**
- (30) Allotment holders will be invited to share or divide their plot upon renewal of their tenancy as a matter of course
13.1 **Page 27 ~**
- (31) Expert advice will be sought on the landscape impact of allotment sites and action to address this incorporated in the five year action plan
15.1 **Page 29 ~**
- (32) Expert advice will be sought on how allotments can contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, and actions to address the issue included in the five year action plan
30 ~ 16.1 **Page**
- (33) This information will be updated on the data base annually
17.2 **Page 31 ~**

- (34) The Steering Group will consider communications as a matter of priority and agree a methodology to be followed **Page 32 ~**
17.4
- (35) NBC will adopt an open and transparent approach as far as possible given the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 **Page 32 ~**
17.4
- (36) The Steering Group will carry out a training needs assessment and a skills audit of all allotment holders as a prelude to embarking on a prioritised training programme **Page 32 ~**
17.5
- (37) The Corporate Director/Manager will continue to bid for NBC capital funds with the support of the Steering Group **Page 33 ~**
18.1
- (38) Other avenues for the obtaining of Capital Funding will be explored **Page 33 ~**
18.1
- (39) The Corporate Director/Manager will review the revenue budget provision after discussion with the Steering Group **Page 34 ~**
19.1
- (40) The search for funding will be extended as widely as possible and will include encouraging allotment sites to undertake fundraising, as is the current practice **Page 36 ~**
21.2

TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF "Income & Expenditure Account"
*
Allotment Association

Balance sheet for year ending *

2004/5	INCOME	2005/6		2004/5	EXPENDITURE	2005/6
£138.00	Membership	£180.00		0	Membership	0
£1,050.65	Shop Sales	£697.98		£851.70	Shop Purchase	£441.94
£89.00	Machine Hire	£142.00		£82.36	Petrol/Line	£159.38
£112.44	Donations	£231.70		0	Donations	0
0	N'pton in Bloom	0		0	N'pton in Bloom	0
0	Trophies	0		0	Trophies	0
0	Message Board	0		0	Message Board	0
£202.36	Annual Show & BBQ	£176.10		£111.59	Annual Show & BBQ	£44.61
0	Christmas Social	0		0	Christmas Social	0
0	Stationery/Postage	0		£102.55	Stationery/Postage	£62.02
0	Plants	£36.35		£4.98	Plants	0
£90.00	NBC Field Maintenance	£55.00		£40.00	Maintenance	£10.00
0	Field Rotavating	0		0	Field Rotavating	0
0	Keys	0		£7.00	Keys	0
0	Condolence	0		0	Condolence	£25.00
0	Sundries	0		£75.25	Sundries	£12.30
0	Subs N A C	0		£10.00	Subs N A C	0
£617.27	Fund Raising/Path Fund	£101.85		£1,200.00	Path Fund	0
£0.48	Bank interest	£0.83		0	Bank Charges	0
0	N'pton E'nv't Forum	£400.00		0	N'pton E'nv't Forum	£343.83
£185.23	Loss on year	0		0	Profit on year	£922.73
£2,485.43		£2021.81		£2,485.43		£2021.81

Current Assets

2004/5		2005/6		2004/5		2005/6
£2,300.20	Income	£2,021.81		£543.76	Current Account	£1,230.66
£2,485.43	Expenditure	£1,099.08		£112.29	Cash in Hand	£70.11
0		0		0	Unbanked Cheques	0
£185.23	Loss on year	0		£703.56	Shop Stock	£470.86
0	Profit on year	£922.73		0		0
				£1359.61		£1,771.63

Treasurer Date

Auditor Date

Chairman Date

TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF "Income & Expenditure Account"
*
Allotment Association

Balance sheet for year ending *

2004/5	INCOME	2005/6		2004/5	EXPENDITURE	2005/6
0	Membership	0		£74.81	Shop Purchase	0
£118.04	Shop Sales	£57.02		0	Petrol/Line	0
£0.50	Donations	0		0	N'pton in Bloom	0
£202.36	Annual Show & BBQ	£176.10		0	Trophies	0
0	Bank interest	0		0	Message Board	£6.48
0	NBC Field Maintenance	0		£111.59	Annual Show & BBQ	£44.61
£148.00	Fund Raising	£1.00		0	Christmas Social	0
£5.00	Machine Hire	£6.00		0	Stationery/Postage	£17.02
0	N'pton En'vt Forum	£400.00		0	Plants	0
0		0		£10.00	Maintenance	0
0		0		0	Rotavation	0
0		0		0	Keys	0
0		0		0	Condolence	0
0		0		£3.00	Sundries	£5.82
0		0		0	Profit on year	0
0		0		0	2004 Subs N A C	0
£473.90		£640.12		£199.40		£73.93

Current Assets

2004/5		2005/6				2005/6
£473.90	Income	£640.12		0		0
£199.40	Expenditure	£73.93		0		0
0		0		0	Current Account	£910.61
0	Cash B/f	£1022.88		0	Cash in Hand	£406.32
0	Unbanked Cheques	0		0	Unbanked Cheques	£400.00
0		0		0	Float Asst. Treasurer	£20.00
		£1736.93				£1736.93

Signed

.....

Treasurer

TRADING SALES LIST

*

Allotment Association

Please LIST BELOW any item sold

DATE	ITEM SOLD	QUANTITY	PRICE	FUND RAISING	MACHINE HIRE	SOLD BY
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
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27						
28						
29						

Sheet No	£	£	£
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Northampton Borough Council

Guidelines and Requirements

on Allotments

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1 **Application for a plot:**

These requirements are made pursuant to Allotment Acts 1908 to 1950 and apply to all rented allotments.

2 **Terms and Interpretation:**

Within these requirements the following words are to have the following meaning:

Allotment:	A plot of land that is let by the Council for recreational gardening and the good husbandry of Hens and Rabbits (see Guideline Hens and Guidelines Rabbits).
Authorised Officer:	The dedicated member of staff or other staff member of the Council.
Cultivation:	Keeping the plot in good productive order by: The maintenance and improvement of the soil: The control and prevention of weeds; Planting and maintenance of lawns, ornamental plants, herbs, flowers, fruit, vegetable crops and recreational gardening. The good husbandry and health of Hens and Rabbits.
Dedicated member of staff:	Member of the Council responsible for the administration and day to day running of allotments.
Haulage way:	A common route within the site for vehicular/pedestrian access to allotments.
Leisure area:	Small area of grass or patio for pastimes, eating and/or relaxing.
Other Authorised Person(s):	Tenant or invited guest(s).
Paths:	Dividing paths between allotments. The path to the right of the plot as viewed from the Haulage way is the tenant's responsibility. Where there are paths at either end, or both ends of the plot, these are the responsibility of the tenant. Where such paths abut another allotment (top or bottom), these must be kept and maintained, and are a shared responsibility. Tenants must not encroach onto neighbouring plots via any paths.
Rent:	The annual rent payable to the Council for an allotment.
Review Notice:	Any notice concerning reviewed rental changes.
Site/Field:	Any area of allotments that are grouped together.
Tenant:	A person who holds an agreement for the tenancy of an allotment.
Tenancy Agreement:	A legally binding written document which records the terms and conditions of letting of a particular allotment to an individual tenant.
The Council:	Northampton Borough Council.

3 **Tenancy Agreement:**

The tenancy agreement of an allotment is personal to the tenant named in the agreement.

The tenant may not assign, sub-let or part with possession or control of all or any part of their allotment.

4

Cultivation and use:

Personal use:

Tenants must use their allotment and any structures on it for their own personal use. They must not carry out any business or profit making schemes or sell produce from their allotment (unless sold by, and for the benefit of, a charity, or the allotment association of that site.)

It is not acceptable for any tenant to take any percentage of any sale, or to receive payment in kind, for their own personal gain. All monies, however accrued, must be passed on to either the charity or the association, and identified as such in an accounts ledger (if passed on to a charity, proper receipts should be shown from that charitable organisation.)

Tenants must not use their allotments as places of residence and must not sleep there overnight. Neither must they use the allotment as storage for cars, trailers, caravans or boats.

Tenants must not be seen to interfere with crops, trees etc on adjoining plots or other allotment plots. Any disputes therefrom must be directed to the dedicated member of staff of the council.

Permitted use:

The allotment is rented to the tenant for the purpose of recreational gardening, including the keeping of Hens and Rabbits.

Allotments must be kept clear and maintained in a good state of cultivation and fertility throughout the year. This includes the keeping of Hens and Rabbits.

The whole plot, including any paths uncultivated/leisure areas, must be kept tidy, safe and free from weeds.

The use of carpets as a weed suppressant is not allowed, due to the chemical content.

Weed Control:

It is the tenant's responsibility to keep his/her plot free from weeds, thereby not causing a nuisance to adjoining tenants.

Where, upon inspection, or as a result of a complaint, a plot with weeds is identified, the tenant will be sent a non-cultivation letter.

A further inspection will be carried out after 28 days and any failure to rectify the situation will result in a termination letter being sent.

If three separate non-cultivation letters are sent to the same plot holder within a five year period this will automatically result in termination of the tenancy.

Water Supply

The use of hose pipes connected in any way to any part of the allotment supply is strictly prohibited.

Water Tanks

Water tanks should be kept clean. Nothing should be placed in them.

Produce or tools etc are not to be washed in any of the water tanks (use a bucket).

Keep chemicals of any description well away from the water supplies.

Note: It is best practice to cover the water butts to prevent animals/birds contaminating the water. This also prohibits the growth of bacteria/algae and keeps the water clean/sweet.

5 Storage of materials within the plot:

Only materials for use on the plot may be stored there.

Any materials for example, paving and timber for infrastructure work, must be used within six months of appearing on the site/plot.

Tenants will be requested to remove, within 21 days, any surplus/unused materials that they have had in situ for more than the initial six month period.

After this period (21 days) surplus materials will be removed by the Council and the tenant will be charged with the full cost of such removal.

6 Trees:

Tenants must not plant any trees which do not have the **M9 dwarf root stock** (this restriction refers to all **future requests** to plant trees from allotment holders) they must also not allow self seeded trees to grow on their allotment.

7 Observance of Requirements:

Tenants must observe and comply with current requirements and those which the Council may make changes to at any time in the future (eg: statutory law changes, local restrictions, such as, bonfire restrictions).

These requirements/changes must be displayed on the notice board at each site, and sent out with rent invoices, new tenancy agreements and/or newsletters.

8 Ponds:

Ponds are not currently permitted on the Council allotment sites. **THIS REQUIRES DISCUSSION BETWEEN NBC AND NAN**

9 Speed limits:

There is a speed limit of 10 kph (5 mph) on all allotments; this is for safety, and to maintain the integrity of the Haulage ways, and must be adhered to (signs may be obtained from the Council).

10 **Rent:**
The tenant must pay the invoiced rent within 28 days of the due date. If the tenant qualifies for any special discounts, these must be requested by the 1st August (prior to the invoices being raised for that year). Proof of entitlement to discount will be required.

Applications for any discounts received by the Council after the 1st August will not be considered until the following year.

The rent year:

The rent year will run from 1st October to 30th September.

Tenants taking up an allotment within the year will be invoiced for the remainder of the year on a pro-rata basis.

11 **Rent Changes:**
Any rental changes must be notified in writing to tenants 12 months prior to commencement.

12 **Relinquishing of plot:**
A tenant may relinquish their plot(s) at any time. They may also have their tenancy agreement terminated for breach of requirements.

13 **Outgoing tenants:**
Outgoing tenants must remove any items or structures from their plot(s) before the end of their tenancy, or offer any suitable structures to the site association, for onward recycling.

The Council will dispose of any materials not removed by the tenant. The full cost of collection and disposal may be charged to the outgoing tenant.

14 **Site keys:**
The allotment site keys must be returned to the Council, within 14 days of the termination date of the tenancy.

The full cost of replacement will be charged to the outgoing tenant if the key is not returned.

Key costs can be increased at anytime, to cover the Councils costs, this will be done with a minimum of six months' notice, via the allotment notice boards.

The Council will also notify field secretaries by letter of any increase.

Note: Some field associations control their own keys and you should adhere to that site's allotment key policy. You will receive information regarding this at the commencement of your tenancy.

- 15 **Bonfires:**
You should be aware that it is now an offence, under the Highways Act 1986 to allow smoke from a bonfire to drift across a road.

In addition, under the Environment Protection Act 1990, the Council is obliged to take formal legal action if they are satisfied that a nuisance, due to smoke, exists or is likely to occur.

Please first consider whether your bonfire is necessary and whether it is likely to cause a nuisance to the occupants of nearby houses, or to other plot holders.

- 16 **Rubbish and Recycling:**
The Council operates a cage system for the disposal of rubbish with each site receiving cages as requested.

It is imperative that the weight limit of 1½ tonnes per cage is not exceeded, and that no green waste is deposited therein.

Please ensure that you do not bring any materials onto the allotment purely for disposal of such items into these cages.

It is preferable that non-diseased vegetable matter be composted and used on the tenant's allotment(s).

Any diseased plants and perennial weeds can be disposed of at the Council's recycling centres, free of charge.

- 17 **Duty of Care:**
Tenants have a duty of care to everyone, including visitors to the site, trespassers and themselves.

Particular care should be taken when using strimmers, rotavators and other mechanically powered equipment.

When using any mechanically powered equipment on your plot, you should advise adjacent plot holders of your intention.

Care should also be taken to avoid creating hazards by the construction of features on the allotment or the storage and usage of chemicals, fuels and hazardous materials.
(PONDS???)

Asbestos is prohibited on all sites. If you discover it, please inform the dedicated member of staff of the Council of its location.

Note: Low level asbestos roofing sheets are permissible, if already in situ.

The use of barbed or razor wire is not allowed on any allotment site.

18 **Site security:**

All tenants and authorised persons must, upon arrival or departure, lock gates to prevent access by unauthorised persons or animals.

This instruction applies even if the gate is found to be unattended and unlocked for whatever reason, upon such arrival or departure.

Criminal acts of vandalism and damage against tenants must be reported to the police, by all affected plot holders.

Each plot holder should pass their crime number on to the field secretary, who should log these for future reference/action (if applicable).

The Council operates a zero tolerance policy in respect of theft from, or criminal damage to allotments. Any person proved to be involved in such activities will be subject to the full rigours of the law, and if a tenant, their tenancy will be revoked forthwith, and the right to rent an allotment withdrawn henceforth.

19 **Livestock and Pets:**

Dogs must be kept on a lead and under control at all times whilst on allotment sites.

Livestock on allotment sites is currently restricted to Hens and Rabbits.

Any tenant wishing to keep Hens and/or Rabbits, must agree to abide by the Guidelines.

Bees are not currently allowed on the Council's allotment sites.

Note: This will be reviewed during 2007/2008

20 **Authorised persons:**

Only the tenant or a person authorised or accompanied by the tenant is allowed on the allotment site.

The dedicated member of staff or other authorised person(s) (association committee members) may order any unauthorised person to leave the allotment site immediately.

21 **Paths:**

Paths within allotments must be kept free from weeds and growth must not exceed 100mm (4" high).

Paths must be kept clear of obstructions at all times.

Boundary pegs must not be removed by tenants under any circumstances (you should be aware that plot sizes will be checked periodically).

All paths should (as a minimum) be 0.75m wide (29"), for easy pedestrian access to tenants' plots.

If a full plot is divided into two half plots, the Council is responsible for marking the boundary between the two halves with a path of 0.75m (29") (as a minimum) and a minimum of two identifying posts.

Tenants should not remove any part of any path. If any path has been altered/removed the tenant will be required to reinstate it.

The tenant must ensure that all Haulage ways have free access for other users at all times (ie: no parking on the Haulage way).

Tenants must not encroach onto neighbouring plots via any paths.

Hardstanding for cars on plots must be reinstated as cultivated ground prior to relinquishing the tenancy.

22 Structures (sheds, greenhouses, poly tunnels, and fences):

Tenants may put up sheds (provided they do not exceed the permitted size limitations) and one greenhouse on their plot.

Maximum size of both sheds and greenhouses is 2.45mtrs long x 2.45 mtrs wide x 2.13 mtrs high (8'x8'x7').

Tenants keeping Hens and/or Rabbits may erect or place and maintain such buildings or structures on the land as is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

The foundations for structures must be no deeper than 150mm (6").

Permission from the dedicated member of staff is required for the siting of a poly-tunnel and the size agreed. Dependent on the size, planning permission may be required.

Note: Community sheds are exempt from the size criteria.

All structures on allotments must be temporary and maintained in a safe order. If the Council is not satisfied with the safe state of a structure the tenant must either repair it to the Council's satisfaction or remove it within one month of instruction to do so.

If the structure is not removed, the Council may remove it and charge the tenant the full cost of removal and disposal.

All applicable structures should have guttering/down pipes and a suitable container (ie: water butts) for water conservation.

Any structures erected on the allotment must not be made from any hazardous materials, and must be adequately secured to the ground to prevent uplift.

All structures must be kept within the boundary of the allotment plot, not impinging on to any path.

They must not be constructed over underground utilities, (eg: water supply pipes).
Contact dedicated member of staff if unsure of location.

No permanent fences are to be erected on any allotment site. All plots will preserve an open aspect (ie: no solid fencing around plot boundaries).

Temporary windbreaks to protect crops are allowed, but need to be easily dismantled when crops are completed.

23 Notices Advertisements and Plot Numbers:

Only field society, association, the Council and NAN information is to be displayed on site notice boards. No other notices or advertisements are allowed on the site except with the written consent of the dedicated member of staff of the Council.

Tenants must mark their plot number on the outside of a shed, greenhouse, or on a post, and keep the number clean and legible, ensuring that it is visible from the Haulage way.

24 Change of Address and Notices:

Tenants must inform the Council immediately, in writing, of any change of address or status.

Notices to be served by the Council on the Tenant may be sent to the tenant's address as contained within the tenancy agreement, or as notified to the dedicated member of the Council under these requirements:

- a) by post
- b) by registered letter
- c) by recorded delivery or
- d) hand delivered.

Written information to the Council should be sent to:

The Dedicated Member of Staff for Allotments,

Westbridge Depot

St James Mill Road

Northampton

NN5 5JW

Or email allotments@northampton.gov.uk

25 Inspection:

Any allotment and any structure may be inspected by an authorised officer of the Council, at any time.

Under normal circumstances the dedicated member of staff or any other officer of the Council will carry out inspections, jointly with the field secretary. In the event of a dispute between the Council and a plot holder, NAN, if requested, will be prepared to mediate.

- 26 **Termination/relinquishing of the Tenancy:**
The Council may terminate an allotment tenancy's agreement in any of the following ways:
- a) By giving 12 months' written notice to quit, if the site is a temporary site.
 - b) By giving one months' written notice to quit if:
 - (i) The rent is in arrears for 28 days or more or
 - (ii) The tenant is in breach of any of these requirements or of their tenancy agreement; or
 - (iii) On the demise of a tenant, when there would normally be no objection to a family member taking on the tenancy.

- 27 **Council's responsibilities (to include Field Managed Sites):**
Administration, waiting lists, letting of plots, rent collection, termination of tenancy agreements, and enforcement of requirements.

Repairs to site perimeter fences, gates, water and haulage infrastructure, vacant plot management, tree management and general repair/maintenance.

The removal of rubbish which has been fly-tipped.

Note: Tenants should not bring rubbish on to the site from outside. Anyone caught doing so is liable to having their tenancy terminated.

- 28 **Liability:**
The Council has a duty of care for all tenants on all sites.

Tenants are advised not to store any items of value on the allotment, and to insure and mark any items they do decide to keep at the allotment.

- 29 **Complaints procedure:**
The Council will provide a high quality of allotment service. If however you are unhappy with the level of service in the first instance:
Telephone 01604 837 837 or
Write to the dedicated member of staff for allotments of the Council, who will respond/acknowledge your correspondence within seven days.

- 30 **Council Contact Details:**
If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, then please write to:

Streetcare & Environment Manager
Westbridge Depot
St James Mill Rd
Northampton

NN5 5JW. For discussion at the monthly meetings between the Northampton Allotments Network & Northampton Borough Council.

Appendices

2



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No:

8

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Northampton Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Discussion Paper
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	3 September 2007
Key Decision:	Yes
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	People, Planning & Regeneration
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Richard Church
Ward(s)	St Crispin / Castle

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report explains the purpose and background of the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) Issues and Options Discussion Paper. The report explains the nature of the issues and options stage and describes the contents of the Discussion Paper. The Discussion Paper is attached as Appendix 1. The report also sets out the next stages in the preparation of the Central Area Action Plan and seeks agreement to commence public consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves for consultation the Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Discussion Paper as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees the outline of the consultation process for the Central Area Action Plan Strategy Issues and Options Discussion Paper as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 2.3 That Cabinet agrees that the detail of the consultation process be agreed with the Portfolio Holder (Regeneration).
- 2.4 That any modifications to the Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Discussion Paper arising as the result of further information and editing to be delegated to the Corporate Manager (Regeneration and Growth) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (Regeneration).

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Purpose and Background of the Central Area Action Plan

- 3.1.1 The CAAP is a statutory document that the Council is preparing as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 3.1.2 In September 2006, Northampton Borough Council's Cabinet agreed that a revised Local Development Scheme for Northampton be prepared and submitted to the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM). Consequently the three Councils of Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire District Councils jointly prepared a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Joint LDS was approved by the Northampton Borough Council's Cabinet in March 2007 for submission to GOEM. GOEM approved the Joint LDS on 19 March 2007 and it was brought into effect on 31 March 2007.
- 3.1.3 The LDS is a public statement of the Council's programme for the production of local development documents. The LDS sets out the following information:
- A brief description of all the local development documents to be prepared and the content and geographic area to which they will relate;
 - Which local development documents will be statutory development plan documents (DPD) and which will be non-statutory supplementary planning documents (SPD);
 - Which policies and proposals in the existing Local Plan and supplementary planning guidance are to be saved;
 - Which, if any, local development documents are to be prepared on a joint basis with one or more local planning authorities;
 - The planned timetable for preparing each local development document and the key milestone to be achieved.

- 3.1.4 The Joint LDS sets out those local development documents that will be

common and those local development documents that each Council will prepare individually. The Joint LDS also sets out those Local Development Documents (LDD) that each of the three Councils intend to prepare individually over the next three years. For Northampton Borough Council, the DPDs that will be prepared are:

- Central Area Action Plan DPD
- Sixfields Area Action Plan DPD

3.1.5 The timetable for the production of Central Area Action Plan is set out below:

Commencement of Preparation	Nov 2006
Preparation of Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal Report	Dec 2006-Mar 2007
Strategic Options and Issues (Pre-Submission consultation)	June-July 2007
Public participation on Preferred Options and initial Sustainability Appraisal report	Dec 2007-Jan 2008
Pre-Examination Meeting	April 2009
Independent Examination	June-July 2009
Adoption of the CAAP	May 2010

3.1.6 The Preferred Options stage for the CAAP is slightly in advance of that for the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (Preferred Options Feb/March 2008). This reflects the clear steer for its preparation in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy. However, in reality the CAAP and JCS are running broadly in parallel and the preparation of the two Plans is being co-ordinated. This includes maximizing the benefits of joint consultation where possible. However, the JCS will be submitted three months ahead of the CAAP and have its Examination earlier than CAAP. This programme has been approved by GO-EM.

3.1.7 All development plan documents, including the CAAP, will be assessed against the nine tests of soundness by an independent planning inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate. The tests of soundness are set out in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. The tests are:

- It has been prepared in accordance with the local development scheme;
- It has been prepared in compliance with the statement of community involvement,
- The plan and its policies have been subjected to sustainability appraisal;
- It is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy

and in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy for the region and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas;

- It has had regard to the authority's community strategy;
- The strategies/ policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base;
- There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring; and
- The plan is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.

3.2 Issues and Options Stage

3.2.1 One of the key aims of the local development framework system is "front loading". This means that Councils should take key decisions early in the preparation of local development documents. The aim is to seek consensus on essential issues early in the preparation of local development documents and so avoid late changes being made. This is why the issues and options stage is so important – enabling a wide ranging and open debate at the start of the CAAP's preparation.

3.2.2 The purpose of the issues and options stage is to identify the key issues and develop alternative options to address those issues. The alternative options will come from the evidence base and the views of everyone with an interest in the central area.

3.2.3 The evidence base takes many forms. It includes facts and figures, e.g. population statistics, house prices through to detailed and complex studies. The evidence for the central area is extensive and developing.

3.3 The Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Discussion Paper

3.3.1 Drawing on the work to date the Local Development Framework team has prepared the CAAP Issues and Options Discussion Paper for consultation. The Discussion Paper is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

3.3.2 The Discussion Paper sets out the main issues that have been identified so far that the Central Area Action Plan must address, what has happened so far in terms of parts of the central area and suggests a series of options for the future to address the issues. The purpose of these options is to stimulate debate and discussion on the key priorities for the central area.

3.3.3 The Discussion Paper does not seek to set out all possible issues and alternative options, instead it represents initial thoughts and provides

the opportunity to raise new issues and options.

- 3.3.4 Questions are asked throughout the Discussion Paper to generate debate and seek feedback on the vision, the objectives, the issues and the options.
- 3.3.5 The CAAP Issues and Options Discussion Paper will be subjected to a strategic sustainability appraisal by independent environmental consultants Environ. This strategic appraisal will then form the basis of the detailed initial sustainability appraisal report, which will be prepared alongside the Preferred Options document and published with the Preferred Options document for consultation in December 2007-January 2008.

The Consultation Process

- 3.3.6 The Discussion Paper will be used as the basis for discussion up to the production of the Preferred Option in December 2007. Consultations have already taken place on specific sites and specific proposals. Whilst these were not part of the formal Issues and Options consultation stage, this early front-loading with key stakeholders is important. A function of the CAAP Issues and Options Discussion Paper, therefore, is to bring all previous consultations together as a position statement for all to comment upon.
- 3.3.7 It is, however, proposed to “piggy back” on some of the consultation events being arranged for consultation on the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, in order to promote discussion on the CAAP. Regard will also be had to the Council’s Statements of Community Involvement that was adopted in Spring 2006. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document that forms part of the Local Development Framework. The SCI sets out how the community will be involved in the preparation of the LDDs and consulted on planning applications. The second test of soundness is that the LDD has been prepared in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.3.8 The detailed arrangements for the consultation process are currently being made and will be available within the next few days. These need to be agreed by the Council’s Portfolio Holder.

The Next Stages

- 3.3.9 The responses to the Issues and Options Discussion Paper will be assessed and used in the preparation of the next stage, the ‘Preferred Options’ document that will set out the preferred approach to the spatial vision, the spatial objectives and the policies that the CAAP will contain. The Preferred Options document will also take into account national and regional guidance and any additional evidence. The Preferred Options document will be subject to consultation and again, the responses to that consultation will be fed into the production of the ‘Submission CAAP’ which will be the final version produced by the Council. This will then be published for comment at the same time as

being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration at a Public Examination. Those making representations on the Submission document will be able to submit their case for consideration. A report and final document will be produced by the Inspectorate and adopted by the Council.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

Report will have implications for changing existing planning policies for the town centre.

4.2 Resources and Risk

The Council has already established a Local Development Framework team which is responsible for preparing the DPDs, including the CAAP. The team has suffered from staff shortages recently, which accounted for the programmed Issues and Options consultation in June-July not being met. Interim management is currently being provided by Jacobs Ltd and a new Team Leader has recently been appointed to the team.

The Northampton Local Development Framework budget for 2007/08 is £66,390. This is currently further supported by Planning Delivery Grant. Allowance has been made within this budget for the Borough Council to contribute to the CAAP Issues and Options consultation process. This consultation work is resourced from within existing budgets.

In preparing the Joint Local Development Scheme it was found that the main areas of risk relate to:

- Staff turnover;
- Capacity of the Planning Inspectorate and other agencies to cope with demand nationwide;
- Programme slippage;
- Political differences;
- Delays in Examination process and/ or legal challenge;
- Changes to national or regional guidance.

The Joint LDS identifies measures that will be taken to address these risks.

The principal opportunity is the strengthening of existing partnerships through joint working resulting in sounder policies.

4.3 Legal

The Legal section has no particular comments to make on the report.

4.4 Equality

The report deals with issues such as affordable housing, access to the town centre by means other than the car, and areas in need of community

regeneration. The report will be discussed with the Council's representative community forums and neighbourhood partnerships. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken where appropriate.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

None to date but a wide range of internal and external bodies will be consulted including the following:

Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Wellingborough Council, Government Office for the East Midlands, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Technical Stakeholders and the general public.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

The preparation of the CAAP in accordance with the Joint Local Development Scheme affects the Council's Strategic Improvement Plan, the Corporate Plan and the allocation of Planning Delivery Grant to the Council.

Cabinet may decide to make amendments to CAAP Issues and Options Discussion Paper. However, significant changes would affect the ability to meet the timetable set out in the Joint Local Development Scheme.

4.7 Other Implications

None

4.8 Compliance Issues

A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes

Strategic Improvement Plan

The CAAP will be fundamental to the achievement of the following outcomes in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2006/09:

- We will deliver sustainable growth that meets the aspirations of current and future generations; and
- We will produce a vision for the town, based on consultation with local people, which sets out for the short, medium and long term the type of place we want Northampton to be.

Corporate Plan

The first, second, fourth and fifth objectives, and their sub-components, of the Corporate Plan 2007-2011 are relevant to the CAAP.

- To ensure that our communities are safer, greener and cleaner;
- To improve housing and health to enhance the well-being of our

communities;

- To promote economic development and growth in Northampton:
- To strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes.

B: Other Implications

Other Strategies

The CAAP influences and is influenced by all the Council's strategies and plans, including the Council's Housing Strategy.

As a key document within the Local Development Framework and as a spatial plan the CAAP will guide the decisions of a wider range of organisations, agencies and individuals beyond the Council itself. These will include: the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation; Northamptonshire County Council; infrastructure and service providers such as the Highways Agency, the Primary Care Trust, Anglian Water, telecommunications and energy providers; environmental bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trust; voluntary agencies; registered social landowners; and land and property developers.

Another key role of the CAAP is to implement the Government's growth agenda as expressed in the Sustainable Communities Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy and The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

The CAAP also influences and is influenced by the Northampton Community Strategy.

5. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source
Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Development Frameworks	Sets out the policies that should be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development frameworks and minerals and waste development frameworks.	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government)
Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)	The development strategy for the East Midlands for the period up to 2021 within which the Local Development will be prepared.	Government Office for the East Midlands
Draft East Midlands Regional Plan	Consultation draft replacement of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands, covers the period to 2026.	East Midlands Regional Assembly

Title	Description	Source
Northampton Local Development Framework – Revised Local Development Scheme	Report to Cabinet – 15 March 2007	Northampton Borough Council
Northampton Statement of Community Involvement	Sets out how the community will be involved in the preparation of local development documents and consulted on planning applications.	Northampton Borough Council

Authors: Chris Cavanagh, Corporate Manager, Regeneration & Growth and John Dalby, Jacobs T: 8754



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Northampton Central Area Action Plan

DRAFT
Issues and Options Discussion Paper

September 2007

CONSULTATION

What is this consultation all about?

1. This Central Area Action Plan discussion paper has been prepared for public consultation. There will be a 6 week period in which representations should be made. Comments received after the 6 week period will be considered as far as the Plan's preparation timetable allows. All comments received will help inform the next stage of the Central Area Action Plan which is Preferred Options. This is currently scheduled for December 2007/January 2008.
2. Northampton Borough Council is committed to involving local people, businesses, visitors and other key stakeholders in the preparation of the Central Area Action Plan from the earliest stage so that everyone can be fully involved in decisions that will help shape the regeneration of the Central Area and increase its profile.
3. This paper sets out the main issues that have been identified so far. It does not seek to set out all the possible issues and alternative options affecting the Central Area. It represents initial thoughts and provides the opportunity to raise new issues and options through continuous public involvement.
4. A further purpose of this Paper is to request from all landowners and other stakeholders in the Central Area, potential sites for development which are not included in this report, for consideration by the Council. Proposals for development should include a clear site address and associated map, with a description of the proposed uses, and a statement of justification.

How is the discussion paper structured?

5. The paper is divided into 10 chapters. The paper:
 - ❖ explains why we are publishing a discussion paper
 - ❖ outlines the background information and technical studies on which the issues and options to date have been based on
 - ❖ provides a draft vision and strategic objectives for the Central Area
 - ❖ raises issues and options for key themes affecting the Central Area
 - ❖ proposes how to deliver the strategic objectives
 - ❖ explains what we are going to do next

When should you make comments by?

6. The formal consultation period for this paper is 6 weeks from XX to XX. Comments should be sent to the LDF team at Northampton Borough Council (contact details below) by 5pm on XX November 2007. (*Exact dates will be decided following Cabinet approval of Draft Issues and Options Discussion Paper*)

How can you make comments?

7. Northampton Borough Council would like to know what you think about the draft vision, the draft strategic objectives and the draft issues, options and proposals raised for meeting the objectives.
8. Questions are asked throughout the discussion paper to help you tell us what you think. A summary of all the questions is given at the end of the paper. The pages are perforated, so you can use them to answer the questions as you go through the discussion paper before returning them to the Council.
9. To respond to the issues and options identified in the discussion paper, please fill in the summary of questions given at the end of the paper. These can also be downloaded from the Council's website, www.northampton.gov.uk. or completed on line – go to On-line Forms (under “Key Information”) → Environment → Planning.
10. Please clearly mark your responses “**Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Response**” and return:–

☞ by hand, to the One Stop Shop in the Guildhall, St Giles Square

☞ by post, fax or e-mail to:

LDF Team
Planning Policy and Conservation Section
Northampton Borough Council
Cliftonville House
Bedford Road
Northampton
NN4 7NR
Fax: 01604 837527
Email: ldf@northampton.gov.uk

For further information, please telephone the LDF team on 01604 838907

**ALL COMMENTS AND VIEWS RECEIVED ON THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS
DISCUSSION PAPER WILL BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND MADE
AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC**

CONTENTS

Preface – Consultation arrangements

List of plans/diagrams *(N.B. Not included but will be available, together with draft plans/diagrams at Cabinet Meeting 3/9/07)*

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Glossary

**Northampton:
A town of the future that values the past.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Northampton is a place of change and growth. It is a key component in the Government's programme of developing sustainable communities. By 2026¹ the whole town will have grown significantly. Past change is evident in the town's unique built heritage. The town must adapt and revitalise to meet the twin challenges of change and conserving its historic past. To enable these two challenges to be faced the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) will guide that Area's future development. The Central Area includes what most people would identify as the 'town centre', the central retail, leisure and commercial hub of the town, together with adjoining areas of commercial, residential and mixed use. A Plan showing the boundary of the Central Area is included in Chapter 2.
- 1.2. The CAAP will provide the basis for co-ordinating the actions of a range of partners with an interest in the Central Area. Area Action Plans are new-style planning documents, targeted at areas of significant change and conservation. They should integrate land use, transport and regeneration proposals with clear mechanisms for delivery.
- 1.3. This Issues and Options Discussion Paper has been prepared in the light of the earlier consultation facilitated through the Town Centre Commission, and a range of background documents, which together form the current evidence base. This evidence base is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.
- 1.4. The paper includes draft spatial vision, strategic objectives, and key issues and options for the development of the central area over the next 20 years have been derived from the evidence base. A number of questions are posed throughout the document to generate feedback.
- 1.5. This Paper provides an opportunity for all interested parties to have their say in the future development of Northampton's Central Area. The feedback received from this document will be used to develop Preferred Options for future development. The CAAP will be developed from the Preferred Options feedback and is due to be adopted in May 2010. Once adopted it will be kept under annual review and will be revised to adapt to changing circumstances. Any future revisions will be consulted upon in the same way as this process.
- 1.6. It is essential that the Central Area be well managed to improve; the quality of life, the environment, opportunities for high quality employment, retail, housing, leisure and cultural development and investment.
- 1.7. The Central Area Action Plan will establish planning policies for the Central Area of Northampton, until 2026. It will:
 - Manage growth and change in the Central Area by establishing development and design principles
 - Ensure the protection of areas and places sensitive to change (this is in addition to the conservation areas in the Central Area)
 - Be deliverable.
- 1.8. The Central Area Action Plan will be the basis for planning decisions made in the Central Area, by West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (the Planning

¹ Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands adopted until 2026. This document determines the growth to be planned in Northampton.

Authority currently determining most applications in the Central Area with the exception of listed buildings), Northamptonshire County Council, the strategic transport and minerals and waste planning authority, and Northampton Borough Council. The latter has responsibility for detailed development plan matters such as this Plan and the determination of certain minor planning applications. The responsibilities and arrangements for preparing the strategic planning context for the CAAP are discussed in the next section. The CAAP will also direct investment and form the basis for regeneration in the Central Area.

- 1.9. This chapter continues by setting the planning policy context for the CAAP. It then summarises the key characteristics of the area. Later chapters explore what has been happening recently in relation to planning of the Central Area and key issues and options for retail and cultural development and regeneration, accessibility and the transport network, the public realm, community regeneration and conservation and built environment. The final chapter sets out the next steps in the process of producing the CAAP.

Policy Context:

The planning System:

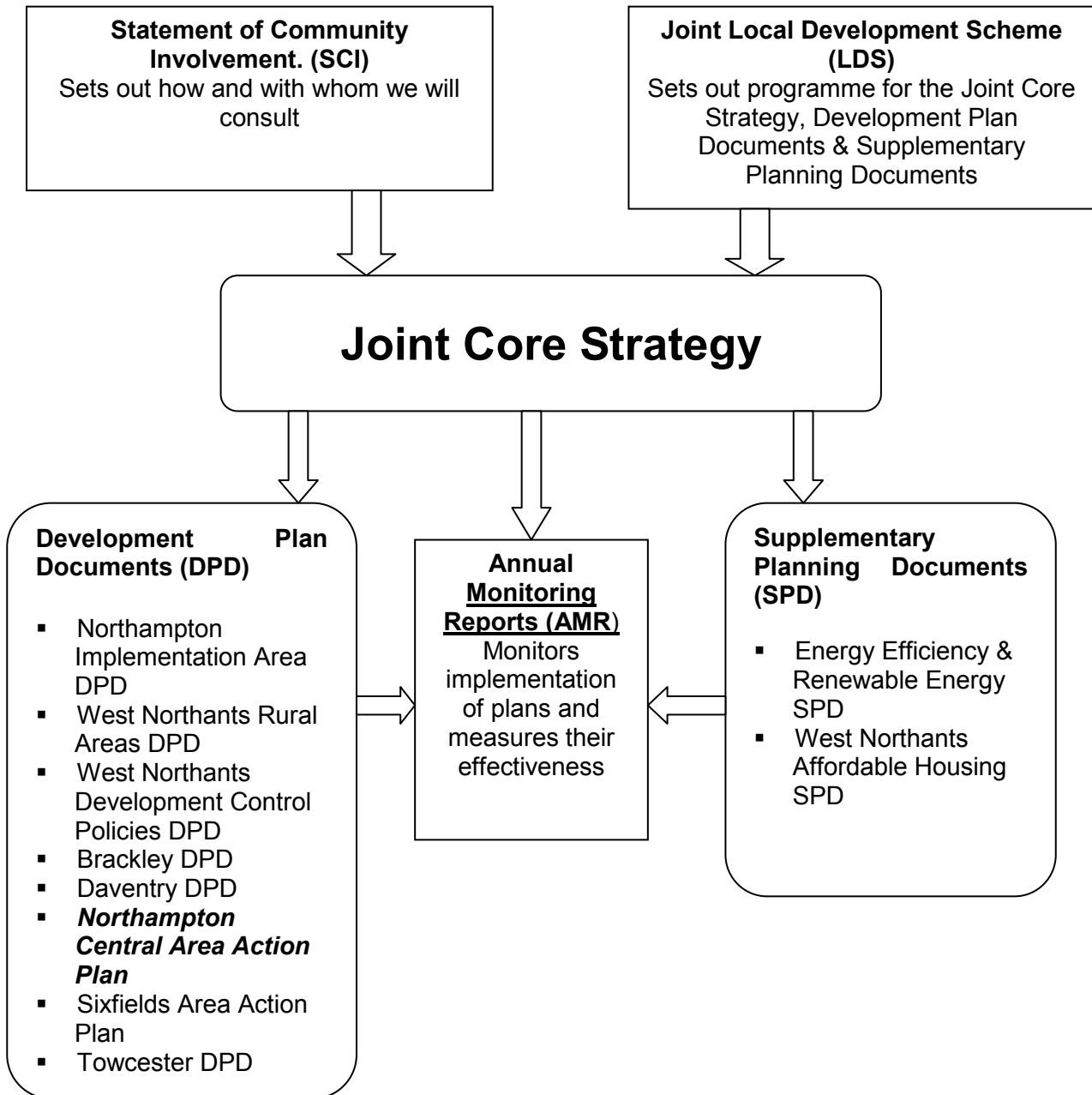
The Act:

- 1.10. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced a new system for planning aimed at streamlining the planning process, replacing the old Local Plan system. The new system, called the Local Development Framework, requires a number of documents to be produced creating a 'portfolio' of documents.
- 1.11. Northampton Borough Council is working with Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District, to produce co-ordinated Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) for the growth area of West Northamptonshire. The three Councils are producing a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for West Northamptonshire. The Joint Core Strategy will consider the strategic issues affecting the whole of Northampton, including a transport strategy for the town and establishing the relationship of the Central Area with district and local centres. The JCS will provide the main context for CAAP by making decisions in principle. CAAP's purpose is to flesh out the policy detail and focus on implementation. The CAAP must meet the objectives of the Joint Core Strategy. This is important to ensure that the targets for growth are met and to deliver sustainable development². Preparation of the CAAP is being integrated with the evolving Joint Core Strategy. A diagram showing the components of the West Northamptonshire Local Development Frameworks is provided in Figure 1. It identifies where the CAAP fits into the process.

²**Sustainable development** – defined as development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (United Nations 1987, "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development")

1.12. A full list of the documents in each of the three Authorities' Local Development Framework, and the timetable for delivery, is given in the Joint Local Development Scheme (LDS) published in March 2007³.

Figure 1 West Northamptonshire Local Development Frameworks



Process:

1.13. The Area Action Plan is a Development Plan Document (DPD) and is prepared according to central government guidance and legislation.

³ Local Development Scheme – available for reference at local libraries, the Guildhall, Cliftonville House or on the website at www.northampton.gov.uk

1.14. There are a number of key stages:

- (i) **Issues and Options** – the development of issues and options and testing of these options with local communities, businesses and all other local groups;
- (ii) **Preferred Options** – public participation on the Council’s “preferred options” document;
- (iii) **Submission Draft** – the Council submit the Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector;
- (iv) **Adoption** – the Council adopt the Plan, having amended it in the light of the Inspector’s binding report

1.15. Public consultation is at the heart of producing a Development Plan Document. Northampton Borough Council has set out its policy for carrying out public consultation in the Statement of Community Involvement⁴. The public consultation for the Issues and Options stage will be in accordance with this document.

1.16. Apart from public consultation, conformity with planning policy is key. Development Plan Documents (such as Area Action Plans) must conform to national government planning policy, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) and the Joint Core Strategy. For the preparation of the CAAP, there are a number of key pieces of planning policy, these are:

- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres. This document sets out the government’s objectives and planning policies for town centres. This document seeks to deliver the key objective of promoting viability and vitality in the towns.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): In this document Northampton is identified as one of the principal urban areas within the East Midlands. Northampton Central Area, therefore, has a key role to play as a regional centre for retail and other services, for the town, and for the wider area. The RSS requires the preparation of a Development Plan Document to provide long-term planning policies to upgrade and extend the quality of existing facilities and to revitalise Northampton’s Central Area, hence the preparation of the CAAP.
- Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy: Adopted in March 2005, this Strategy forms part of the regional policy basis for the preparation of statutory Local Development Documents such as this Central Area Action Plan.

The document, which was the subject of extensive consultation and public examination, sets out the following policy framework for Northampton Central Area:

“Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other relevant bodies, will prepare an LDD to provide a long-term framework for revitalising and upgrading the quality and facilities of the central area, including:

- *developing the area around and including the railway station not only as a transport hub for the town, but also as an attractive and vibrant gateway to the town centre and focus for development;*

⁴ Statement of Community Involvement – available for reference at all local libraries, the Guildhall, Cliftonville House and on the NBC website www.northampton.gov.uk

- *improving the range and quality of retail provision by increasing comparison and convenience floorspace, and linking this into a revitalisation of the rest of the central area incorporating attractive links to the railway station and waterfront areas;*
- *making the central area the focus of a range of employment opportunities with a particular emphasis on offices, through provision of large office space through to small office suites in both new and converted accommodation;*
- *developing cultural/heritage tourism by enhancing the existing cultural heritage facilities and attractions, and through the provision of new facilities; and*
- *increasing the range of centrally located overnight accommodation.”*

The Evidence Base

1.17. The issues have been developed through an examination of the evidence base that has been collected to underpin the Area Action Plan. The evidence base consists of national and regional planning policy, best practice guidance, background studies, Census statistics and other published data, and consultation feedback.

Sustainability Appraisal:

1.18. The Area Action Plan will need to be informed and modified by the process of Sustainability Appraisal, which will test out the Plan's effect on agreed sustainability objectives. The first stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process is the preparation of a Scoping Report. The purposes of the Scoping Report are to identify other plans or programmes and sustainability objectives, collect baseline information, identify sustainability issues and develop a suitable framework for assessing the sustainability of the Plan. The Scoping Report was completed in January 2007 and has been subject to statutory consultation.

1.19. This discussion paper will be subject to sustainability appraisal using the framework referred to above. This sustainability report will inform, and be part of, the consultation at the Preferred Options stage.

2. Central Area Context:

Central Area Context:

- 2.1. Despite growth in the population of Northampton and Northamptonshire, the Central Area has not seen similar growth and investment. The growth of out-of-centre retailing and business areas has resulted in several major employers and retailers moving out of the Central Area. Whilst there has been a growth of new apartment development and a rise in the number of pubs and restaurants operating in the centre, there is an urgent need to reverse the image of a Central Area in partial decline. With the inclusion of Northampton as a significant element of the Government's growth agenda a key challenge is to try and realise the potential that Northampton has to become a regional centre. This will benefit not only the Borough itself but assist in the enhancement of Northampton's traditional market town role.
- 2.2. The area proposed to be covered by the Central Area Action Plan is shown on Figure 2. It covers the main shopping areas, of Abington Street, Grosvenor Centre and the Market Place, together with adjoining areas of commercial, residential and mixed use. The boundary includes areas that have important, strategic links with the centre; these include the railway station to the west and the riverside to the south.

Northampton's Central Area Key Characteristics:

Demographic:

- The Central Area is home to around 9% of Northampton's population.
- The area covers two of Northampton's electoral wards, Castle and St Crispin
- Castle Ward contains a number of Super Output Areas, which appear in the index of multiple deprivations. One of these areas is included within the top 3% of deprived areas in England.

Character and Environment:

- The Central Area retains its historical character and there are four conservation areas in place, albeit that the addition of poor modern buildings now detract from certain areas.
- The Mounts Baths is the only Art Deco swimming pool in the country, and it still retains its original use.
- The Central Area has a high percentage of accessible open space, both Becket's Park, and the Racecourse to the north of the Central Area, and Abington Park to the east.
- Most of the housing stock in the Central Area is pre-war. Some of the old Boot and Shoe factories have been converted into apartments.
- The river is a natural resource and is located to the south of the Central Area

Employment, Retail and Leisure:

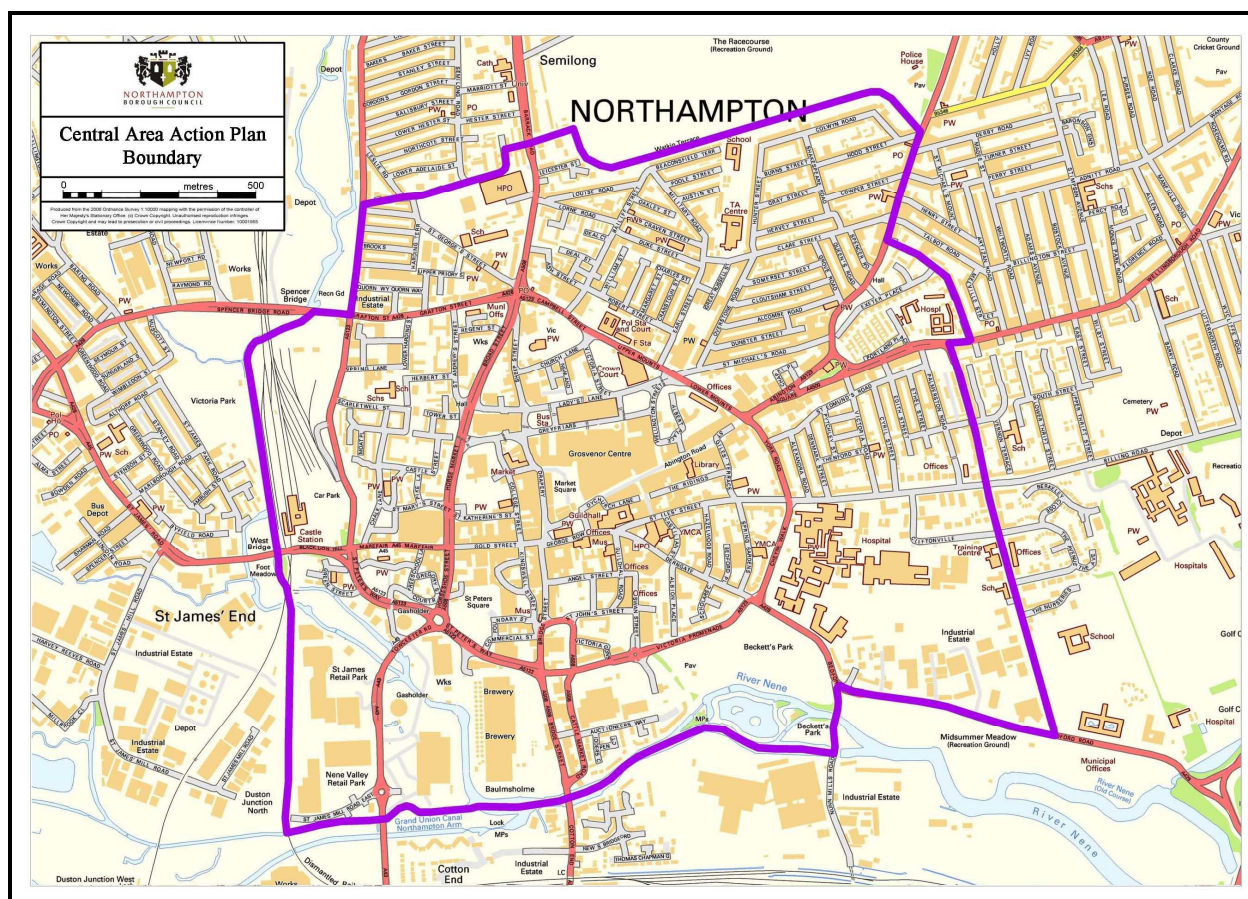
- Northampton has a large retail offer, but is in direct competition with other large towns, such as Milton Keynes

- The Hospital is located to the east of the Central Area and provides facilities for a wider area
- There is one main employment site at Bedford Road. However there are several other industrial sites including Carlsberg Brewery and the railway sidings at Castle Station.

Transport and Movement:

- The town centre is enclosed within the inner ring road.
- The bus station is currently located adjacent to the Grosvenor Centre
- Castle Station, whilst on a loop line, provides links with both London and Birmingham, along the West Coast Main Line.
- Abington Street, which is one of the main shopping areas, is pedestrianised.
- There are a number of one-way systems in operation around the Central Area.

Figure 2 Boundary of the Central Area Action Plan



3. What Has Happened So Far

- 3.1. Community involvement is a key element of the new planning system and authorities are now expected to involve the community at an early stage in the preparation of Local Development Documents. This is essential to achieve local ownership and legitimacy for proposals. The Borough Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out the Council's approach to involving the community in the planning process. It already has established Forums to encourage greater involvement from particular community interests and the traditionally harder to reach groups. In the case of CAAP, the community of interest is made up of a broad spectrum of businesses, retailers, residents and organisations across Northampton and its catchment area since so many people and organisations have an interest in the future of Northampton Central Area.

Town Centre Commission

- 3.2. The Council has established a Town Centre Commission to provide a mechanism for community involvement in the preparation of CAAP. The Commission is formed of people drawn from a range of organisations including the voluntary, business, transport, education and public sectors. A workshop was held on 8 October 2005 to establish urban design principles. The feedback from the Commission's work has informed the preparation of this Issues and Options Discussion Paper. Further information is contained in the background evidence paper referred to in paragraph 3.7.

Community Forums

- 3.3. Meetings have been held and the feedback used to inform the preparation of this paper. Further information is contained in the background evidence paper referred to in paragraph 3.7.
- 3.4. Many initiatives, projects and proposals impacting on the Central Area exist. These include local authority led schemes, private developments and proposals, public sector projects and community initiatives. All are at various stages in development. Generally most are consistent with the broad policy framework for the central area established at the sub regional level. A key issue, however, is to make sure that a co-ordinated approach is taken to progressing matters with the inter-relationships between the various projects acknowledged and fully explored to make sure that potential conflicts are minimised.
- 3.5. Some of the above have been the subject of previous consultations by the Borough Council. These initiatives have been carried out outside the statutory planning process and before the formal start of work on CAAP. However, the results of these "front-loading" public involvements are still important in informing CAAP's evidence-base, and a summary of the key initiatives, projects and proposals are included in this report so that people can have a complete understanding of what may happen in the Central Area, and be able to comment on all proposals.
- 3.6. Therefore, a further purpose of this report is to request from all landowners and other stakeholders in the Central Area, potential sites for development which are not included in this report for consideration by the Council. Proposals for

development should include a clear site address and associated map, with a description of the proposed uses, and a statement of justification.

- 3.7. Results of past consultations form an important part of the evidence base. A separate paper summarises the key points to emerge from previous consultations.

Conservation Area Reviews

- 3.8. Three of the Central Area's Conservation Areas (Derngate, St Giles, and All Saints) have been re-appraised. Minor modifications to the boundaries of Derngate and St Giles have been agreed following public consultation. The public consultation on the proposed changes to All Saints ended on Sept 7th 2007. The re-appraisals include new management plans for the areas.

Derngate

- 3.9. This Conservation Area was first designated in June 1986. The re-appraisal was adopted in September 2006, following public support for the proposals. Boundary extensions were agreed as follows:

- To include the full extent of Guildhall Road in the Conservation Area,
- To include the whole of Hazelwood Road,
- To include the fine Victorian properties in Castilian Terrace,
- To include the central portion of St Giles Street.

- 3.10. Four areas were highlighted for enhancement:

- Improving the area of green space at the junction of Derngate and Albion Place,
- The sensitive redevelopment of the Albion Place car park,
- The sympathetic redevelopment of part of St Giles Street South,
- The redevelopment of the health centre site in St Giles Street North.

St Giles

- 3.11. St Giles Conservation Area was also first designated in June 1986, and its re-appraisal was also adopted in September 2006. Again, there was widespread public support for the changes, including the following boundary amendments:

- The exclusion of the Grade 11 Listed Becketts Well,
- The inclusion of Spring Gardens,
- The inclusion of the Manna House, St Giles Street.

- 3.12. Two areas were agreed for enhancement,

- The redevelopment of the single storey office building adjacent to the Manna House, and
- the replacement of the existing telephone exchange by a building of more appropriate scale and form.

All Saints

3.13. This Conservation Area was designated in January 1976. It has recently been re-appraised and went out to public consultation during August/September 2007. Its proposals are:

- To extend the boundary along the west of the Drapery and Bridge Street,
- To extend the boundary to the north-west, to include the whole of the Market Hall and College Street,
- To enhance Gold Street,
- To enhance the south side of Bridge Street, and
- To enhance the Market Square.

3.14. The Council will consider the results of the public consultation before adopting the proposals.

Regeneration Areas

Programme and Project Priorities

3.15. The work to date has identified a wealth of regeneration opportunities and potential projects. The organisation and grouping of projects and programmes has created a project list with the Central Area proposed as the highest programme priority. Proposed key projects are:

- Central area feasibility study (more of an essential forerunner than a straight priority). This work has progressed significantly to the point where a vision for the Central Area has been produced and presented to members and the Town centre Commission.
- Grosvenor/Greyfriars – focal retail development and expansion.
- St Johns / County hall / Angel St area – development of a cultural quarter.
- Breathing Spaces – creating quality open space and public realm focused on improving the areas of highest deprivation.
- Castle Station – major development of high quality office / employment/ housing/transport interchange.
- Public realm programme to create exceptional public realm
 - Gold St / Marefair
 - Market Square
 - Abington St
 - Cultural Mile
 - The Cross
 - The Waterways
 - Approaches
 - Gateways
 - The Racecourse
- Great Russell Street – links Town Centre to University with live work units.
- The Mounts Car Park.
- St Peter's area – Three projects in close proximity

- Freeschool Street – mixed use development expanding quality of town centre
- St Peter's Way – mixed use (residential prominence) along riverside
- St Peter's Square Car Park – retail development probable food store and multi-storey car park
- Bridge St / Waterfront – expansion of social uses and opening up mixed use (emphasis on residential) adjacent to river.

3.16. Of these projects it is proposed that the Grosvenor/Greyfriars retail led scheme, St Johns Cultural quarter, and Gold St/Marefair Public Realm form the initial priorities on the basis of deliverability in terms of land ownership and funding since they are clearly central to the regeneration needs of the Central Area. At its meeting on 12th December 2006, the Town Centre Commission supported the proposal that the Council continue to bring forward these projects as soon as possible with its partners. Cabinet agreed these proposals on the 19th December 2006.

Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework

3.17. The Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework ("The Central Area Framework") was jointly commissioned by the Borough Council, County Council, WNDC and English Partnerships. Produced by the Building Design Partnership (BDP) the Central Area Framework, together with its supporting studies, provides an evidence base for the CAAP. The Framework converts research and ideas into a proposed vision for the Central Area. It has been used to consult widely within the relevant local authorities and with the Town Centre Commission. A generally favourable response has been received, helping the vision develop into that included in the Final BDP Report, November 2006.

3.18. The Framework includes a townscape appraisal which illustrates areas of good, neutral and poor townscape. Townscape is broken down into landmarks, routes, barriers and frontages: "landmarks" are key buildings or spaces; "routes" are the main streets within the centre; "barriers" refers to the severance effect of traffic dominated routes, but also to buildings which block easy pedestrian movement; and "frontages" are the built frontage to the main streets and spaces.

3.19. During February-March 2007, the Central Area Framework was made publicly available and used as a discussion document to generate issues, and ideas for the future of the Central Area. The feedback on the Framework has been used in the development of this issues and options discussion paper.

3.20. It is important to recognise that the BDP Final Report, whilst an important piece of consultancy work, does not form planning or other policy of the Northampton Borough Council. It identifies opportunities for regeneration in the town over a long term and much more work is required before any individual project is approved, especially where people's homes or businesses are identified or where people's lives are affected. This further work includes additional consultation through this CAAP and other documents like the JCS.

Public Realm Implementation Framework

3.21. This document is also being developed by BDP on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council and is due to be completed later this year following public consultation. Once complete it will provide an overall strategy for Public Realm within the Central Area of Northampton. Future Public Realm development will then be implemented in conformity with the strategy. The benefits are a co-ordinated approach to the Public Realm with consistent use of materials that will enhance the public spaces in the Central Area. When funding is available the different areas of the Central Area can be enhanced in accordance with the strategy. Running alongside the strategy is the work being done on Marefair, Black Lion Hill and Gold Street. The materials and design to be used in these areas reflect the initial work on the strategy, and will compliment the other parts of the central area documented in the strategy.

Retail and Leisure Study

3.22. This report was prepared in August 2006 by retail planning consultants CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) and forms an appendix to the Design, Development and Movement Framework.

3.23. The main conclusions of the report were that:

- Every effort should be made to bring forward substantial comparison goods led retail development in the town centre, to create a step change in Northampton's offer, thereby better meeting the needs of its catchment population and enabling them to meet a wider range of their shopping requirements close to where they live.
- There remains a need for an improved supermarket offer in the town centre. In assessing proposals that come forward it will be very important to ensure that a meaningful supermarket presence is maintained within the town centre. There is capacity for convenience retail provision of approaching superstore scale at 2011.

Town Centre Health Check

3.24. This report was also prepared by retail planning consultants CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) and again forms an appendix to the Design, Development and Movement Framework, November 2006.

3.25. The main conclusions of the report were that:

- Overall, Northampton is a healthy and vibrant location. The level of demand from retailers to locate in the centre, the fairly diverse retail offer and the shop unit vacancy figures suggest this is the case.
- However, if Northampton is to compete efficiently with other centres – such as Milton Keynes and Bedford – then it must continue to evolve and improve. In that respect, the health check identifies a number of key aspects of the current town centre offer which are in need of improvement:
 - A greater representation of higher order/luxury goods retailers;
 - Provision of larger retail units to meet retailer requirements;
 - An increased convenience retail offer;
 - A more compact centre;
 - Improvement to the environmental quality of the centre;

- Improvements to the centre's accessibility, and particularly relating to the quality of the bus station and evening bus services, cycle facilities and links to the train station. Wider pedestrian links to surrounding residential areas are considered to be poor, especially due to severance caused by the inner ring road;
- Improvement to the attractiveness of Northampton's cultural / entertainment offer.

Property Market Review

3.26. This report was prepared by CBRE and forms an appendix to the Design, Development and Movement Framework, November 2006. The report provides an examination of the key property market sectors relevant to the town centre.

3.27. The main conclusions of the report were that:

- Retail development is required in order for Northampton to maintain its current size and status. However, there is currently a low level of development activity with only the extension to the Grosvenor Centre planned.
- Demand exists from restaurant operators which may be suitable to further expand the current provision, particularly to cater for the family market. Very limited potential for increased hotel and conference provision.
- Local agents have identified demand for apartment properties in the mid-market bracket, despite a current increase in development of these properties. (Since this Report was produced the market now suggests the need is for more family size homes).
- Some small scale B1 uses may be welcome on the town centre periphery.
- The town sector office market is dominated by local firms, with most larger employers located on out of town business parks. Low vacancy levels, second hand stock and a lack of development suggest an opportunity for town centre office development. However, this needs to cater for local business tenants and provide parking in order to compete with out-of-town space.

Retail and Business Survey Report

3.28. This report was prepared by retail planning consultants CBRE and forms an appendix to the Design, Development and Movement Framework, November 2006. In February 2006, CBRE carried out a postal survey of all retailers, service operators and other companies in Northampton town centre.

3.29. The main results of the survey were that:

- The majority of respondents have seen stable workforce numbers.
- The greatest number of respondents felt that their business was 'steady'.
- When analysing these responses by area, a number of areas are seeing a particularly declining trend. These are Bradshaw Street/Sheep Street, Gold Street/Marefair, The Drapery and St Giles Street and St Giles Square areas. Areas of the town that are doing particularly well are Derngate, Abington Street and Abington Square areas.
- The greatest number of respondents have stayed in their current business location for between 2 and 10 years.

- Respondents were asked to comment on the trading advantages and disadvantages of their current locations. Many of the individual areas have specific problems which could potentially benefit from individual development strategies. However some improvements at a town centre level would be welcomed by many of the businesses. The most obvious of these is parking – mentioned by a particularly high number of respondents. Most respondents requested increasing parking levels in the town centre, particularly on the road side for ease of shoppers. However, the complaints regarding congestion and access in the centre suggest public transport improvements or even a park and ride scheme, as suggested by some businesses, may be more appropriate. Secondly, increased police presence and CCTV throughout the town was widely requested, with the problems of antisocial behaviour both in the day and night time highlighted by many respondents. Another common suggestion is cleaning up the streets to improve the attractiveness of the town, and encourage a better retail offering to draw shoppers into the centre and prevent leakage to the surrounding out-of-town retail parks.

Northampton Employment Study (July 2006)

- 3.30. In accordance with government guidance in PPS3 (Housing), an employment land review was commissioned by the Borough Council. The Study undertaken by Innes England/Roger Tym and Partners assessed the need for employment land over the period 2001-21 and current supply. The study identified a shortfall of between 25 -55 hectares of land for office development, depending upon whether future development takes place at high density in town or at relatively low density out of town.

Castle Station Masterplan

- 3.31. Castle Station is the entry point to the town for visitors arriving by train and needs to provide an attractive arrival point. As an important public building it needs to be more visible. The Building Design Partnership (BDP) was jointly commissioned by WNDC, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Network Rail, and Invest Northamptonshire to deliver a masterplan for the Castle Station site. BDP's Final Report 'The Regeneration of Northampton Castle Station' was published in March 2006. The masterplan proposals include a bus/rail interchange, upgraded station, better station car parking provision, mixed use development (offices/housing/hotel) and improved pedestrian links to Spring Boroughs.

Northampton Waterside January 2005 (Northampton Borough Council/Halcrow)

- 3.32. Along and around the River Nene, development has turned its back on the river resulting in a poor quality environment, with little activity as people choose to not visit the area. The Masterplan develops a strategy to reverse this process for the area from Duston Mill Reservoir to Barnes Meadow. The key objectives are to emphasise the key characteristics of the River Valley corridor, enable linkages between the cultural centre of the town and the surrounding historic parks and landscape and give specific attention to the Becket's Park area as a gateway to the town.

West Northamptonshire Housing Market Assessment

3.33. This report, prepared by DTZ and published in June 2007, provides contextual housing market information and recommendations for the whole of West Northamptonshire. In relation to the Northampton Implementation Area the recommendation is for planning policy to seek a 35% affordable housing contribution from new housing development sites. With particular relevance to Northampton central area it recommends the use of new housing provision to help improve the physical environment particularly in neighbourhoods with high levels of disadvantage and housing deprivation. In these areas decisions about the tenure mix and type of new housing can be used to help change the social balance of the neighbourhood. In this way where there are areas of concentrated disadvantage these can be diluted through the provision of new housing.

Profile of Spring Boroughs

3.34. The Northamptonshire Observatory has prepared a profile of the Spring Boroughs area, part of Castle Ward, using 2001 Census information and other data sources. The profile of Spring Boroughs is compared against averages for its ward, Northampton, East Midlands and England.

3.35. Key findings of the profile for Spring Boroughs, comparatively, are: larger number of single person households; very low owner occupancy; high proportion of flats; low skill levels; higher percentage of males; lower percentage of 5-15 year olds; higher percentage of 20-44 year olds and pensioners.

Cultural Mile

3.36. A proposal for a "cultural mile" was prepared for the Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council by Alsop Architects. The concept of the Cultural Mile is based upon celebrating, highlighting, and unifying Northampton's cultural assets. It proposes the connection of ten cultural destinations across the town centre: Nunn Mills, St John's, Albion Place, Angel Street, County Hall, Abington Street, the Market Square, Lady's Lane, The Mounts and the Sprint.

Civitas Workshop Summary Report

3.37. This Report, summarises the results of workshops held in September 2004, which, using the Civitas principles, set out to establish, share and apply principles of traditional town making to the renewal of Northampton Town Centre generally and the St John's area in particular.

4. Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

The Community Strategy Vision

- 4.1. The Council is preparing its spatial vision through the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy for the period to 2026. This spatial vision will incorporate, amongst others, the vision for Northampton Borough as given in the emerging update to Northampton Community Strategy. The Community Strategy is being progressed in association with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 4.2. The Northampton Local Strategic Partnership was reviewed in 2006 and re-launched at the Local Strategic Partnership Conference on 5 December 2006 with a new focus on the three themes of growth, neighbourhood management and health, well-being and education. Work has already started on a new Community Strategy and this will be progressed this year. The LSP has adopted the Community Vision for Northampton on which the final Strategy will be based.

The Central Area Draft Vision

- 4.3. The Council has drafted a vision for the Central Area, which looks towards 2026 in line with:
 - the draft LSP's vision for West Northamptonshire and Northampton contained in the Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Discussion Paper;
 - the Northampton LSP vision adopted this year for the emerging Community Strategy; and
 - the vision identified in the Northampton Central Area Design, development and movement framework.
- 4.4. Comments received from the consultation to the BDP report have also been used to devise the draft vision. The vision will be revised as the Area Action Plan progresses to reflect the comments received as a result of this consultation.
- 4.5. It is key that the vision capitalises and maximises on what Northampton currently has and can offer within the plan period.

The Council would very much welcome input from the community to shape the draft vision further.

Draft Central Area Vision to 2026

By 2026, the Central Area of Northampton will be a place that:

- **encourages and delivers sustainable development;**
- **capitalises on its rich tapestry of architectural heritage, history and natural assets, particularly the River Nene, the Market Square, All Saints Church and Square and 78 Derngate**
- **maximises the opportunities offered by key retail areas including the Grosvenor Centre, St Giles Street and Abington Street, offering an exceptional shopping experience and choice for the community**

- provides a safe, comfortable and appealing environment for people to walk or cycle through with places to stop, relax and interact
- continues to provide and build on a wide range of high-quality attractions and community facilities to serve the needs of residents and visitors such as Royal and Derngate Theatre and Northampton College
- is the location of choice for businesses and investors offering high quality employment opportunities
- provides a vibrant and enterprising environment enjoyed and aspired to by all sectors of the community who live, work and shop in the area, and for its visitors
- is accessible by all means of transport including improved accessibility from Castle Station and the provision of an efficient transport interchange

Strategic Objectives

- 4.6. In order to successfully achieve the vision for the Central Area, the Council needs to identify strategic objectives, from which policies and plans will be formulated.
- 4.7. The Council intends to focus on five strategic objectives which are considered to be both achievable and deliverable. These draft objectives will be discussed further in the next chapters. The five draft strategic objectives are:

Strategic Objective 1: Central Area Development and Regeneration

To accommodate, in a sustainable manner, high quality new developments which will ensure that the Central Area fulfils its role as a sub-regional centre.

Strategic Objective 2: Accessibility and Transport Network

To ensure that the Central Area is accessible by all means of transport to secure its economic success and vibrancy.

Strategic Objective 3: Public Realm

To provide a network of high quality streets and spaces that will encourage people to live, visit and invest in the Central Area.

Strategic Objective 4: Community Regeneration

To regenerate existing residential and local business communities within the Central Area through initiatives which will create sustainable and enterprising communities who will contribute towards the vitality and prosperity of the town.

Strategic Objective 5: Conservation and built environment

To retain and enhance the distinctive local character of the Central Area's Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

Key Issues:

ISSUE 1: Draft Vision

- (a) Do you agree with the contents of the draft vision for Northampton Central Area? Are there any other aspirations we should have and why?
- (b) Do you agree with the timescale of the draft vision which is to 2026?
- (c) Does the draft vision encapsulate the key elements which will make Northampton's Central Area a successful and thriving town?

ISSUE 2: Draft Strategic Objectives

- (a) Do you agree with the draft strategic objectives outlined in this chapter?
- (b) Are there any other realistic and deliverable strategic objectives which the Council could focus on?

5. Central Area Development and Regeneration

Strategic Objective 1

To accommodate high quality new development which will ensure that the Central Area fulfils its role as a sub-regional centre in a sustainable manner

5.1. To meet the above objective, the development needs and the design principles relating to new development within the Central Area will be considered. The issues raised have been informed by the evidence based outlined in earlier chapters.

i. New Development Needs

The following Central Area uses have been identified as potentially meeting development needs:

a. New Retail Development

The key facts are:

- ❖ Area Action Plan should be “improving the range and quality of retail provision by increasing comparison and convenience floorspace” (Regional Spatial Strategy)
- ❖ Northampton should “seek to achieve a step change in its town centre comparison retail offer to encourage these shoppers to meet their needs more locally” (Retail and Leisure Study) The Borough Council supports this and defines locally in this context as within Northampton.
- ❖ The need to improve the range and quality of retail provision is also supported by the Town Centre Health Check which recognises that if Northampton is to compete efficiently with other centres – such as Milton Keynes and Bedford – then it must continue to evolve and improve.
- ❖ Within Northampton Town Centre an initial study suggests that there is scope in 2011 for an addition of:
 - between 1,700 sq.m and 2,400 sq.m (net) of convenience goods and
 - between 34,300 sq.m and 53,400 sq.m (net) of comparison goods. (Retail and Leisure Study)

The actual level of new retail development will be set out in the JCS. Further work being carried out in connection with the JCS will test the results of the initial work and examine the scale of requirement over a longer timescale to 2026;

- ❖ Priority for Northampton: an improved supermarket offer in the town and a major new centrally located shopping centre to expand the town’s offer (Retail and Leisure Study)
- ❖ New retail development should adjoin and be well related to the Primary Shopping Area
- ❖ Independent retailers provide the local distinctiveness which sets it apart from other towns, including those in St Giles Street and Gold Street

5.2. The issues relating to new retail developments are:

ISSUE 3

Where is the best location for new retail development to meet the requirements of comparison goods retailers?

Options (see Figure 3):

- 1. North of Grosvenor Centre, including bus station**
- 2. North of Abington Square**
- 3. St Peter's Square**
- 4. Between Horsemarket and Drapery**

Are there any other suitable locations for new retail development and why?

ISSUE 4

Where within the town centre should a new supermarket be located?

Options (see Figure 4):

- 1. North of Grosvenor Centre**
- 2. North of Abington Square**
- 3. St Peter's Square**
- 4. Between Horsemarket and Drapery**

Are there any other suitable locations for a new supermarket and why?

ISSUE 5

Where are the most appropriate locations to encourage independent retailers?

Options (see Figure 5):

- 1. St Giles Street**
- 2. Gold Street**
- 3. St John's Area (behind County Hall)**

Are there any other suitable locations for independent retailers and why?

b. Offices

Key facts:

- ❖ Area Action Plans should be “making the central area the focus of employment opportunities with a particular emphasis on offices, through the provision of large office space through to small office suites in both new and converted accommodation” (Regional Spatial Strategy)
- ❖ Sites close to the town centre should be retained for office uses and it is imperative that Castle Station is brought forward for development (Northampton Employment Land Assessment)
- ❖ Office market in Northampton is predominantly based on local businesses rather than national companies (Property Market Review)
- ❖ There is a need to provide a significant amount of office development within Northampton (Northampton Employment Land Assessment). Central Area should provide a range of sites to meet the differing needs of the office market
- ❖ The general trend for offices in recent years is to move out of town to estates on the periphery of the conurbation with good access to major trunk routes. This has left the town centre with the older office accommodation, often unsuited to modern development (Northampton Employment Land Study)
- ❖ The key role of the Town Centre in providing public administration facilities (e.g. Guildhall and County Hall)
- ❖ The overall level of office development will be set out in the JCS

The issues relating to office developments are:

ISSUE 6

What type and scale of office development needs to be accommodated within the Central Area?

ISSUE 7

Where is the most appropriate location for large-scale office development?

Options (see Figure 6):

- ❖ **Castle Station**
- ❖ **Towcester Road/St Peters Way**
- ❖ **St James Retail Park**
- ❖ **Freeschool Street**
- ❖ **Victoria Street**
- ❖ **Horsemarket**
- ❖ **St Johns**
- ❖ **Bedford Road**
- ❖ **Old postal sorting office, Barrack Road**

Are there any other options and why?

Are the same options appropriate for small-scale office developments?

If not which locations are?

c. Leisure

Key Facts:

- ❖ Northampton has a varied leisure/entertainment sector which includes a multiplex cinema in Sol Central; Mounts swimming baths; national bar chains in Bridge Street; entertainment venues at the Derngate, the Roadmender and Soundhaus
- ❖ There is a need to improve leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities in the town (Town Centre Health Check)
- ❖ There is scope for additional health and fitness provision in Northampton (Retail and Leisure Study)
- ❖ There is unmet demand from upmarket restaurant chains (Property Market Review)
- ❖ Planning policies should encourage a wide range of complementary evening and night-time economy uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups (PPS6)
- ❖ Planning policies in the adopted local plan (June 1997) seek to resist change of retail premises to other uses, including leisure, so that a high proportion of shop uses that maximises retail activity are retained within primary shopping areas and the heart of the town centre

The key issues for leisure are:

ISSUE 8

Are there any gaps in provision of leisure and entertainment facilities in the Central Area?

Does the existing provision meet the needs of all sectors of the community?

If not, where are there deficiencies?

ISSUE 9

Should leisure/entertainment uses be concentrated in specific locations, if so where?

Is dispersal throughout the Central Area more appropriate?

Should different approaches be applied to different types of leisure / entertainment uses, for example, cafes, restaurants, bars and night clubs?

ISSUE 10

Are there areas within the Central Area which would be suitable for leisure/entertainment uses? If so, what type of uses would be appropriate?

These are the options (see Figure 7):

Restaurant/café/bar uses:

- A. Bridge Street, between Victoria Promenade and South Bridge**
- B. St Johns Station Passage**
- C. Market Square / All Saints Square**
- D. Marefair**
- E. Derngate/Guildhall Road**
- F. The Riding / Fish Street / Dychurch Lane**

Larger-scale leisure/entertainment uses:

- G. North of Grosvenor Centre**
- H. North of Abington Street**
- I. St Peters' Square**
- J. Between Horsemarket and Drapery**

Outdoor events:

- K. Market Square**
- L. Becket's Park**

Are there any other options and why?

d. Cultural development

The key facts:

- ❖ Area Action Plans should be “developing cultural/heritage tourism by enhancing the existing cultural heritage facilities and attractions and through the provision of new facilities.” (Regional Spatial Strategy)
- ❖ Key cultural attractions in Northampton Central Area include the Derngate, the Royal Theatre, the Fish Market, Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and Abington Street Library
- ❖ Regional Economic Strategy states that one of its priority actions involved targeting growth of creative and cultural industries. Creative workplaces could contribute towards cultural development. These could generate entrepreneurship skills through the creation of effective links between educational institutions such as Northampton College and University of Northampton and business organisations

The key issues are:

ISSUE 11

Are there any gaps in provision of cultural facilities in the Central Area? Does existing provision meet the needs of all sectors of the community?

ISSUE 12

Is there a need for provision of workspace for creative industries? Where would be the best location for such development?

Options (see Figure 8):

- ❖ **As part of the cultural quarter within the St John’s/Angel Street area**
- ❖ **Near to the University, for example, Great Russell Street area**

Are there any other suitable locations and why?

e. Hotel

The key facts are:

- ❖ Area Action Plans should be increasing the range of centrally located overnight accommodation (Regional Spatial Strategy)
- ❖ There is sufficient hotel provision at present, however, as the Masterplan aims to increase the level of office space provision within Northampton Central Area, it is likely that demand for hotel bed space may potentially increase accordingly (Central Area Framework Property Market Review)

- ❖ Hotels can provide an active frontage at ground floor level through provision of restaurant facilities, but should not be located within areas of highest footfall (retail core).

The key issues are:

ISSUE 13

Where is the most appropriate location for a new hotel?

Options (see Figure 9):

- 1. Castle Station**
- 2. Freeschool Street**
- 3. St Johns**
- 4. Horsemarket**
- 5. Grosvenor Centre/the Mounts**
- 6. County Hall**
- 7. Old Grand Hotel, Gold Street**

Are there any other suitable locations and why?

f. Residential development

The key facts are:

- ❖ Residential use should be promoted within town centres wherever possible, especially utilising upper floors (PPS6)
- ❖ The Central Area is a sustainable location for housing development, given the availability of services and access to public transport
- ❖ Housing within the town helps to create activity within the centre, particularly outside normal business hours
- ❖ The most appropriate locations for significant residential development lie outside the Primary Shopping Area. It is anticipated that these residential developments will form part of mixed use schemes with office, employment and leisure uses
- ❖ The overall level of residential development will be set out in the JCS

The key issues are:

ISSUE 14

What type of housing should be provided within the Central Area?

ISSUE 15

Which locations are appropriate for significant residential development?

Options (see Figure 10):

- 1. Freeschool Street**
- 2. Bedford Road**
- 3. Horsemarket**
- 4. Angel Street**
- 5. St Johns**
- 6. St Peter's Way**
- 7. Castle Station**
- 8. Great Russell Street**
- 9. Old postal sorting office, Barrack Road**

Are there any other options and why?

g. Other uses

ISSUE 16

Are there any other development needs which should be accommodated in the Central Area and if so, why and where?

ISSUE 17

Are there any sites which should be considered for development within the Central Area?

Mixed use development

5.3. Mixed use development makes an important contribution to the vitality and viability of Central Areas. Different but complementary uses, during the day and in the evening, can reinforce each other, making town centres more attractive to local residents, shoppers and visitors. It is envisaged that sites identified for development will include a mix of uses, although there will probably be one or two principal uses.

ii. Design Principles

5.4. The Area Action Plan will establish design principles relating to new development in Central Area. Good urban design principles are essential to ensure that the

attractive, high quality, sustainable places are created for existing and future generations (By Design, CUBE). Key urban design principles for development, which are discussed further below, should include the following:

- Incorporate a mix of uses to promote vitality and efficient use of land
- Normally be orientated so that it fronts the street
- Respect building lines of the existing urban environment and, where appropriate, build up to the edge of the curtilage
- Maximise the amount of active street frontage
- Avoid designs which are inward looking and which present blank frontages
- Provide level access from the public realm and meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act
- Maximise the use and potential of the site
- Reinforce local distinctiveness
- Where appropriate, increase pedestrian links
- Incorporate sustainable features, relating to the use of energy and other resources and new features/developments/schemes should be easy to maintain

ISSUE 18

Do you agree with the key design principles for new development? Are there any other principles that you consider should be included and why?

iii. Criteria for development sites

5.5. There are some criteria which the Council had to use in order to identify development sites. These criteria were based on national policy guidelines and various stakeholder consultation exercises. These are:

- ❖ Deliverability and marketability including funding mechanism in place
- ❖ Accessibility to various modes of transport
- ❖ Contributions to urban design
- ❖ Social benefits
- ❖ Economic benefits including potential inward investment
- ❖ Consultation outcome – public's request

ISSUE 19

Do you agree with the criteria for new development? Are there any other criteria that you consider should be included and why?

6. Accessibility and Transport Networks

Strategic Objective 2

To ensure that the Central Area is accessible by all means of transport to secure its economic success and vibrancy

6.1. Accessibility defines the ability of people to get to the services and destination they need or want to reach such as shopping, leisure activities, healthcare, education and training. Good accessibility enables people to participate in their day-to-day activities and social life. Easy access into and around the Central Area is essential to attracting Northampton's residents, visitors and businesses into the Central Area. Transport networks facilitate accessibility and promote socio-economic integration. Sustainable elements of the network contribute to environmental wellbeing and help reduce the impact of transport on climate change.

Aims of Accessibility to be achieved:

- *Pedestrians environment that is safe, secure, pleasant and link to networks of well defined walking and cycling routes, together with encouragement of such modes.*
- *A road network which is appropriate and fit for purpose, which discourages through traffic and reduces the amount of traffic circulating in the Central Area.*
- *To increase the choice of different modes of transport so that no single mode of transport dominates or has a detrimental effect on the natural or built environment, or quality of life experience in the Central Area.*

6.2. To address the transport issues that will arise as a result of regeneration in the Central Area, it is vital to identify initiatives, investment needed in the transport infrastructure, which will facilitate and encourage a wide-range of travel options with emphasis on *non-car usage*.

6.3. The preparation of the County Council's Transport Strategy for Growth is welcomed and its content broadly supported. The challenges outlined below, and in the Public Realm Chapter are consistent with those in the Transport Strategy for Growth. A key issue will be trying to ensure that a balanced approach is taken with the promotion of more sustainable modes of transport recognising the need to support the economic development of the Borough. It is vital that the fragile economy of the town centre is supported and not undermined by over restrictive car usage policies and proposals. In particular, the timing of new park and ride facilities will need to be very much dependent on the strength of the town centre economy.

Key Challenges

- To make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to access the Central Area, particularly from the immediate adjacent areas.
- To propose a high-quality new interchange to replace the existing inefficient and dated bus station to meet future transport needs.
- To make it easier and quicker to access the Central Area along the key radial route.
- To ensure good access to the Central Area, whether by bus, rail, car, and cycle or on foot, is a fundamental requirement, if that trip is to be made to Northampton rather than Milton Keynes or some other location.
- To ensure that there are good links between the town centre and residential areas and the rest of the town's catchment's.
- To provide new park and ride sites on the outskirts of the town to supplement the parking available in the town centre.
- To promote the area around Castle Station as a major redevelopment site that supports increased use of the railway.

Guiding Principles for Transport and Accessibility

6.4. The fundamental principle behind future decisions about accessibility and transport in the Central Area *will be people not cars*. The emphasis of a new transport system for the Central Area should be based upon:

- 1) A comprehensive public transport network
- 2) The ease of movement for pedestrians and cyclists through a network of *safe, secure and attractive footpaths, cycle routes and open spaces*.

Travel Pattern in the Central Area

- About 70% of Journeys to work are undertaken by Car
- Around 8% of Journeys to work are undertaken by Public Transport
- Majority of people who live close and within the Central Area walk to work.

To change these patterns to a situation where car travel is less dominating requires action on other forms of transport.

Public Transport

6.5. As can be seen from the figures above public transport use in the Central Area is very low in comparison to the private transport. The reasons for this are numerous but include poor public perceptions of public transport, the prohibitive cost for some and the insufficient frequency and range of services.

ISSUE 20

- *Why are People using less Public transport in comparison to other mode of transport?*
- *Which of the following options will encourage more people to use public transport in the Central Area?*

Options

- A. Retain and upgrade Greyfriars bus station on current site**
- B. New bus station on different site within the Central Area**
- C. New on-street bus interchange on The Drapery (with additional stops on Horsemarket)**
- D. New on-street bus interchange at Fish Market**
- E. New on-street bus interchange as part of redevelopment to north of Grosvenor Centre**
- F. New transport interchange, including bus station, at Castle Station**
- G. Alternative locations of smaller, more efficient Bus Station which focus on passenger's facilities**
- H. Ensure that the Central Area road system is able to support a fast and reliable bus service**
- I. Provide a fast shuttle link between Castle Station and key points in the Central Area**
- J. Allow bus penetration into pedestrian only areas**
- K. Any other options**

Car Parking

6.6. There are 25 public car parks providing a total of 6,012 spaces within the town centre. Of these spaces 3355 are long stay, and the rest short stay. The main car parks are: (multi-storey) St Johns, Mayorhold, Grosvenor Centre, Greyfriars and St Michaels; (surface) Commercial Street, St Peters Way, Upper Mounts, Morrison's, and Midsummer Meadow. According to BDP's Design, Development and Movement study, there is sufficient supply of car parking within the town centre, however there is poor spatial distribution of car parking, with significant proportion located in the northern part of the town centre.

- 6.7. The Borough Council would welcome a joint parking strategy for all Northampton which would aim to encourage the efficient use of spaces, without resulting in discouraging people from living, working, visiting or investing in and contributing positively to the growth of the Borough.

Issues

ISSUE 21

How and in what form do we address the problem of poor spatial distribution of Car Parking in the Central Area?

Options

- **Arrival signage and car parking space information**
- **Car park management, including security, 'pay as you leave'**
- **Prioritising provision for short stay shoppers parking**
- **Phased reduction in commuter parking with introduction of 'park and ride'**
- **Providing high quality facilities for public transport including the following primary multi-modal interchanges: Provision of new bus station and the redevelopment of Northampton Castle Station**
- **Are there any other options?**

Cyclists and Pedestrian Network

- 6.8. Access to and circulation in and around the Central Area is poor as a result of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movements. The inner ring road system and Horsemarket create significant barriers for cyclist and pedestrian movements between residential, leisure and rail station uses in the west and the retail core in the town centre. Also, there is limited provision of cycle facilities in the town centre. Provision for cyclists such as changing, cycle maintenance facilities and bike stands are the major problem hindering pedestrians and cyclists movements.
- 6.9. Particular problems include:
- **Linked trips from Morrison's to primary shopping area**
 - **Barriers to pedestrian movement include the inner ring road, the bus station/ Lady's Lane/Greyfriars and Horsemarket / Mayorhold / Broad Street**
 - **Links with the centre and the riverside and Becketts Park**
 - **Linking railway station to town centre**
 - **Provision for disabled, surfaces, crossings**
- 6.10. Encouraging pedestrian and cycle movement around the Central Area and adjoining areas through the development of legible links. The town centre benefits from being compact - the area within the inner ring road is approximately within 285 metre (0.17 mile) radius of the Market Square.

- 6.11. Pedestrian links both within and into the centre must be attractive, legible, safe, and direct to encourage people to use them. How can they be made attractive; streetscape (furniture, floorscape, trees); safe: active fronts, overlooking of street; legible (sight-lines features.); direct (traffic lights sequences, crossing points).

ISSUE 22

Where, and in what form to provide pedestrians and cyclists access routes in and around the Central Area?

Options

- Horsemarket needs to be downgraded from four lanes to a single carriageway road. This will allow pedestrians to cross without the requirement of a traffic signal.
- Development of pedestrians and cyclist networks around the River Nene area, adjacent to Nunn Mills Road, providing access to the power station residential site
- Development of pedestrian and cycle crossing routes linking the western side of Becketts Park through the Avon site to the town centre.
- Adjacent to eastern side of Bridge Street linking to the proposed Cattle Market road.
- A maximum speed of 20mph be imposed within the inner core area of the town centre with vehicular movement limited to access and servicing only.
- provide additional at grade crossings.
- remove existing subways.
- Are there any other options?

7. Public Realm

Strategic Objective 3

To provide a network of high quality streets and spaces that will encourage people to visit the Central Area and increase the time they spend in the area.

Definition

7.1. The “public realm” is all the areas between buildings that are accessible to the public, including streets, footpaths and public open space and associated facilities such as seating, lighting and waste bins. It serves a number of functions as area for play, for parking cars, movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Why is Public Realm important?

7.2. For Northampton Central Area to be an attractive place for people to want to visit and spend time it is important that the space between buildings is given the same consideration as the buildings themselves. The public realm, as defined above, provides the backdrop to the buildings and together they create the visual appearance of a place. By enhancing the relationship between the town’s buildings and the spaces that surround them it will help to lift the image of the town and create a sense of place.

Public Realm investment to encourage higher quality development

7.3. The Area Action Plan will encourage the funding of public realm improvements. A separate study, the Public Realm Implementation Framework, commissioned by Northamptonshire County Council will provide an overall strategy for delivering public realm improvements. This work is being carried out by Building Design Partnership (BDP) consultancy. Investment in public realm will encourage those in the development sector that Northampton wants to improve the quality of its Central Area environment. A high quality public realm will encourage high quality building development with each complimenting the other.

Key considerations

- National planning policy encourages development of the public realm
- There are four conservation areas and part of a fifth within the Central Area of Northampton. These are All Saints – covering the historic core and the Market Square; Holy Sepulchre – covering the church and Sheep Street; St Giles – covering the church, Spencer Parade, York Road and the west side of Cheyne Walk; Dergate – covering Dergate, Albion Place, Castilian Place and Victoria Promenade; Barrack Road (part of). These conservation areas have been designated because they contain historic buildings and spaces that reflect Northampton’s past. The buildings represent examples of high quality architecture.
- There are a large number of listed buildings within the Central Area
- There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These are the remains of the Castle around Black Lion Hill and St Andrew’s Road and the Saxon Palace complex and medieval urban deposits between Marefair and St Peter’s Way.

- There are seventy eight locally listed buildings in the Central Area. Whilst the designation does not have statutory backing, it is still significant when making planning decisions.

7.4. Different issues have been identified that could be overcome through the policies in the CAAP. These are laid out below:

Gateway sites

7.5. Gateways into the Central Area should create a positive first impression of Northampton. A gateway is a natural access point into the Central Area. Examples could be the southern end of Bridge Street by Church's restaurant or the junction of Horsemarket, Marefair and Gold Street. Most of the gateways are at points where the inner ring road crosses radial routes into the town centre. Many of these currently create a less than positive first impression of Northampton. This is due to a combination of poor built environment and poor public realm.

ISSUE 23

Which of the following Gateway sites (see Figure 11) should be given priority for public realm improvement?

Black Lion Hill

St Peter's Way/Towcester Road roundabout

Bridge Street/Victoria Promenade interchange

Bedford Road/Derngate junction

Abington Street/Abington Square

Regent Square/Grafton Street/Campbell Street/Barrack Road junction

Are there any other Gateway sites that should be included?

Barriers to movement

7.6. A key priority is to strengthen pedestrian and cycle routes across the Central Area. These include the barrier created by the bus station for pedestrians entering the town from the north or the barrier created by Horsemarket for access by pedestrians into and out of Spring Boroughs. There are also barriers at the Bedford Road junction, bottom of Bridge Street and the Chronicle and Echo junction.

7.7. Removing barriers to access can reconnect different areas of the town with the Central Area. For example Sheep Street is currently marginalised and separated from the Central Area where as historically the area was very much part of it.

ISSUE 24

What should be done to overcome the barrier of the bus station?

Demolition of bus station

Improve existing north/south routes by downgrading Greyfriars/Lady's Lane to one lane

There is no barrier leave bus station as it is

Are there any other options?

Is the answer a combination of these or other options?

ISSUE 25

What should be done to overcome the barriers at Horsemarket?

Downgrade Horsemarket to one lane (this will effect traffic movement elsewhere in the town centre, and may require work on outer ring road to be completed first)

Leave Horsemarket as at present?

Any other options for Horsemarket or the junctions at Bedford Road, Chronicle and Echo and Bridge Street?

Conflicting uses on the street

7.8. Conflicting transport uses in the public realm can be overcome to create a better environment for all those moving through it. There are several areas in the Central Area where vehicles dominate to the detriment of pedestrians and cyclists. To meet the objective of creating streets and spaces where people will want to spend time it is necessary to create shared spaces. For example St Giles Street allows a shared use between vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and maintains an interesting public realm where pedestrians want to spend time. It should be possible to create streets that maintain traffic movement whilst naturally slowing the flow to create a better environment for pedestrians.

ISSUE 26

Do you think that shared use of the space is realistic in the Central Area?

Which of the following streets(see Figure 12) should be shared use?

Drapery

Gold Street

Abington Street

St Giles Street

Bridge Street

Are there any other streets you would include?

Safety issues and the public realm

- 7.9. Feedback from consultation work has highlighted several safety concerns about different parts of the Central Area. Some of these relate to areas of single usage at certain times of the day, in particular evenings. For example on Bridge Street where pubs and clubs are the dominant use. They are predominantly used by a younger age group to the exclusion of the rest of the population who feel unsafe in this area in the evenings. In other areas safety concerns are linked to the physical environment and the way it has been designed. Examples include the subways and pedestrian underpasses around the bus station, underneath Horsemarket and the jetties. Work on the public realm should contribute to making these places safer for people to use.

ISSUE 27

Do you think that an improved public realm contributes to making a place safer?

Which other areas in the Central Area have safety issues relating to the public realm?

What measures can be taken on the public realm to improve safety?

8. Community Regeneration

Strategic Objective 4

To regenerate existing residential communities within the Central Area through initiatives which will create sustainable and enterprising communities who will contribute towards the vitality and prosperity of the town.

- 8.1. One of the government's key objectives for the new planning system is to create sustainable communities. In relation to the Central Area, this is not just about new development, but improving what already exists.
- 8.2. Many parts of the Central Area are considered to require improvement in some form or another. This may be through the promotion of social inclusion, the encouragement of investment, promoting economic growth and the ideas of high quality design or a combination of these principles. One of the primary aims of the Action Plan is to stimulate regeneration and focus the delivery of area-based initiatives.
- 8.3. The aim of the Action Plan is to regenerate the Central Area's residential communities. Much of the housing stock in the central area is pre-war, terraced housing and was built as a result of the economic growth seen in the late 19th and early 20th century. Whilst some areas of the Central Area contain a large percentage of socially rented housing, the majority remains in private ownership, either owner occupied or privately rented. It should be noted that deprivation in towns and cities is not unusual. Many urban areas have high levels of multiple deprivation and these exist in nearly all-inner 'city' areas.
- 8.4. National planning and housing policy is aimed at creating mixed communities. Mixed communities are defined by different characteristics, including the demographics of the people, income groups, housing tenure and type and employment sectors. These communities tend to be more sustainable as they include support for a higher level of local services, such as transport and amenities.
- 8.5. Central Government use Indices of Deprivation, when allocating funding, for different initiatives. Therefore this information is an important consideration for the delivery of regeneration projects. Multiple Deprivation is measured on the Super Output Level, these are areas that contain around 1,500 people. The measure is made up of the following seven domains:
 1. Income Deprivation
 2. Employment Deprivation
 3. Health Deprivation and Disability
 4. Living Environment Deprivation
 5. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
 6. Barriers to Housing and Services
 7. Crime
- 8.6. These domains are broken down further into 'sub-domains', such as 'Income affecting older people'.

More information about Super Output Areas and Indices of Deprivation can be found on either www.northampton.gov.uk or www.communities.gov.uk.

A: Spring Boroughs

- 8.7. Spring Boroughs used to lie at the heart of Northampton's Central Area, positioned adjacent to the castle many of the streets in the area have historic significance relating back to the original medieval town. Spring Boroughs was the home of the first shoe factory in Northampton, dating back to 1838. Produce was traded from Silver Street, which no longer exists.
- 8.8. In recent times, many of the links between Spring Boroughs and the town's centre have been lost.
- 8.9. The Super Output Area, of Spring Boroughs, is recognised by central government as being one of the most deprived areas in the country. The area is in the top 10% nationally in terms of the indices of multiple deprivation, with 5 of the 7 measures falling into this bracket, these are:
- Income Deprivation
 - Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
 - Crime
 - Health Deprivation and Disability
 - Employment Deprivation

Population and Housing:

- A total of 1,422 people live in the Spring Boroughs area and the population density is 11.14 people per hectare. This compares with 24.08 in Northampton and 3.77 in England.
- Spring Boroughs contains a higher percentage of 20-44 year olds, and elderly people than the Northampton average
- There are a high proportion of single households in this area; this figure stands at 60.10% when compared with 29.8% in Northampton as a whole.
- There are a large number of single person households within the area, with fewer married people than in the rest of the town

ISSUE 28: The population structure of Spring Boroughs.

- *Do you think that the current population structure, within Spring Boroughs, should be altered?*
- *Should we encourage more families and dual person households to the area?*
- *Is the population structure unbalanced?*

Would there be benefits of having a more balanced community?

Housing

- The area has low home ownership levels. Only 16% of the properties are owned, compared to 83% rented.
- The area has a higher proportion of flats.
- If Spring Boroughs is to develop into a mixed community, then the mix of housing needs to reflect the requirements of a more diverse range of households including family housing and owner-occupied properties.

ISSUE 29: Housing Stock

In order to create the potential for a more balanced community, it is necessary to meet their housing needs.

Does the housing stock meet the needs of the current population?

To encourage a more mixed community, should there be

- a) More apartments**
- b) Fewer apartments**
- c) More family/ larger properties**

ISSUE 30: Ownership

To promote a more mixed community a variety of housing tenures should be provided, including owner occupied housing. At present, a large number of the properties are rented. If we were to create a more balanced population should there be:

- **More socially rented properties (Housing association and council owned)**
- **More Shared ownership properties**
- **More Market Housing**

8.10. There has been some investment in the housing stock of Spring Boroughs. The 'New Life' apartment block have been refurbished to provide housing of a high standard. However, much of the housing stock is still of poor quality and provides inadequate standards of amenity for local residents, such as private outdoor space.

ISSUE 31: Housing Quality

Is the quality of the housing offer in Spring Boroughs of an acceptable standard?

Should we:

- **Refurbish existing housing stock, if this is realistic**
- **Demolish, with appropriate interim housing arrangements for those affected, some of the properties that are beyond economical repair, and replace them with housing of the same type**
- **Demolish, again with appropriate interim housing arrangements for those affected, some of the properties that are beyond economical repair, and replace them with alternative types of housing**

The government is encouraging developments to be zero carbon. Should the properties on Spring Boroughs be either constructed, or refurbished to meet the "Excellent" standard in energy efficiency?

Access to facilities and Connectivity:

8.11. Spring Boroughs has a number of community facilities, such as the community café, a pub, as well as small businesses. Just to the North is the Quorn Way/ Grafton Street industrial estate, and to the south lies Sol Central, which is a large leisure complex, housing a multi-screen cinema.

ISSUE 32: Local Facilities

Local facilities are important in the retention and creation of community spirit and cohesion.

What local facilities in Spring Boroughs should be retained?

Are there any other facilities that should be provided in Spring Boroughs?

8.12. Movement and accessibility by foot and other modes of public transport is of high importance, car ownership in the area is only 35%, compared with 75% in the rest of Northampton. One third of people travel to their place of work by foot, this is three times the national average. Spring Boroughs is cut off from the town centre by major roads: Horsemarket / Broad Street, St Andrew's Road and Grafton Street. Spring Boroughs is located close to both the railway station and the bus station. This provides residents with the opportunity to access jobs and facilities within a wider area served by public transport. However pedestrian routes to both these facilities are poor. There is a lack of crossing points for pedestrians across the major roads, at present. The crossing points that do exist are not always well lit and concerns about safety have been raised during consultation.

ISSUE 33: Accessibility to the wider area

At present Spring Boroughs is cut off from the rest of the central area by the four main roads, considering that the majority of those who reside in the area travel by pedestrian routes.

To improve access should we:

- **Provide more crossing points on Horsemarket Road**
- **Downgrade the inner ring road to a minor route**
- **Reduce the speed limit on Horsemarket to allow crossing**
- **Improve the bus routes through Spring Boroughs**
- **other**

Training and Employment

8.13. Within Spring Boroughs there is a high level of unemployment. Access to jobs may be constrained because of a lack of training, qualifications of transport. Many of the people living within the area have fewer qualifications, when compared with Northampton as a whole. Much of the employment is in the lower third of the occupational hierarchy with the highest proportion of people work in retail and wholesale, followed by process plant and elementary occupations.

ISSUE 34: Training and Employment

By improving training and skills, people are able to move into higher quality jobs and earn better wages. What can be done to improve the job prospects for the residents of Spring Boroughs?

- **Provide a better range of basic skills courses in the local area**
- **Provide incentives to remain in education beyond 16**
- **Encourage the relocation of business to the central area as a whole, such as office development**
- ***other***

Open Spaces and Urban Design:

8.14. The quality of an area is as much about the space between buildings, as it is about the buildings themselves. Streets should provide direct access to places, which people need to go. Streets and open spaces should proved attractive and safe places for people to stop and relax.

8.15. Throughout the Breathing Spaces project, a River Nene Regional Park led initiative to improve the attractiveness, usefulness and accessibility of a number of open space areas in close proximity to Spring Boroughs have been enhanced. Open Space can serve a number of different functions, for example in children's play, young peoples' play and recreation, informal recreation and sport. In considering whether there is sufficient, accessible open space, it is important to consider the different functions that the space performs.

8.16. The ward (Castle) as a whole suffers from high levels of crime, including drug offences and sexual offences. Work has been recently undertaken through the formation of a Home Office funded CASPAR +NR neighbourhood renewal project, for the area.

ISSUE 35: Safety

How can we make the streets and other public spaces safer and more pleasant?

Provide more green space

Provide better street lighting

Improve the quality of existing public spaces

Is there sufficient provision of open space within, or within easy access, of Spring Boroughs?

If there should be more should this be to the:

- **North**

- **South**
- **East**
- **West**

Additional Areas:

8.17. In addition to Spring Boroughs, there are a number of other parts of the Central Area where it is considered community regeneration is an issue. These areas have their own history and character, as well as problems. Figure 13 shows other areas that rank within areas of multiple deprivation. The Lower Mounts and area between Billing Road and St Edmund's road have been included, as up until recently they ranked in the top 20% and still have certain aspects that fall within that threshold.

B: The Upper Mounts (Castle Ward)

8.18. The Mounts is an area of predominantly terraced streets, which lay to the North of the Central Area. Historically the old gaol was situated on the road, however this was demolished in 1930 to make way for a number of new public buildings. These included the Fire Station, the Police Station, Magistrates' court and the Mounts Baths (opened 1936), which is the only existing art-deco swimming baths in the country still in use.

8.19. This part of the Central Area ranks within the top 20% under the indices of multiple deprivation. One specific domain, which is significantly higher than the rest is crime, where the area falls into the most deprived 10% (5.10%). There are a number of specific sub-domains that fall below the 20% threshold, these are:

- Income affecting older people (top 10%)
- Education for Children and young people (top 10%)
- Indoor living environment (top 10%)

C: Lower Mounts and Billing Road Area (St Crispin's Ward)

8.20. Like most of the Central Area, the residential streets that surround St Michael's Road, were constructed for the rapidly growing boot and shoe industry. The area has a number of significant factories, such as Hawkins. A number of factories have already been converted into apartments, with several others (including Hawkins) having been granted planning permission for conversion.

8.21. St Edmund's Hospital, to the very east of the Central Area, currently has planning permission to construct a mixed-use development.

8.22. Unlike the neighbouring area of Castle Ward, this area is not ranked within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the country, in terms of multiple deprivation. However, the area is still considered to be 'deprived' in terms of the living environment, where it falls into the top 15% nationally, both in terms of indoor and outdoor environment.

ISSUE 36: Other Areas

Are these areas in need of regeneration?

- **Upper Mounts**

- **Lower Mounts**
- **Both**
- **Neither**

Where should the efforts be focused?

- **Open Space**
- **Traffic reduction; especially around St Michael's Road, Clare Street, St Edmunds Road etc)**

9. Conservation and Built Environment

Strategic Objective 5

To retain and enhance the distinctive local character of the Central Area's Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

History:

- 9.1. The Central Area today, is a product of past events. It has been influenced by royalist wealth, political rebellion, devastation from fire and a world-renowned footwear industry. The town has been built around the historic core and therefore the past will be important in shaping the town's future.
- 9.2. The first Earl of Northampton, Simon de Senlis built a castle on the site currently occupied by the railway station. In later times the strategic location in the centre of England made the town popular with, and important, to both Royalty and heads of state. For 200 years, Northampton was the capital of England, with the castle being the seat of Parliament. It was amongst the richest and most important towns in England and has played an important role in political and royal history.
- 9.3. The town's past role is reflected by the array of historic buildings that can be found in the Central Area. These include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is the oldest building in the town, and the largest and best preserved example of one of only four round churches remaining in England⁵. Another enduring feature is the Market Square. It is reputed to be the largest fully enclosed open-air market place in England. The original size is masked by the changes to the street pattern that have occurred. Originally All Saints Church was inside the Market Square, with Drapery and Mercers Row forming the western and southern sides respectively. Trading has taken place uninterrupted on the square since 1275.
- 9.4. Despite its medieval links, the majority of the Central Area's significant buildings are of a later date. In 1675 a major fire, caused by a cooking pot at a house in St Mary's Street, quickly took hold in the narrow network of streets destroying over 600 buildings, around three quarters of the town, including All Saints Church. As a result the streets around the market place were widened, to prevent a re-occurrence of the fire. The town was rebuilt, thanks in part, to local people and businesses raising £25,000, a significant sum at the time, toward the rebuilding. The King also contributed. In recognition of the 1000 tons of timber he donated a statue of King Charles II, dressed in a toga, stands on the portico of the rebuilt All Saints Church. Following the towns re-building the writer Daniel Defoe described the town as "*[the] handsomest and best built town in all this part of England...finely rebuilt with brick and stone, and the streets made spacious and wide*".
- 9.5. The legacy of historic buildings is evident today in many of the fine examples of architectural quality that remain. There are scheduled monuments and many examples of listed buildings afforded protection for their architectural merit. Many

⁵ Temple Church, London; St John the Baptist, Little Maplestead, Essex; and Holy Sepulchre, Cambridge are the other three examples

of these buildings are located in one of the four conservation areas within the Central Area. In addition there are many other examples of high architectural quality that have not been afforded special protection, although worthy of preservation.

- 9.6. More recent examples of unique buildings result from the Boot and Shoe manufacturing industry, which brought prosperity and made Northampton famous. The influence of shoe manufacturing can be traced back into the past. During the English civil war Northampton supplied boots to Cromwell's army. In later times the local shoe industry supplied boots to British soldiers in the Great War. At its peak, the local shoe industry produced more shoes than the rest of Great Britain combined. This once massive industry shaped many of the Central Area's residential areas. There are examples of the industrial architecture around the Overstone Road, St Michael's Road area, with the dwellings in the streets to the North housing the workers for this industry.
- 9.7. Northampton Central Area has many fine and historic buildings and the Council has designated 4 Conservation Areas in the Central Area to protect their character and attractiveness, see Figure 14. They are
- Derngate
 - St Giles
 - All Saints
 - Holy Sepulchre
- 9.8. Although the Conservation Areas contain listed buildings of national importance, there are other listed buildings and protected trees elsewhere in the Central Area which are outside the conservation area boundaries. These include many buildings which are not of national importance, and not consequently statutorily protected, but have been "locally listed" by the Council. The Council has formally adopted the local list that related to the inner town centre i.e. those contained within the inner ring road, although this list is due for review. The Council also has a draft local list of important buildings in the outer town centre area, which has not yet been formally adopted, and this will also be reviewed when resources allow. There are also 2 scheduled ancient monuments in the Central Area, see Figure 14. They are;
- Remains of Northampton Castle; and
 - Saxon Palace complex and Medieval Deposits in the centre of Northampton
- 9.9. In the Conservation Areas the design and layout of new developments is carefully controlled so that they contribute to and enhance the existing conservation area character. Chapter 3 sets out what has happened recently in terms of the re-appraisals of the Derngate, St Giles and All Saints Conservation Areas.

Holy Sepulchre

- 9.10. The appraisal of this Conservation Area is currently being undertaken and it is envisaged that public consultation will take place on this in November. At this stage it is unlikely that any significant changes to the boundaries will be proposed and issues of enhancement are likely to be confined to individual buildings and parts of the street scene.

Other Issues

9.11. Conservation is a major part of the CAAP. In addition to the issues determined as part of the Conservation Area re-appraisals, proposals for development and regeneration that are outlined elsewhere in this report need to square with the policies for the conservation of the Central Area's important architectural and cultural heritage. Some of these may be within or adjacent to conservation areas, or affect listed buildings, ancient monuments, and protected trees elsewhere in the Central Area.

9.12. The Council's general position on the urban design in the CAAP is to protect as much as possible of the important historic fabric of the central area and to ensure that new developments/redevelopment enhance the built environment. However there is a balance to be struck between the modernisation and regeneration of the central area and the impact this may have on the key elements of the historic fabric.

9.13. In particular, the following major issues need to be resolved;

- how the proposed retail development north of the Grosvenor Centre, including Greyfriars bus station, will be designed so as make a positive impact upon adjacent parts of the All Saints Conservation Area (especially on the Market Square) and the Holy Sepulchre Conservation Area
- how proposals for the Cultural Mile can be made to enhance the four Conservation Areas
- How the proposed mixed use development of St John's be designed so as to enhance the Derngate Conservation Area
- How the northern part of the proposed redevelopment of the Mount's car park be designed in order to minimise its impact on the Holy Sepulchre Conservation Area
- How to use possible Public Realm improvements to enhance the four Conservation Areas and the setting of important buildings, both listed and unlisted, in the Central Area.
- How to ensure that new developments in the Central Area make provision for the maintenance of open spaces that may be an integral part of the development.
- How to ensure that whatever transport improvements take place do not worsen, and if possible, improve the environment within and adjacent to Conservation Areas.

9.14. In relation to the above:

ISSUE 37

Do you agree that these are the main issues in respect of the Central Area's Conservation Areas? If not, what other issues do you think need to be considered?

ISSUE 38

Are there other listed buildings or other important buildings outside Conservation Areas which need to be taken into consideration in relation to possible developments?

ISSUE 39

Which important trees or existing open spaces need to be retained when developments are being considered?

10. Next Steps

- 10.1. The Borough Council will reflect carefully on the consultation feedback it receives on the issues and options raised in this report, and on other feedback and further evidence from the ongoing community involvement. There is a formal consultation end date by which views must be submitted to the Council. Although the process of community engagement is continuous, the Council is aiming to publish its Preferred Option consultation report for formal public consultation during December 2007 and January 2008. Therefore, it will be helpful to have as many views as possible within the formal deadline.
- 10.2. The Preferred Option Report will be a statement of what options the Council intends to pursue in CAAP, and why. It will explain what options the Council has rejected and why. It will also identify development timescales, and who will be responsible for which aspects of implementation. The report will also contain milestones, targets and indicators to provide the basis for monitoring and reviewing CAAP, especially in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which is submitted to Government.
- 10.3. CAAP will provide the basis for development decisions, by both the public and private sector, within the Central Area. It will be used by West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) who are responsible for making decisions on planning applications within the Central Area. It will also be used by Northamptonshire County Council, as highway authority, in making decisions about transportation and public realm matters.
- 10.4. CAAP will act upon the key decisions of the JCS and:
 - Set out a vision and objectives for the Central Area
 - Include site-specific allocations for key sites
 - Provide a movement framework
 - Provide guidance on design and developer contributions
 - Include development control policies
 - Include a public realm strategy
 - Set the timetable for the implementation of proposals
 - Identify who will deliver these proposals
- 10.5. The Plan will ultimately be subject to a local public examination which will assess the “soundness” of the plan and its proposals. This will relate both to the process of preparing the plan; and to whether the evidence-base justifies the proposals.
- 10.6. Government Guidance on Area Action Plans states that a key feature should be the focus on implementation with plans helping to deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration, protect sensitive areas and help to resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures.
- 10.7. As stated earlier many initiatives, projects and proposals impacting on the Central Area exist. It is imperative that the key organisational drivers behind these are identified and that their action is co-ordinated.
- 10.8. For clarity it is important that we are able to identify what is already committed and what is achievable in the short, medium and longer term. It will be helpful to identify how such actions will help resolve the issues identified and what they

mean for the various communities that make up the Central Area, or have an interest in it.

- 10.9. Crucial will be ensuring that the actions proposed are realistic and take account of the availability of resources and have the necessary infrastructure in place or programmed to ensure timely delivery. Equally important is the need to acknowledge the constraints on action and make it clear where some things cannot be done or will take a long time to resolve.

Your input is crucial in helping to achieve the above.

Glossary

Title / Body / Acronym	Definition
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	Statutory part of the <i>Local Development Scheme</i> . They are compiled to provide evidence for future policies and monitor the success of current policies
Area Action Plan (AAP)	Statutory <i>Development Plan Document</i> that provides a planning framework for specific areas of change and conservation.
Community Strategy	Prepared by local partnerships, with the purpose of improving social, economic and environmental well-being of their areas
Comparison retailing	The provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.
Convenience retailing	The provision of everyday essential items including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.
Conservation Area	Area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Core Strategy (CS)/(JCS)	Statutory document that sets out the long-term <i>spatial</i> vision for the local planning authority area and the policies and proposals to deliver the vision. In the case of Northampton this will provided by a Joint Core Strategy for West Northamptonshire Development Area (Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire)
Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	The government department that is now responsible for planning and local government. Previously, the department responsible for planning was the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Development Control Policies	A suite of criteria-based polices, which are required to ensure that all development, within the area meets the vision and strategy, as set out in the <i>Core Strategy</i> .
Development Plan	Consists of the <i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i> and <i>Development Plan Documents</i> contained within the <i>Local Development Framework</i> .
Development Plan Document (DPD)	<i>Spatial Planning</i> documents that are subject to independent consultation and examination. There is a right for those seeking to change aspects of <i>Development Plan Documents</i> to be heard at an independent examination.
Government Office of the East Midlands (GO-EM)	Part of Central government, who work specifically to raise awareness of issues that affect the East Midlands in the areas of; Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.
Issues and Options and Preferred Options	The pre-submission consultation stages on the Development Plan Documents with the objective of gaining public consensus over proposals ahead of submission to government for Independent examination.

Title / Body / Acronym	Definition
Key Diagram	Diagrammatic interpretation of the spatial plans, as set out in the <i>core strategy</i> , to illustrate the plans for the area, in a way that is similar to existing diagrams in the structure plan. They are most likely to be for areas of significant change. They allow broad areas of future development to be identified and linked together as well as showing the relationships of neighbouring areas. They can also show areas of no change and protected areas.
Local Development Document (LDD)	A document that forms part of the <i>Local Development Framework</i> . Can either be a <i>Development Plan Document (Statutory)</i> or a <i>Supplementary Plan Document</i> .
Local Development Framework (LDF)	This is the 'umbrella' of the new planning system and comprises a number of local development documents, including: <i>Development Plan Documents, Sustainability Appraisals, Supplementary Plan Documents, Monitoring reports</i> and the <i>Statement of Community involvement</i> . These documents provide the framework for delivering the <i>spatial planning</i> strategy for the area
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	This is a statutory document and public statement which outline the Council's 3 year project plan and identify which LDDs will be produced and when
Local Strategic Partnership	Broad based partnership of local and regional organisations representing the public, private and voluntary sector. It gives the opportunity for different initiatives and services to support each other and work together to the benefit of the citizens of the town.
Northamptonshire Observatory	The Northamptonshire Observatory is a partnership of organisations across the County who aim to share and improve access to quality information on the county, for more effective and informed policy and decision making and to prevent duplication of effort.
Planning Policy Guidance	Government statement of national planning policy guidance. These are gradually been replaced by <i>Planning Policy Statements</i> .
Planning Policy Statement	Government statement of national planning policy guidance. <i>Regional Spatial Strategies</i> and <i>Local Development Frameworks</i> must be consistent with <i>Planning Policy Statements</i> . Formally, these were known as <i>Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)</i> , and some are still used.
Pre-examination meeting	Procedural meeting held by an inspector, appointed to hold examination, into the <i>Development Plan Document</i> or <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i> . The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the management of the examination and consultation.
Proposals Map	Illustrates the policies and proposals in the <i>Development Plan Documents</i> and any <i>saved policies</i> that are

Title / Body / Acronym	Definition
	including in the <i>Local Development Framework</i> .
Public Realm	This is the area between buildings that is accessible to the public, including streets, footpaths and Public Open Space. It also serves a number of functions as area for play, for parking cars, movements of vehicles, pedestrians and Cyclists.
Regeneration Area	<p>Regeneration centres on the physical development of land, buildings and new transport systems. It also seeks to capture and maximise benefits for the people of the Borough through economic and social regeneration in terms of skills, social and economic inclusion, education, housing, health, community development and the environment.</p> <p>Regeneration is closely aligned to neighbourhood renewal, which aims to improve the quality of life of people living in disadvantaged areas by encouraging the community in improving services and building community cohesion.</p>
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	Prepared by the regional planning body (<i>Government office for the East Midlands</i>). It will set out the policies in relation to development and use of land in the region and will be approved by the First Secretary of State (formally known as Regional Planning Guidance)
Saved Plan	Existing adopted plans (or parts of them) can be saved fro three years from the date of commencement of the Act. Unadopted plans can be saved for three years post adoption.
Site Specific allocations and policies	Allocations of sites, and areas, for specific or mixed uses of development, such as housing and employment. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals and applications.
Spatial Planning	Influences the organisation of space and links environmental, social and economic factors, when creating plans. It understands the fact that development in one area will influence another.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Sets out the standard, which the local authority intends to archive, in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and review of planning documents. It also lays down the methods that will be used to achieve the targets. The Statement of Community Involvement is subject to an independent examination. For each of the <i>Development Plan Documents</i> , a statement of how the authority has complied with the Statement has to be produced.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A term that is used internationally to describe <i>environmental assessment</i> when it is applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)' requires a formal <i>environmental</i>

Title / Body / Acronym	Definition
	<i>assessment</i> of certain plans and programmes, including those that relate to future land use.
Super Output Area	Geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. Their first statistical application was the Indices of Deprivation 2004.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	An appraisal to ensure that all policies and proposals in <i>Development Plan Documents</i> reflect sustainable proposals. This will be carried out at the same time as the <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i> .
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Policy guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in development plan documents. They will not form part of the development plan or be subject to independent examination. (Formally known as Supplementary Planning Guidance).
West Northamptonshire	The area that covers the local authority areas of: Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District Council and Daventry District Council.
West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC)	A Planning authority set up by Central government to consider strategic applications in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester, to promote investment from the public and private sector and encourage growth.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
ISSUES AND OPTIONS DISCUSSION PAPER

YOUR COMMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US. PLEASE FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE BELOW WHICH HIGHLIGHTS ALL THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS RAISED IN THE DISCUSSION PAPER.

CHAPTER 4: SPATIAL VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Draft Vision

Issue 1:

a. Do you agree with the contents of the draft vision for Northampton Central Area?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Are there any other aspirations we should have and why?

b. Do you agree with the timescale of the draft vision which is to 2026?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

c. Does the draft vision encapsulate the key elements which will make Northampton's Central Area a successful and thriving town?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Draft Strategic Objectives

Issue 2:

a. Do you agree with the draft strategic objectives outlined in this chapter?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

b. Are there any other realistic and deliverable strategic objectives which the Council could focus on?

CHAPTER 5: CENTRAL AREA DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Retail

Issue 3:

Where is the best location for new retail development to meet the requirements of comparison goods retailers? The options are (see Figure 3):

- North of Grosvenor Centre, including bus station
- North of Abington Square
- St Peter's Square
- Between Horsemarket and Drapery

Are there any other suitable locations for new retail development and why?

Issue 4:

Where within the town centre should a new supermarket be located? The options are (see Figure 4):

- North of Grosvenor Centre, including bus station
- North of Abington Square
- St Peter's Square
- Between Horsemarket and Drapery

Are there any other suitable locations for a new supermarket and why?

Issue 5:

Where are the most appropriate locations to encourage independent retailers? The options are (see Figure 5):

- St Giles Street
- Gold Street
- St John's Area (behind County Hall)

Offices

Issue 6:

What type and scale of office development needs to be accommodated within the Central Area?

Issue 7:

Where is the most appropriate location for large-scale office development? The options are (see Figure 6):

- Castle Station
- Towcester Road/St Peter's Way
- St James Retail Park
- Freeschool Street
- Victoria Street
- Horsemarket
- St John's
- Bedford Road

Are there any other options and why? (PTO)

Are the same options appropriate for small scale office developments?

YES / NO / DON' KNOW

If not, which locations are?

Leisure

Issue 8:

Are there any gaps in provision of leisure and entertainment facilities in the Central Area?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Does the existing provision meet the needs of all sectors of the community?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

If not, where are the deficiencies?

Issue 9:

Should leisure/entertainment uses be concentrated in specific locations, if so, where?

Is dispersal throughout the Central Area more appropriate?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Should different approaches be applied to different types of leisure/entertainment uses, for example, cafes, restaurants, bars and night clubs?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Issue 10

Are there areas within the Central Area which would be suitable for leisure/entertainment uses? If so, what type of uses would be appropriate? The options are (see Figure 7):

Restaurant/café/bar uses:

- Bridge Street, between Victoria Promenade & South Bridge
- St John's Station Passage
- Market Square/All Saints Square
- Marefair
- Derngate/Guildhall Road
- The Ridings/Fish Street/Dychurch Lane

Large-scale leisure/entertainment uses:

- North of Grosvenor Centre
- North of Abington Street
- St Peter's Square
- Between Horsemarket and Drapery

Outdoor events:

- Market Square
- Becket's Park

Are there any other options and why?

Cultural Development

Issue 11

Are there any gaps in provision of cultural facilities in the Central Area?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Does existing provision meet the needs of all sectors of the community?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Issue 12

Is there a need for provision of workspace for creative industries?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Where would be the best location for such development? Options:

As part of the cultural quarter within the St John's and Angel Street area

Near to the University, for e.g., Great Russell Street area

Are there any other suitable locations and why?

Hotel

Issue 13

Where is the most appropriate location for a new hotel? The options are (see Figure 9)

Castle Station

Freeschool Street

St Johns

Horsemarket

Grosvenor Centre/the Mounts

County Hall

Are there any other suitable locations and why?

Residential Development

Issue 14

What type of housing should be provided within the Central Area?

Issue 15

Which locations are appropriate for significant residential development? Options are (see Figure 10):

Freeschool Street	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bedford Road	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horsemarket	<input type="checkbox"/>
Angel Street	<input type="checkbox"/>
St John's	<input type="checkbox"/>
St Peter's Way	<input type="checkbox"/>
Castle Station	<input type="checkbox"/>
Great Russell Street	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any other suitable locations and why?

Other uses

Issue 16

Are there any other development needs which should be accommodated in the Central Area and if so, why and where?

Issue 17

Are there any sites which should be considered for development within the Central Area?

Design Principles

Issue 18

Do you agree with the design principles for new development?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Are there any other principles that you consider should be included and why?

Criteria for Development Sites

Issue 19

Do you agree with the criteria for new development?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Are there any other criteria that you consider should be included and why?

CHAPTER 6: ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPORT NETWORKS

Public transport

Issue 20

Why are people using less public transport in comparison to other modes of transport?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Which of the following options will encourage more people to use public transport in the Central Area?

The options are:

- Retain and upgrade Greyfriars bus station on current site
- New bus station on different site within the Central Area
- New on street bus interchange on the Drapery (with additional stops on Horsemarket)
- New on street bus interchange at Fish Market
- New on street bus interchange as part of redevelopment to north of Grosvenor Centre
- New transport interchange, including bus station, at Castle Station
- Alternative locations of smaller, more efficient bus station which focus on passengers' facilities
- Ensure that the Central Area road system is able to support a fast and reliable bus service
- Provide a fast shuttle link between Castle Station and key points in the Central Area
- Allow bus penetration into pedestrian only areas

Are there any other options?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Car Parking

Issue 21

How and in what form do we address the problem of poor spatial distribution of car parking in the Central Area? Options:

- Arrival signage and car parking space information
- Car park management, incl security, “pay as you leave”
- Prioritising provision for short stay shoppers parking
- Phased reduction in commuter parking with introduction of “park and ride”
- Providing high quality facilities for public transport incl the following primary multi-modal interchanges: provision of new bus station and the redevelopment of Northampton Castle Station

Are there any other options?

Cyclists and Pedestrian Network

Issue 22

Where, and in what form to provide pedestrians and cyclists access routes in and around the Central Area?

- Horsemarket needs to be downgraded from 4 lanes to a single carriageway road. This will allow pedestrians to cross without the requirement of a traffic signal
- Development of pedestrians and cyclists networks around the River Nene area, adj to Nunn Mills Road, providing access to the power station residential site
- Development of pedestrian and cycle crossing routes linking the western side of Becket’s Park through the Avon site to the town centre
- adj to eastern side of Bridge Street linking to the proposed Cattlemarket Road
- A maximum speed of 20mph be imposed within the inner core area of the town centre with vehicular movement limited to access and servicing only
- Provide additional at grade crossings
- Remove existing subways

Are there any other options?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Chapter 7: Public Realm

Issue 23

Which of the following gateway sites should be given priority for public realm improvement? The options are (see Figure 11)

- Black Lion Hill
- St Peter’s Way/Towcester Road roundabout
- Bridge Street/Victoria Promenade interchange
- Bedford Road/Derngate Junction
- Abington Street/Abington Square
- Regent Square/Grafton Street/Campbell Square/Barrack Road junction

Are there any other gateway sites that should be included?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Issue 24

What should be done to overcome the barrier of the bus station?

- Demolition of the bus station
- Improve existing north/south routes by downgrading Greyfriars / Lady’s Lane to one lane
- There is no barrier, leave the bus station as it is
- Bedford Road/Derngate Junction

Are there any other options? Is the answer a combination of these or other options?

Five horizontal lines for writing.

Issue 25

What should be done to overcome the barriers at Horsemarket?

Downgrade Horsemarket to one lane (this will affect traffic movement elsewhere in the town centre, and may require work on outer ring road to be completed first

Leave Horsemarket as at present

Any other options for Horsemarket or the junctions at Bedford Road, Chronicle and Echo and Bridge Street?

Issue 26

Do you think that shared use of the space is realistic in the Central Area?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Which of the following streets should be shared use, (see Figure 12)?

Drapery
Gold Street
Abington Street
St Giles Street
Bridge Street

Issue 27

Do you think that an improved public realm contributes to making a place safer?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Which other areas in the Central Area have safety issues relating to the public realm?

What measures can be taken on the public realm to improve safety?

Chapter 8: Community Regeneration

Population structure of Spring Boroughs

Issue 28

Do you think that the current population structure within Spring Boroughs should be altered?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Should we encourage more families and dual person households to the area?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Housing Stock

Issue 29

Does the housing stock meet the needs of the current population?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

To encourage a more mixed community, should there be:

- More apartments
- Fewer apartments
- More family/larger properties

Issue 30

To promote a more mixed community, a variety of housing tenures should be provided, including owner occupied housing. At present, a large number of the properties are rented. If we were to create a more balanced population, should there be:

- More socially rented properties (Housing Association and Council owned)
- More shared ownership properties

More market housing

Issue 31

Is the quality of the housing offer in Spring Boroughs of an acceptable standard?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Should we:

Refurbish existing housing stock, if this is realistic

Demolish, with appropriate interim housing arrangements for those affected, some of the properties that are beyond economical repair, and replace them with housing of the same type

Demolish, again with appropriate interim housing arrangements for those affected, some of the properties that are beyond economical repair, and replace them with alternative types of housing

The Government is encouraging developments to be zero carbon. Should the properties on Spring Boroughs be either constructed, or refurbished to meet the "Excellent" standard in energy efficiency?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

Local Facilities

Issue 32

What local facilities in Spring Boroughs should be retained? Are there any other facilities that should be provided in Spring Boroughs?

Accessibility to the wider area

Issue 33

At present, Spring Boroughs is cut off from the rest of the Central Area by the four main roads, considering that the majority of those who reside in the area travel by pedestrian routes. To improve access, should we:

- Provide more crossing points on Horsemarket Road
- Downgrade the inner ring road to a minor route
- Reduce the speed limit on Horsemarket to allow crossing
- Improve the bus routes through Spring Boroughs
- Other (please give examples)

Training and Employment

Issue 34

What can be done to improve the job prospects for the residents of Spring Boroughs?

- Provide a better range of basic skills courses in the local area
- Provide incentives to remain in education beyond 16
- Encourage the relocation of business to the Central Area as a whole, such as office development
- Other (please give examples)

Safety

Issue 35

How can we make the streets and other public spaces safer and more pleasant?

- Provide more green space
- Provide better street lighting
- Improve the quality of existing public spaces

Is there sufficient provision of open space within, or within easy access, of Spring Boroughs? If there should be more, should this be to the:

- North
- South
- East
- West

Other Areas

Issue 36

Are these areas in need of regeneration? The options are, (see Figure 13):

Upper Mounts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower Mounts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where should the efforts be focused?

Open space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic reduction, especially around St Michael’s Road, Clare Street, St Edmund’s Road etc	<input type="checkbox"/>

CHAPTER 9: CONSERVATION AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Issue 37

Do you agree that these are the main issues in respect of the Central Area’s Conservation Areas?

YES / NO / DON’T KNOW

If not, what other issues do you think need to be considered?

Issue 38

Are there other listed buildings or other important buildings outside Conservation Areas which need to be taken into consideration in relation to possible developments?

Issue 39

Which important trees or existing open spaces need to be retained when developments are being considered?

WHEN COMPLETED, DETACH AND RETURN TO:

By hand: at the One-Stop Shop, Guildhall, St Giles Square

By e-mail: ldf@northampton.gov.uk

By post: LDF Team (Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options response)
Planning Policy and Conservation, Northampton Borough Council,
Cliftonville House, Bedford Road, Northampton, NN4 7NR

By fax: 01604 837 527

By 5pm on the XXXX of November 2007

Consultation Plan for the Central Area Action Plan

Background

This is a consultation plan for the Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options discussion paper. It has been prepared in the context of the substantial consultation that has already been carried out with stakeholders around the town. It has also been prepared in line with the requirements of our published Statement of Community Involvement and an acknowledgement of the likely available resources to deliver the consultation.

Consultation with stakeholders in Northampton around the development of the Central Area Action Plan started back in October 2005 with a Stakeholder Consultation Event. This event worked with a range of stakeholders from around the town to define a series of urban design principles to inform the next steps in plan making.

These urban design principles were then used as a tool to consult other stakeholders around the town – primarily the Community Forums set up by Northampton Borough Council.

The feedback from the Stakeholder event has been reported on and is available online at www.northampton.gov.uk. A summary of key findings from the consultation activities that followed the Stakeholder Consultation Event is being produced.

Town Centre Commission

One of the outputs from the Stakeholder Consultation Event was the formulation of a Town Centre Commission. The Commission is made up of around 200 stakeholders drawn from the voluntary, business, transport, education and public sectors. From the Commission membership a representative Steering Group was established. This group consists of 12-14 representatives, plus 3 Elected Members of the Council. The Steering Group should be able to demonstrate accountability to the sector they represent. The Steering Group has been meeting on a regular basis to oversee a community engagement plan to help feed into the production of a Central Area Action Plan and consider the inclusion of stakeholder views into the Central Area Action Plan. This process is ongoing.

Northampton Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework Consultation

Building Design Partnership (BDP) was commissioned by a client partnership, led by Northampton Borough Council, and including WNDP, Northamptonshire County Council and English Partnerships. BDP produced a Northampton Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework in November 2006. This document looked to bring forward an exemplar masterplan that would deliver a development, design and movement framework to guide investment in the central area of Northampton until 2021. Northampton Borough Council consulted on this document between 5 February and 30 March 2007.

All of the consultation responses and feedback gathered since October 2005 have played a part in contributing to developing the Issues and Options paper for the Central Area Action Plan.

Consultation Plan

It is proposed to consult on a Central Area Issues and Options discussion paper following approval by Cabinet. The draft document that has been produced for consultation is extensive and provides significant detail about the Central Area.

To date there has been nearly 2 years of consultation on the Central Area. It is important that work to date is recognised and previous consultation exercises are not repeated. Therefore in producing a consultation plan the focus is very much on updating the community and stakeholders as to where we are in the process and capturing any new feedback or issues that may have evolved during the last 2 years.

It is proposed that the focus of this consultation exercise is to look for any gaps that might exist and identifying particular priorities. This will help facilitate the gathering of any new information or issues. It will also act to reassure our stakeholders that we have listened and taken on board feedback that has been provided, but that we must check back with the community as part of the formalised planning process. It is important to note that, given the consultation to date there may be limited new input to offer. This point will be made throughout the consultation to reassure consultees that they do not have to repeat everything that has been said to date.

Details of our commitments to the community in terms of consultation are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Joint Core Strategy

It is anticipated that the Central Area Action Plan Consultation will run simultaneously with the Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation. This is identified as a positive opportunity as clearly the same communities will be consulted for both documents. Whilst the documents are fundamentally very different, the Joint Core Strategy provides the strategic context for the Central Area Action Plan.

It is proposed that the Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Consultation, where possible, utilises consultation opportunities provided by the Joint Core Strategy. It is envisaged that this will be particularly the exhibitions that will be rolled out in Northampton. However this will all be subject to the overall timing of the process.

Raise Awareness

One of the biggest challenges is to ensure that our community is aware of where we are in the process of delivering the Central Area Action Plan. It is proposed to produce a short summary leaflet which highlights the process that is going on and where further information can be found.

The leaflet will be widely distributed to take away around the town and to existing stakeholder networks, including shopping centres, supermarkets, community centres, schools, colleges, leisure centres and faith buildings. The LDF team has a database of businesses, groups and individuals who wish to be kept informed of consultations. All entries will receive a leaflet mailing.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions will provide an opportunity for people using Northampton to access information about the Central Area Action Plan. The Joint Core Strategy is arranging exhibitions in key local catchment points throughout September. It is envisaged that the Central Area Action Plan consultation will utilise these opportunities to fit together the strategic and the local dimensions.

Consultation Documents

The consultation discussion document will be made available to view through existing networks, including shopping centres, supermarkets, community centres, schools, colleges, leisure centres and faith buildings.

A questionnaire will be supplied for completion with a freepost address. This will invite feedback which looks to define any gaps or missed opportunities within the document.

Community Forums / Area Partnerships

These groups are key links into and out of the communities of Northampton. Previous consultation has taken place with these groups. It is essential that a progress update is provided and an opportunity to comment on the consultation document.

It is proposed that a feedback proforma is provided to each of these groups to use within their meetings. This will look to capture specific feedback in relation to the consultation document. To do this the documents will need to be sent out with clear instructions as to how to feedback.

The Central Area team will offer the opportunity for staff to attend groups meetings. However groups will be encouraged to use the feedback process available as they have already discussed many of the issues and options available for the town and there is limited 'new' information that the planning team can offer.

This will be distributed to key distribution points around the town, including, The Central Library, The One Stop Shop, NBC Cliftonville Reception.

Parish Councils / Residents Associations

Parish Councils and Residents Associations will be provided with information in a similar way to Community Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships above.

These groups will be provided with a number of copies of the consultation documents to distribute within their areas to raise awareness and encourage participation in the process.

Spring Boroughs

Previous commitments have been made to the residents of Spring Boroughs, as this area is a key focus for regeneration. A questionnaire is required which focuses specifically on capturing feedback from local residents on their local area.

A community meeting process is proposed which will involve residents in shaping the Spring Boroughs preferred options. This will involve building awareness and understanding of the Action Plan, understanding the issues and concerns from the community and identifying opportunities.

Website

The NBC website will provide the main means of accessing all of the documents and will have means of completing an electronic questionnaire.

Press

Press releases will be issued to reflect progress of the consultation. An initial launch release will be produced and a reminder of the consultation deadline 2 weeks before the end of the process.

Appendices

3



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No:

9(a)

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

MONTH 4 BUDGET MONITORING 2007/08

AGENDA STATUS:

PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	3 September 2007
Key Decision:	YES
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Governance and Improvement
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Malcolm Mildren
Ward(s)	Not Applicable

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report identifies the projected outturn position for the current financial Year. Appendix 1 of the report provides further background information. The report also refers to management action being taken in response to the forecast and to minimise the impact on the Council's general reserves at the end of the financial year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet to note the report and the actions being taken to manage the forecast overspend.
- 2.2 Cabinet approves the following virements:
- 2.2.1 £312k from the General Fund Reserve for concessionary fares.
 - 2.2.2 £42k from the Improvement Fund (earmarked reserve) for Human

Resources.

- 2.2.3 £40k from the Corporate Initiatives (LABGI) earmarked reserve for funding Delapre Abbey as agreed on 30 July 2007.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Month 3 is not being brought to Cabinet as there was no suitable date during August, and that information has now been superseded by the more current information contained in this report relating to month 4.
- 3.1.2 The Council approved the General Fund Revenue Budget on 21st February 2007. The 2007/08 budget preparation process identified a substantial gap in funding. This was bridged by a combination of policy, efficiency and base budget savings of £5.2m. In addition there was a requirement for the temporary use of reserves of £0.89m.
- 3.1.3 In addition to the funding included in the original budget that was set early in 2007, the Council has been awarded £592k Planning Delivery Grant (25% of which must be used for capital purposes), the highest for any district outside London, as well as £280k intervention grant from DCLG. These amounts are not yet reflected in the figures in this report, except for the £100k funding for the interim Chief Executive included in the intervention grant.
- 3.1.4 It is crucial that the savings built into the budget are achieved to minimise the impact on both the Council's general reserves at the end of this financial year and the impact on future year budgets. It is intended that all policy, efficiency and base budget savings that were built into the approved budget will be monitored and reported separately this financial year together with the regular monitoring of the revenue budget.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Budget Managers, in conjunction with Finance, have undertaken a review of the progress being made towards achieving the savings contained within the budget. Work has also been undertaken to identify any other emerging issues that cannot be contained within the approved budget with appropriate management action. Appendix 1 presents the identified variations from the approved budget that are giving rise to a forecast net overspend of £469k. This will reduce down to £167k should an application to capitalise severance costs to the DCLG be agreed.

3.2.2 Table 1: General Fund Provisional Outturn Summary (£,000)

RAG	Directorate	2007/08 Original Budget	2007/08 Additional Budget	2007/08 Revised Budget	P4 Projected Outturn	Variance Projected Outturn to Revised Budget
		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
A	Governance & Improvement	14,600	48	14,648	14,716	68
R	Customers and Service Delivery	15,239	100	15,339	15,842	503
G	People, Planning, and Regeneration	7,296	187	7,483	7,381	(102)
	Total	37,135	335	37,470	37,939	469

3.2.3 RAG (Red, Amber, Green) criteria were agreed by Management Board at their meeting on 16 August 2007. The criteria are detailed at Annex 3.

3.2.4 £505k of the net projected overspend relates to policy and efficiency savings that Budget Managers have indicated still required further work. Where savings have not yet been made management is preparing an action plan to ensure delivery and this will be reported to future Cabinets.

3.2.5 The remaining £635k overspend relates to newly emerging issues identified by Budget Managers.

3.2.6 This overspend is offset by proposed virements totalling £394k from reserves (£82k from earmarked reserves, and £312k from general fund balances) and management action plans of £277k.

3.2.7 Governance and Improvement: Amber

Service Area	Forecast Variance before Action	Forecast Variance after Action	Narrative
	£,000	£,000	
Chief Executive	104	(16)	Costs of interim Chief Executive with £100k intervention grant and recoverable LAA contribution.
Governance & Communications	93	93	Restructure of admin posts unachievable plus interim cover and redundancy costs
Other minor variations (below £50k)	(49)	(9)	£40k for Delapre Abbey to be funded from the earmarked LABGI reserve.
Total	188	68	

3.2.8 An application will be made to the Department for Communities and Local Government, to capitalise the cost of redundancy and pension strain costs. If approved, this would reduce the charge to the revenue account by an estimated £310k. This saving to the revenue account will be partially offset by the additional cost of borrowing to finance the capitalisation of £8k.

3.2.9 Customers and Service Delivery: Red

Service Area	Forecast Variance before Action	Forecast Variance after Action	Narrative
	£,000	£,000	
Community Safety, Leisure & Town Centre Operations	19	(35)	(£46k) alternative savings on energy and discretionary expenditure plus additional income from Leisure, car parking, and town centre operations.

Service Area	Forecast Variance before Action	Forecast Variance after Action	Narrative
	£,000	£,000	
Customer Services	88	88	£50k print room savings undergoing further investigation. A new directive was agreed at the Service Improvement meeting that means that council tax demands, reminders and summons will go out earlier to enable the debt to be collected and prevent bad debt. This, together with the increased correspondence it generates will increase the postage bill. Work is ongoing to clarify the financial impact.
Streetscene & Property	325	325	See details below
Housing Services	228	125	The Board has approved £103k additional expenditure to meet the cost of two new Revenues and Benefits Officers. This is to be recovered through increased subsidy. The estimated cost for 2007/08 of temporary Revenues and Benefits Officers is forecast as £145k. These are offset by minor (below £50k) variations including savings on temporary accommodation.
Total	802	503	

3.2.10 The Trade Waste service (saving ref BH3) will not achieve the revenue target saving for the sale of the service of £150k, as any disposal receipts will generate a capital not revenue receipt.

3.2.11 A saving of £150k (ref PS23) was attributed to Streetscene service was deemed unachievable early in the process and it was agreed that it would be addressed corporately. The Management Board will consider how this can be achieved. A review will be undertaken to establish what revenue expenditure within this service can be capitalised to offset this overspend.

3.2.12 The Asset Management Group is currently assessing a £50k saving on security at the Westbridge Depot for its impact on the depot. It currently appears that the saving is unlikely to be achieved.

3.2.13 These are partly offset by vacancy savings of £25k.

3.2.14 People, Planning & Regeneration: Green

Service Area	Forecast Variance before Action	Forecast Variance after Action	Narrative
	£,000	£,000	
Regeneration and Growth	247	(65)	Latest concessionary fares forecast is £312k above the available budget due to take up of the service. This is to be funded from reserves. Staff savings of £65k have also been recognised.
Other minor variations (below £50k)	5	(37)	Extension to employment of staff to be made redundant will reduce the level of savings to be achieved. It is anticipated that one member of staff will be retained to undertake specific project work. This will be funded via the Improvement Fund.
Total	252	(102)	

3.2.15 Other Areas for Information

3.2.16 It was anticipated that £2.15m of savings contained within the budget would be achieved by way of reduction to Employee related budgets. It has been possible to achieve some of these savings by deleting vacant posts from the employee establishment or reducing the level of temporary staff and overtime used. Several savings will be achieved by redeploying staff to suitable alternative employment within the Council. This presents a small financial burden in relation to protected pay. A number of savings will be achieved by granting voluntary redundancy or early retirement to staff in the affected areas. The achievement of such savings requires the one off cost of severance payments, pension strain and added years benefits to be incurred. In some cases the level of severance costs being incurred are higher than the saving to be generated in one financial year and as a result do not start to generate

savings until the financial years 2008/9 or 2009/10. Requests for voluntary redundancy and early retirement with a payback period of more than 3 years were refused as being unaffordable.

3.2.17 It was anticipated that £3.06m of savings contained within the budget would be achieved within non-employee related budgets. The most significant variations exist within the Streetscene division, and are outlined in paragraphs 3.2.9 to 3.2.13.

3.2.18 Emerging issues of net £635k have been identified by Budget Managers. The most significant variations are due to the high level of concessionary fares take up and the costs of the additional revenues and benefits staff.

3.2.19 The cessation of the Highways service is not reflected within the numerical appendices to this report due to insufficient information concerning the implications to the service being available. It is thought that work might be identified to cover the cost of the service but this is based on estimated costs via Asset Management and has yet to be properly costed. This relates to the cost of the retained in house team of 9 employees and costs to Property Maintenance over budget relating to salary protection. Once further information is available, Cabinet will be informed of the financial act on the projected outturn position of the General fund.

3.2.20 As indicated above, managers have already taken action to minimise the overall net impact on Council finances. This includes identifying where there is scope for efficiencies without detriment to public service delivery, seeking additional external funding and capitalisation of specific costs. Managers must continue to rigorously assess areas in which further efficiencies can be achieved. Particular attention should be given to management of the employee establishment.

3.2.21 Improvement Fund

		£,000
	Improvement Fund Balance as at 01.04.2007	500
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for planning service improvements	(175)
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for recruitment of new Chief Executive	(48)
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for retention and extension of staff employment	(42)
	Total estimated Improvement Fund balance at 31.03.2008	235

3.2.22 LABGI

		£,000
	LABGI Balance as at 01.04.2007	860
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for Town Centre Enhancements	(12)
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for Park Ranger service (amended)	(100)
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for Delapre Abbey*	(40)
	Total estimated LABGI balance at 31.03.2008	708

* A further £2,750 will be required in 2008/09 for Delapre Abbey

3.2.23 General Fund Balances*

		£,000
	General Fund Balance as at 01.04.2007	2,893
<i>Plus</i>	Budgeted contribution to reserves	1,250
<i>Less:</i>	Budgeted Use of Reserves	(890)
<i>Less:</i>	Funding for concessionary fares	(312)
<i>Less:</i>	2007/08 forecast deficit attributable to General Fund as outlined in Table 1	(469)
	Total estimated General Fund balance at 31.03.2008	2,472

Note that this does not include any figures relating to the costs of the cessation of the Highways Service (see paragraph 3.22 above).

3.2.24 "The Audit Commission has previously recommended that the level of the General Fund working balance should not fall below £2.3m" (Draft Statement of Accounts 2006/07).

3.3 Choices (options)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet is invited to note the report and the actions being taken to contain net expenditure to minimise the impact on the Council's reserves at the end of the financial year.
- 3.3.2 Consideration must be given as to if further management action can be taken to achieve those savings that have been identified by Budget Managers as unachievable.
- 3.3.3 Options for further constraining expenditure without detriment to front line service delivery must be considered corporately to address the projected net overspend.

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The table at 3.2.2 shows that the budget will be overspent by £469k if the overspends identified are not addressed.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 This report informs the Cabinet of the provisional revenue budget outturn as at month 4.
- 4.2.2 There will be an ongoing impact on future year budgets of not achieving savings contained within the 2007/08 budget. The impact of a projected net overspend on reserve levels must be considered alongside the level of general reserves that will need to be retained to mitigate risk.

4.3 Legal

4.2.3 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Chief Executive, Directors, Corporate Mgrs, and Budget Managers have been consulted.

4.6 How Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 Monthly budget monitoring relates to improving the CPA Use of Resources score, which contributes to the priorities of continuing to improve our weakest services and continuing to strengthen our financial management.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 Not applicable

5. Background Papers

5.1 Cabinet Report – 2 July 2007 Budget Monitoring 2007/08

Rebecca Thomas, Assistant Head of Finance – Financial Management and Planning, ext 8046

CABINET REPORT

SIGNATORIES

Report Title	Period 4 Budget Monitoring 2007/08
Date Of Call-Over	14/08/2007

Following Call-Over and subsequent approval by Management Board, signatures are required for all Key Decisions before submitting final versions to Meetings Services.

Name	Signature	Date	Ext.
Monitoring Officer or Deputy			
Section 151 Officer or Deputy			

Analysis of Policy, Efficiency and Base Budget Savings 2007/08

Colour Key

Achievable Savings

Unachievable Savings

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Cllr Church	C Thomas	Building Control and Environmental Health	Building Control	BD1	Increased income	-2	0	A pro-rata Budget and actual comparison for Period 3 reveals that the Income is still below budget; activity data is being compiled to establish trends for Income .	'Regularisation' Income increased in the second half of 2006/07; This income, together with Domestic & Housing incomes, will be monitored during the year	Downturn in activity
Cllr Church	C Thomas	Building Control and Environmental Health	Environmental Protection	PS2	Environmental Health - cease non-mandatory activities, e.g. safe cycle routes, healthy eating	-10	0	Saving achieved - (0.4 fte) post deleted from Environmental Protection (redeployed to a budgeted post in Regeneration, Growth & Community Development)		
Cllr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Building Control and Environmental Health	Private Sector Housing	BD2	HIMO Licensing Income	-29	0	£10k Income achieved as at period 3 in 2007/08; anticipated that target saving will be achieved	Ongoing budget monitoring	
Cllr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Building Control and Environmental Health	Private Sector Housing	EF01	Private Sector Housing - deletion of vacant posts plus possible redundancy	-175	0	Deletion of three vacant posts have produced savings of (£115k). The originally proposed Recharge of £46k to capital re Disabled Facility Grants(DFG) is now agreed. . The transactions will be undertaken on a monthly basis so that a total saving of £161k	Supplies & Services expenditure for Housing Standards-HIMO (costc 32303) to be reduced and additional income received. Plans are in place to achieve the remaining £14k for this proposal, and the £10k for proposal PS01, to be realised together	
Cllr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Building Control and Environmental Health	Private Sector Housing	PS01	Private Sector Housing - cease non-mandatory aspects of energy efficiency	-10	0	See above	See above	
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Arts Development	PS24	Arts Development External income. This is offset by an additional expenditure budget that was created	-50	0	This saving is a duplication of assumed savings within PS04.	An action plan is in place to deliver alternative savings and income which will compensate for unachievable savings BD3, DC3, PS24, and PS03	Lack of corporate support to identify alternative saving source
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	CCTV	BH4	CCTV Savings	-130	0	Savings of £30k have been achieved from reducing management costs. Remaining £100k to be achieved from re-examining CCTV contract arrangements.	Negotiations regarding partner contributions to be held.	Risk that partner contributions cannot be negotiated to enable the full saving to be materialised in 2007/8.
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Christmas Lights	PS09	Xmas Lights - cease provision by NBC (NB this item was discussed with Carl Grimmer but should be on Thomas Hall list)	-76	0		£30k of the possible saving relates to internal costs of providing the electrical service. This therefore becomes a possible targeted overtime reduction for the Electrical service.	Political will to reinstate the Christmas lights. Electrical service do not reduce overtime costs to reflect the saving required.
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Community Safety	BD3	Delete Community safety Post	-58	0	Vacant post has been deleted within the service. Savings of £25k are unachievable as they represent a duplication of the saving identified in PS25	An action plan is in place to deliver alternative savings and income which will compensate for unachievable savings BD3, DC3, PS24, and PS03	

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08	2007/08	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
						Target Saving	Savings Shortfall / (Excess)			
						£000's	£000's			
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Community Safety	PS25	External income from partner organisations for Anti Social Behaviour unit. This is offset by an additional expenditure budget that was created in Director budget	-25	0			
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Cross Cutting	DC3		-50	0	Proposed as achievable additional income in December, before budget options PS05/PS06 had been proposed. Therefore the savings options PS05/PS06 should have been reduced by £50k. The saving is therefore not achievable.	An action plan is in place to deliver alternative savings and income which will compensate for unachievable savings BD3, DC3, PS24, and PS03	Lack of corporate support to identify alternative saving source
Cllr Glynane	C Thomas	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Events and Arts	PS04	Arts Development & Events - additional income through charges and staffing reorganisation	-380	0	Savings have been achieved via the deletion of vacant posts of £30k. Vast majority of the saving comes from generating income at the Balloon Festival.	Need to agree level of charge for Balloon Festival. Also need to seek sponsorship.	Poor weather at the Balloon Festival resulting in poor throughput and underachievement of entry charge income.
Cllr Glynane	C Thomas	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Events, Arts, Museums	DC5	Events, Arts, Museums - S&S - Does this require specific action to achieve?	-53	0	Museums - charging for school visits has been introduced generating (£15k income). £38k saving on supplies & services budgets based on previous years trends and the removal of contingency budgets.	Maintain close monitoring of income and activity levels.	Customer resistance to fee increases resulting in decrease in activity. No contingency for unexpected events within the budget.
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Health Wellbeing and Access	PS03	Health Wellbeing & Access - discontinue service	-40	0	Post to be deleted. Currently in discussion with postholder/unions.	An action plan is in place to deliver alternative savings and income which will compensate for unachievable savings BD3, DC3, PS24, and PS03	Any extension to the estimated employment end date will reduce the savings to be achieved. Some risk of challenge from service users (e.g. re disables access).
Cllr Glynane	C Thomas	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Leisure Centres	BD4	Leisure Service	-20	0	Steps have been taken to increase fees within the Leisure Centres to generate additional income. New initiatives are being created all the time e.g. corporate membership to generate additional income and targeted marketing.	Close monitoring of income and activity levels is required to assess the markets response to the fee increases.	Customer resistance to fee increases resulting in decrease in activity. Resistance has been identified by schools.
Cllr Glynane	C Thomas	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Leisure Centres	PS05	Leisure Centre Charges	-150	0	Steps have been taken to increase fees within the Leisure Centres to generate additional income. New initiatives are being created all the time e.g. corporate membership to generate additional income and targeted marketing.	Close monitoring of income and activity levels is required to assess the markets response to the fee increases.	Customer resistance to fee increases resulting in decrease in activity. Resistance has been identified by schools.
Cllr Glynane	C Thomas	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Leisure Centres	PS06	Leisure Centre Energy Costs - increased costs to be funded from further increase in charges	-100	0	Steps have been taken to increase fees within the Leisure Centres to generate additional income. New initiatives are being created all the time e.g. corporate membership to generate additional income and targeted marketing.	Close monitoring of income and activity levels is required to assess the markets response to the fee increases.	Customer resistance to fee increases resulting in decrease in activity. Resistance has been identified by schools.
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Tourist Information	PS07	Tourism - withdraw funding from Explore Northants.	-205	0	Expenditure will be contained within the existing budget. The status of this saving has been changed from unachievable to achievable and the forecast overspend		
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Community Safety, Leisure and Town Centre Operations	Town Centre Management	EF02	Town Centre Mngmt/Community Safety efficiencies/income	-45	0	Town Ctr Mgmt have achieved savings of £30k via budget reconfiguration. £15k will be achieved through various reductions in Community Safety budgets	Ongoing budget monitoring	

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Administrative Services	EF06	Admin Services non-staffing	-50	0	Reduction in postage budget agreed	Managers to agree how £50K will be achieved, Postages allocation/ usage being analysed.	
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Cross Cutting Administration Services	DC1	Cross-cutting savings as a result of OSS (i.e.. in other service areas)	-48	0	Due to vacant posts this savings can be met in 07/08 only. These post are still required and will be filled later on in the year.		
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Customer Access	EF05	Customer Access non-staffing	-37	0	Action plan agreed identifying how savings are to be achieved with allocated responsibility for this.	Ongoing budget monitoring	
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Customer Services	EF04	Customer Services posts	-164	0	Savings achieved from deletion of vacant posts.		
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Post Room	EF07	Postages - increased e-mail (some overlap/duplication with above) Additionally there is a further £18k "shaving" of postage budget agreed between Ian Thompson and Clive Thomas. Total of £78k represents nearly	-10	0		Requires corporate support to reduce postage costs across the Council. Close monitoring across all service areas is required.	Lack of corporate support and buy in
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Post Room	OT2	Post Room	-10	10	Management not in agreement with saving target	Corporate attention required as to how this can be achieved	No ownership of saving
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Print Unit	BH1	Print Unit, incl partnership wkg	-50	50	Original offer from TSO proved to be uncompetitive and more costly than the current arrangement.	Further investigation required into outsourcing option or investment on the internal service.	No viable option found. Not possible to make savings from the existing internal service without reducing employee levels hence reducing throughput.
Cllr Glynane	D Taylor	Customer Services	Print Unit	EF03	Print Unit (links to above)	-10	0		Work yet to be undertaken to establish how this saving is to be achieved.	Not yet determined how this will be achieved
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Asset Management	EF10	Finance & Asset Management vacancy freeze	-45	0	Posts currently being held vacant.	Review and restructure of Asset Management Team. Management have agreed to make these savings and are looking at possible alternative areas from employees to meet these savings.	There are additional pressures on employee expenditure in Asset Management due to Maternity Leave and a secondment being funded from this area for which there is no budget provision. Also much employee time is capitalised and therefore limits the employe
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Asset Management	EF11	Window cleaning reduced freq.	-8	0	Certain contracts have ceased to result in savings to date. Progress needs to be made with all contracts to achieve all budgeted savings	IP to confirm contract has been adjusted	Inability to reduced existing contracts

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Audit	OT3	Audit Fees/Internal Audit - only £38k re Internal Audit included in budget	-38	0	Agreed KPMG audit fee of £297k, achieving saving of £38k		
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Cross Cutting	EF08	Cease insurance cover on low risk areas.	-71	0	Achieved - cover has ceased from 1/4/07		
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Finance	BD7	Increase in Commission re Insurance on Sold Flats	-7	0			The commission level is dependent on the premium levels levied by the Insurance Company and the number of increased flat sales. Introducing All Risks into premiums would increase premium levels and therefore NBC commission but it is not necessarily what a
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Other Land and Buildings	BD5	Increase of rent for small industrial units not increased for some years	-29	0	There is a back log of lease reviews, when fully processed, will result in increased rents and back rent. Reviews on target for 2007/09	Rent reviews to be completed within this financial year.	Non completion of the rent reviews
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Other Land and Buildings	BD6	Minor increase on main portfolio where reviews and lease renewals due	-30	0	There is a back log of lease reviews, when fully processed, will result in increased rents and back rent. Reviews on target for 2007/10	Rent reviews to be completed within this financial year.	Non completion of the rent reviews
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Other Land and Buildings	BD8	Increase in Service charges for industrial units especially gas/electricity	-10	0	Achievable	Service Charges are levied to recover costs and will be in line with any increase in utility costs. Increased Income therefore will be in line with increased expenditure and must be monitored closely.	
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Finance and Asset Management	Procurement	EF09	Procurement efficiencies and joint working with other Councils	-20	0	Progress dependant upon the appointment of the Joint Procurement Manager.	Recruitment of Joint Procurement Manager	Unable to recruit manager with appropriate skills and expertise within appropriate timescale.
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Cllr & Managerial Support, Meeting Services and Communications Unit	EF12	Restructure Admin Support and delete vacant posts	-256	42	Vacant Exec Assistants (3 fte) deleted (£114k). Meeting Services post deleted (£36k). Further £64k (£6k increase on target saving) to be achieved through reduction of 4 secretaries. Out to consultation (part of corporate process).	Secretarial staff TL £16k target saving not achieved and £32k target saving for CXs Exec Asst, now retained. Manager currently looking at actions to enable them to manage efficiencies within current budget.	Delay to redeployment process will reduce savings achieved. Further delays regarding redeployment, limited information provided. No further management information provided regarding £42k.
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Cross Cutting	EF13	Hospitality (excluding Mayoralty and residual corporate provision)	-15	0	Achieved - reductions to budgets across all service areas.	Ongoing budget monitoring. Board attention required to attribute responsibility for the achievement of this saving.	Lack of corporate support
Brian Hoare	J Edwards	Legal & Democratic	Licensing	BD9	Increased Licensing Income - Based on 2006/07 experience.	-72	0	Monitoring indicates that this is achievable	Ongoing budget monitoring	

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Clr Woods	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Publicity	EF14	Reduce Advertising Budget	-20	0	Control process in place to ensure all advertising expenditure is approved via the Communications Team.	Ongoing budget monitoring	Lack of corporate adherence to the protocol for incurring advertising expenditure.
Clr Woods	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Publicity	OT4	Deletion of Communications Post	-32	0	Achieved - deletion of vacant post		
Clr Woods	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Publicity	PS10	Civic Newspaper - cease production	-23	0	Achieved - production ceased. Small cost in 2007/08 re buy-out of contracts.		
Clr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Housing Services	Homelessness	BH5		-100	0	Achieved		
Clr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Housing Services	Homelessness	DC2	Cease use of B&B for Homeless	-60	0	The manager of NBC temp. accom. Has committed to savings of £60k during 07/08. There is a diminishing need to provide emerg. Accom. Of any type due to the strengthening of the homeless prevention agenda. Clients requiring temp.accom. Will be placed on a	Spend to save budgets will be targeted at vulnerable client groups where risk of homelessness is high. This will further reduce the need for clients to enter accommodation on an emergency basis. Monitoring of the spending on Emerg. Accom. And longer temp.	
Clr Beardsworth	D Taylor	Housing Services	Housing Money and Advice	PS11	Housing & Money Advice Merger - reconfigure service/integrate with OSS - reduction of 4 fte (vacant posts)	-100	0	This consists of 3 full time posts which have been vacant for all of 2007/08. This area is also in the midst of a restructure which could result in additional savings.	Restructuring - increased focus on prevention - consultation with staff will take place Apr - June. Fish St Offices to close asap after 1 April and move to OSS. Implementation of Queue Mngmt system, improve use of space in OSS (FR working with Kay A)	Delay in restructure and office closure.
Clr Hoare	C Thomas	Human Resources	Human Resources	EF16	HR Division Restructure - 6 posts to go, replaced by 4 new posts (generally lower graded)	-66	42	Transfer of the Programme Delivery Manager to a vacant post in Regen. & Growth has saved £40k due to the post in HR being deleted. Two members of staff have left and one person has been redeployed. Of the remaining two redundant posts one is being retained		Extension to employment of staff to be made redundant will reduce the level of savings to be achieved. It is anticipated that one member of staff will be retained to undertake specific project work. This will be funded via the Improvement Fund.
Clr Hoare	C Thomas	Human Resources	Training	EF15	Reduce Training Provision	-100	0	Available budget to be rationed based on business cases from each Corporate Manager linked to corporate priorities.	The response to requests for training will be distributed according to the Budget available.	

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Misc	Council Tax	PS12	Council Tax	-260	0	Achieved		
Cllr Mildren	I Proctor	Misc	Debt Management	MS1	Debt rescheduling	-35	0	Arrangements have been put in place to reschedule specific debts	Ongoing budget monitoring	
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	EF17	HR/Payroll replacement system	-20	0	This has been achieved the System is implemented resulting in reduced licence/maintenance fees		
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	EF18	IT System efficiencies	0	0	Future years saving	Exploring options for improved system procurement & governance. Potential to not replace vacant post.	
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	EF19	Electoral System implementation	-7	0	Achieved. The System is implemented	The first years licence fee is included in the cost of the software, future years licence will be met by the Electoral Section.	
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	EF20	Freeze vacancies - Performance Officer plus Analyst/Programmer	-63	0	Achieved. Posts frozen for 12 months	Need to review future service needs before future year's saving can be assumed	
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	OT6	Telephones	-25	0	Achieved the deletion of vacant post		
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	ICT	PS13	Mobile Telephones	-15	0	New contract procured - £4k saving	The aim is to continue to reduce number of handsets. The approval to have a mobile phone forms are being actively chased, this has reduced the number of phones. There is to be continued pressure on Corporate Managers to reduce the phones in their area.	Lack of corporate support
Cllr Hoare	J Edwards	Performance and Improvement	Performance Management	OT5	Vacant posts	-32	0	Achieved the deletion of vacant post		
Brendan Glynnane	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Community Centres	PS27	Community Centres. This is offset by an additional expenditure budget that was created.	-50	0	Income and expenditure budget of £50k set. Community Centres working party has been established.	Look into the community centres purpose against the councils priorities, assess their working arrangements and investigate the possibility of them becoming more self sufficient. All management contracts will be reviewed.	

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Brendan Glynane	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Community Grants	PS08	Royal & Demrgate Grant - phased reduction in grant	-200	0	Grant reduced, replaced by NCC funding.		
Brendan Glynane	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Community Grants	PS14	Community Grants	-50	0	Grants budget reduced	Ongoing budget monitoring	To achieve this saving will result in the absence of a community grants program.
Brendan Glynane	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Community Grants	PS26	Next Grants allocation process will work with reduced budget. This is offset by an additional expenditure budget that was created.	-14	0	Grants budget reduced. Budget moved to Community centres and will be fully utilised.		
Cllr Church	C Thomas	Regeneration, Growth and Community Development	Regeneration	BH2	Regeneration & Growth - MTFP assumed £100k growth, removed in budget setting - equivalent to c2.5fte	-100	0	Savings being managed within the regeneration department.	Vacant post being held vacant. Looking into possibility of deleting admin posts.	
Brendan Glynane	J Edwards	Governance, Resources and Communications	Community Development	EF21	Planning (delete vacant posts, rationalise grants admin and community development)	-120	11	5 posts deleted. 1 post made redundant.	Shortfall re redundancy costs. Community Development now under Governance and Communications, manager looking to cover shortfall from within the current budget due to 1 vacancy.	
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Domestic Refuse Collection	EF22	Managed vacancy factor - Streetscene	-45	0	Allocated to waste services. To be achieved through reduced use of agency staff.	Ongoing budget monitoring	
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Graffiti Removal	PS18	Graffiti Removal - reduce number of teams/vehicles from 4 to 2.	-60	0	Achieved through removal of 6 agency staff.	Further progress is required to confirm saving. There are concerns that the actuals coming through for this service are high. Possibly some expenditure should be charged to Street Cleansing.	
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Park Ranger	PS19	Park Rangers - removal of entire service (8 fte)	-150	0	Currently down to 5 fte in post. 2 staff to be retained under instruction from David Taylor. The shortfall previously reported has been funded by monies from the LABGI fund		Possibility new administration wishes to keep service. The LABGI funding is for one year only there is still an issue as there is no funding in 2008/09.
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Parks & Grounds Maintenance	PS17	Grounds Maintenance - reduced frequency of grass cutting/maintenance of parks - loss of 9 fte staff Parks Savings - duplication - Ongoing impact of 2006/07 budget decision, i.e. £100k in 06/07 rising to £250k in 07/08.	-150	0	Achieved through not recruiting to vacant positions		

Portfolio Holder	Director	Division	Service Description	Ref	Detail	2007/08 Target Saving £000's	2007/08 Savings Shortfall / (Excess) £000's	Progress to Date	Agreed Future Management Action	Risks Identified
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Parks & Grounds Maintenance	PS23	To be achieved from other SS services	-150	150	This saving was allocated to the service but identified as being unachievable from this service. It was proposed that this would be achieved by evaluating the 2006/07 outturn position once known to identify potential savings sources corporately.	Options currently being worked on for consideration by Portfolio Holder.	Potential further reduction in front line service delivery.
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Public Conveniences	PS20	Public Conveniences Other - closure of all public conveniences other than parks	-100	0	All closed from 1/4/07. Achieved full year saving immediately due to removal of agency staff.		
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Public Conveniences	PS21	Public Conveniences Sheep Street - closure	-50	0	Agreed that these will remain open until June, utilising the extra £30k from above.	Sheep Street Public Conveniences are still open. It is anticipated that existing budget would cover costs until the end of June after this there would be a shortfall. New administration may wish to retain this service.	Lack of political support to close conveniences after end of June.
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Recycling	DC4	Material Recycling Facility	-100	0	Proposal was to close MRF and dispose through other facilities. Business case for this is unsound, but saving can be achieved through increased income levels (evident in 2006/07)	Ongoing monitoring of income from sale of recyclates.	Variation in recycle prices and throughput
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Street Cleaning	PS15	Street Cleaning - 10% reduction in service levels.	-150	0	Achieved through removal of agency staff.	Further progress is required to confirm saving. Concerns that staffing levels only reduced by 6 to cover saving for both Street Cleansing and Graffiti removal.	Employee reductions insufficient unless reductions made in the use of temporary staff.
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Street Cleaning	PS16	Weed Spraying - reduce frequency from 4 sprays to 2 sprays pa.	-30	0	This service is funded by NCC as this is weed spraying to the public highway therefore no cost to NBC.	This saving will be achieved from with the Parks and Open Spaces budget. In doing so the service will exceed the target savings allocated the service.	No alternative source of saving being identified
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Trade Refuse Collection	BH3	Sale of Trade Refuse Operation	-150	150	Sale being progressed. Disposal receipt will be a capital receipt not revenue receipt.		No buyer identified. Impact of capital receipts not revenue.
Cllr Crake	D Taylor	Streetscene and Property Maintenance	Westbridge Depot	PS22	Westbridge Depot Security	-50	50	Being progressed	Asset Management have been requested to review security to enable this saving to be achieved.	
TOTAL						-5265	505			

Red, Amber, Green (RAG) Criteria for Revenue Budget Monitoring

The RAG status is based on the overall directorate position.

Ideally there should not be any movement from green to red; amber should be used through effective monitoring for initially flagging the budget pressure so that it can be addressed.

- Red
 - Where the forecast directorate overspend is over £100,000.
 - An action plan needs to be created and agreed.
- Amber
 - Where the forecast directorate overspend is over £50,000 (but under £100,000)
 - An action plan is in place and is being monitored.
 - An unexpected shift took place at the previous year end (over £200,000).
- Green
 - Estimated outturn on budget, nothing of concern.

Notes

- i. Action Plans Where over £100k they will need portfolio member approval, and DMT where less than £100k.
- ii. Underspends unless there are adverse service implications or the underspend is significant and unplanned, underspends will be shown as Green.

Appendices



Item No:

9(b)

NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

Performance Monitoring – July 2007

AGENDA STATUS:

Public

Cabinet Meeting Date:	3 rd September 2007
Key Decision:	NO
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Citizens, Finance & Governance
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Brian Hoare
Ward(s)	N/A

1. Purpose

To inform Cabinet of the Council's performance for July 2007 monthly performance indicators

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet note the contents of the report

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1. Performance data is collected across a range of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's). Most BVPI's are collected

monthly, with others collected either quarterly or annually. The reporting of BVPI's each month, together with a small number of locally determined indicators, forms the basis of our performance monitoring process.

3.1.2 Data for each month is available by the 20th of the following month; this allows for data to be transferred onto our database and quality assured too ensure that data quality standards are met. This report summarises performance data for July 2007.

3.1.3 The format of this months report has been changed to reflect the reporting frequency review as part of the new 'Harder Test' agreed by Cabinet on 2nd July 2007. The review has resulted in fewer monthly and annually reported indicators and an increase in quarterly reported indicators. The structure of performance reports to Cabinet have also changed to reflect individual Cabinet portfolios

3.2 Issues

Performance Across the 10 priority monthly indicators for July 2007;

Colour	Number	Indicators
Green	4	Planning processing times (minor and other) applications and Benefit processing times for both new and change of circumstance claims
Amber	3	Payment of invoices, collection of council tax and number of tenants owing more than 7 weeks rent
Red	3	Re-let times, employee absence and the collection of rent arrears

Notable performance trends across all monthly indicators for July 2007:

Areas of improvement:

- Planning application processing times (minor and other) achieved in July were the highest of the year to date. Performance overall to date is currently within top quartile.
- Performance against our response to investigations of abandoned vehicles has significantly improved. Overall performance is currently 95.99%, compared to 53.69% this time last year. This has been achieved by enhanced performance management within the service and stronger representation in the ELVIS partnership, leading directly to improvements to the removal of abandoned vehicles.
- Performance deterioration:
- The number of tenants owing over 7 weeks rent has been increasing month on month since April 2007, with the figure increasing by 1.5% over the last 4 months. Resource re-allocation at the start of the financial year has contributed to this increase. A dedicated team of two officers has now been

allocated to these cases in order to reduce the number of tenants owing more than 7 weeks rent and prevent them becoming severe arrears cases.

3.3 Choices (options)

None

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

N/A

4.2 Resources and Risk

N/A

4.3 Legal

N/A

4.4 Equality

N/A

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal – Performance data is published across the Council
External – The Lead Official; Audit Commission; partners; publication of performance data on our website.

4.6 How Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

Improvement Plan – Performance management, including the monitoring of data, is a key priority in the Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan – Performance management, including the monitoring of data, is critical in ensuring the Corporate Plan objectives are delivered.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Monthly performance report for July 2007 – Summary performance data for July – Dale Robertson ext 7110

Dale Phillipson, Corporate Manager – Performance, I.T. & Improvement, Ext 8273

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Regeneration Portfolio, Cllr Richard Church

CURRENT STATUS			KEY TO STATUS COLOURING KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING	KEYS
G = 2 [66.7%]	A = 1 [33.3%]	R = 0 [0%]	GREEN:	2 (Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]
Overall performance on or exceeding target Top or Upper Median Quartile				
MONTH ON MONTH TREND			AMBER:	BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator
↑ = 3 [100%]	↔ = 0 [0%]	↓ = 0 [0%]		
Overall performance within range stated in "Target Tolerances" column Lower Median Quartile				
YEAR ON YEAR TREND			RED:	^ Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables
↑ = 3 [100%]	↔ = 0 [0%]	↓ = 0 [0%]		
Overall performance outside the stated "Target Tolerances" Bottom Quartile				

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.

Please contact Dale Robertson Ext 7110, if you require further information or support.

ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC OUTTURN & PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Development, Building Control & Environmental Health [Christine Stevenson]							G = 2	A = 1	R = 0												
↑ BV109b	Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the government's new development control targets to determine: 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks	84.62	95.24	76.47	85.71									84.48%	81%		2% points	↑	↑ 55.78%	63.23% Bottom	74.55% Upper Median
↑ BV109c	Percentage of planning applications determined: 80% of other applications in 8 weeks	92.41	96.39	89.42	92.50									92.49%	92%		2% points	↑	↑ 68.75%	75.5% Bottom	85.62% Lower Median
↑ PL1 188	The number of decisions delegated to officers as a percentage of all decisions	92.52	99.04	88.65	94.78									93.36%	95%		2% points	↑	↑ 92.93%	92.30%	2

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Housing Portfolio - Cllr Sally Beardsworth

KEY TO STATUS COLOURING

KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING

KEYS

CURRENT STATUS					GREEN:		KEYS	
G = 5 [36%]	A = 2 [14%]	R = 7 [50%]	NO DATA = 0 [0%]	Overall performance on or exceeding target Top or Upper Median Quartile		2	(Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]	
MONTH ON MONTH TREND					AMBER:		BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator	
↑ = 6 [43%]	↔ = 0 [0%]	↓ = 8 [57%]	NO DATA = 0 [0%]	Overall performance within range stated in "Target Tolerances" column Lower Median Quartile				
YEAR ON YEAR TREND					RED:		Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables	
↑ = 7 [50%]	↔ = 1 [7%]	↓ = 1 [7%]	NO DATA = 5 [36%]	Overall performance outside the stated "Target Tolerances" Bottom Quartile		^	Indicators are included in both the Housing and Environment portfolio report as they are cross-cutting	

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.

Please contact Dale Robertson Ext 7110, if you require further information or support.

ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC OUTTURN & PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Housing Services [Fran Rodgers]		G = 5					A = 2		R = 7												
↑ BV9	Percentage of council tax received in the year	11.81	9.18	8.97	9.13									39.04%	98%	39.33%	0.5% points	↑	38.30%	96.63% Lower Median	95.45% Bottom
↑ BV66a	Rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings	63.66	67.06	65.34	65.61									87.12%	97.80%	90.19%	1% point	↑	Previously collected quarterly	95.93% Bottom	96.03% Bottom
↓ BV66b	The number of local authority tenants with more than seven weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of council tenants	11.79	12.39	13.06	13.27									12.62%	8.25%	12.07%	5%	↓	Previously collected quarterly	11.92% Bottom	12.43% Bottom
↓ BV78a	Speed of Processing: Average time for processing new claims	25.3	32.3	26.4	33.3									30.1 Days	30 Days	32 Days	1 Day	↓	45.6 Days	36.5 Days Bottom	57.6 Days Bottom
↓ BV78b	Speed of Processing: Average time for processing notifications of change in circumstances	11.1	13.1	10.4	11.5									11.5 Days	11 Days	13 Days	0.5 Days	↓	19.4 Days	16.4 Days Bottom	24.4 Days Bottom
↓ BV212	Average time taken to re-let local authority homes	30	34	32	35									33 Days	28 Days		5%	↓	68 Days	72 Days Bottom	72 Days Bottom
↑ HLP19	Night time repairs completed on target	100	95	96.24	100									97.47%	99%		1% point	↑	99%	99%	2
↑ BV10	% of non domestic rates due for the year which were received by the authority	12.33	11.45	9.61	9.25									42.91%	99.3%	40.40%	2% points	↓	41.20%	99.72% Top	99.2% Upper Median
↓ BV66c	Percentage of local authority tenants who received Notices Seeking Possession	1.52	2.08	2.56	2.92									9.12%	25%	8.02%	5%	↓	Previously collected quarterly	26.66% Lower Median	44.58% Bottom
↓ BV66d	Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	0.05	0	0.01	0									0.06%	0.30%	0.10%	5%	↑	Previously collected quarterly	0.46% Lower Median	0.83% Bottom
↔ BV76c	Housing Benefit Security: the number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload	3.25	4.99	5.05	7.04									20.76	65	15	5%	↑	20.72	61.32	51.08
↔ BV76d	Housing Benefit Security: the number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	0.24	0.18	0.12	0.36									0.90	4.3	1.13	5%	↑	0.9	3.91%	4.64
↑ BENLPI 1	Percentage of cases from complete to determined within 14 days	82.90	79.90	83.90	79.67									81.59%	86%	84%	2% points	↓	66%	85.51%	2
↔ CFLI 1	Housing Benefit Security: the number of housing benefit claimants visited	225	253	352	193									1,023	3,500	1,167	5%	↓	Local PI Replaces BV76a	Local PI Replaces BV76a	New indicator

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Environment Portfolio - Cllr Trini Crane

KEY TO STATUS COLOURING
KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING

KEYS	
2	(Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]
	BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator
^	Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables
	Indicators are included in both the Housing and Environment portfolio report as they are cross-cutting

CURRENT STATUS			
G = 7 [54%]	A = 1 [8%]	R = 5 [38%]	
MONTH ON MONTH TREND			
↑ = 8 [61.5%]	↔ = 1 [7.7%]	↓ = 4 [30.8%]	
YEAR ON YEAR TREND			
↑ = 9 [69.2%]	↔ = 0 [0%]	↓ = 4 [30.8%]	

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.

Please contact Dale Robertson Ext 7110, if you require further information or support.

ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Streetscene and Property Maintenance [Carl Grimmer]							G	A	R												
↑ BV82ai	Percentage tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	18.94	19.91	19.39	20.13									19.55%	21%		5%	↑	↑ 18.28%	20.24% Upper Median	19.82% Upper Median
↑ BV82aii	Total of tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	1,316.26	1,466.26	1,385.65	1,444.67									5633.24 Tonnes	17,028 Tonnes		5%	↑	↑ 5250.74 Tonnes	16,155.45 Tonnes Upper Median	15,509.95 Tonnes Top
↑ BV82bi	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste sent for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	20.20	19.25	22.96	23.60									21.88%	16%		5%	↑	↑ 21.17%	15.92% Upper Median	16.30% Top
↑ BV82bii	Total tonnage of household waste sent for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	1,403.66	1,437.16	1,641.40	1,693.12									6304.82 Tonnes	12,974 Tonnes		5%	↑	↑ 6078.84 Tonnes	12,680.30 Tonnes Top	12,752 Tonnes Top
↓ BV84a	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head	35.6	38.3	36.7	36.8									147.8kg	410kg		+ - 10kg	↓	↓ 147.2kg	408.4 kg Upper Median	401.7 kg Upper Median
↓ BV84b	Percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of Kg of household waste collected per head of population	+ 7.54	-7.31	-6.93	+10.78									+0.48%	+ 3%		5%	↓	↑ +2.46%	+1.69% Lower Median	+ 5.96% Bottom
↓ BV212	Average time taken to re-let local authority homes	30	34	32	35									33 Days	28 Days		5%	↓	↑ 68 Days	72 Days Bottom	72 Days Bottom
↑ BV218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification	97.97	93.30	95.38	99.01									95.99%	95%		5%	↑	↑ 53.69%	87.25% Lower Median	0% Bottom
↑ BV218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle	73.08	61.90	87.88	93.10									77.69%	85%		5%	↑	↓ 78.38%	79.16% Lower Median	0% Bottom
↑ ELPI5	Percentage of flytips removed within two working days	83.02	75.17	70.96	77.93									76.91%	70%		5%	↑	↓ 99.56%	99.60%	2
↓ ELPI6	Number of refuse collections missed per month	209	77	32	184									502	12,000		5%	↓	↑ 3519	11,302	2
↑ ELPI10	Percentage of missed collections put right within 24 hours	91	100	100	100									96.41%	95%		2% points	↔	↑ 96.04%	92.99%	2
↑ HLPI9	Night time repairs completed on target	100	95	96.24	100									97.47%	99%		1% point	↑	↓ 99%	99%	2

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Finance Portfolio - Cllr Malcolm Mildren

KEY TO STATUS COLOURING KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING	KEYS
GREEN:	2 (Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]
Overall performance on or exceeding target Top or Upper Median Quartile	
AMBER:	BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator
Overall performance within range stated in "Target Tolerances" column* Lower Median Quartile	
RED:	^ Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables
Overall performance outside the stated "Target Tolerances" Bottom Quartile	

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.










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ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC OUTTURN & PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Monthly Corporate Priority Indicators						G = 0			A = 1			R = 0									
↑ BV8	The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services paid by the authority within 30 days of being received	95.45	91.16	90.59	90.76									92.04%	94%		2% points	↑	↑ 87.19%	89.45% Bottom	86.89% Bottom

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Performance Portfolio, Cllr Brian Hoare







KEY TO STATUS COLOURING
KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING

KEYS

CURRENT STATUS			GREEN:	2	(Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]
 = 0 [0%]	 = 0 [0%]	 = 1 [100%]	Overall performance on or exceeding target Top or Upper Median Quartile		
MONTH ON MONTH TREND			AMBER:		BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator
 = 0 [0%]	 = 0 [0%]	 = 1 [100%]	Overall performance within range stated in "Target Tolerances" column" Lower Median Quartile		
YEAR ON YEAR TREND			RED:	^	Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables
 = 1 [100%]	 = 0 [0%]	 = 0 [0%]	Overall performance outside the stated "Target Tolerances" Bottom Quartile		

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.

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ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC OUTTURN & PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Monthly Corporate Priority Indicators						 = 0	 = 0	 = 1													
 BV12	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	0.78	0.86	0.85	0.96									3.46 Days	9.5 Days		5%		 3.58 Days	11.38 Days Bottom	16.12 Days Bottom

PERFORMANCE REPORT : Monthly - July 2007 - Community Engagement & Safety Portfolio

KEY TO STATUS COLOURING
KEY TO QUARTILE COLOURING

KEYS

CURRENT STATUS			GREEN:	2	(Within NBC 05/06 Outturn & quartile position) LOCAL INDICATOR [quartile data unavailable]
= 0 [0%]	= 0 [0%]	= 4 [100%]	Overall performance on or exceeding target Top or Upper Median Quartile		
MONTH ON MONTH TREND			AMBER:		BVPI ID column denotes Corporate Priority Indicator
= 1 [25%]	= 1 [25%]	= 2 [50%]	Overall performance within range stated in "Target Tolerances" column* Lower Median Quartile		
YEAR ON YEAR TREND			RED:	^	Annual Targeted quartile colouring based against unaudited 06/07 performance data tables
= 3 [75%]	= 0 [0%]	= 1 [25%]	Overall performance outside the stated "Target Tolerances" Bottom Quartile		

* New 'Harder Target' test applied - Please refer to "Target Tolerances" column for individual test applied.

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ID	NAME	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	OVERALL PERFORMANCE TO DATE	^ ANNUAL TARGET & TARGETED QUARTILE	CURRENT PROFILED TARGET [if any]	* TARGET TOLERANCES	PERFORMANCE AGAINST LAST MONTH	OVERALL PERFORMANCE AGAINST SAME TIME LAST YEAR	NBC OUTTURN & PROSPECTIVE QUARTILES BASED ON UNAUDITED 06/07 DATA TABLES	NBC 05/06 OUTTURN & QUARTILE POSITION
Monthly Partnership Priority Indicators						= 0	= 0	= 4													
↓ BV126	Domestic burglaries per year per 1,000 households in local authority area	1.7	1.8	1.2	1.6									6.3	14		5%		8.1	21.4 Bottom	22.1 Bottom
↓ BV127a	Violent crime per year, 1000 population	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.7									9.7	24.66		5%		9.2	26 Bottom	27 Bottom
↓ BV127b	Robberies per year, 1000 population	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3									1.2	2.83		5%		1.3	3.5 Bottom	3.4 Bottom
↓ BV128	The number of vehicle crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the local authority area	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.3									5.9	15.41		5%		6.8	19.8 Bottom	21.6 Bottom

Appendices



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Parking Concessions
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	03 September 2007
Key Decision:	YES
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Customer & Service Delivery
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Brendan Glynane
Ward(s)	All Wards within City Centre

1. Purpose

This report outlines a set of proposals in respect of amendments to Parking Concessions:

- 1.1 To improve the Sunday Trading activity within the Town Centre to make Northampton a seven day trading centre in line with national trends.
- 1.2 To improve the popularity of the Town Centre over the festive holiday period for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- 1.3 To improve the attractiveness of the Town Centre to sectors other than retailing.
- 1.4 To generally improve the economic activity levels within the Town Centre.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked:

- 2.1 To agree to the introduction of revised parking arrangements to stimulate Sunday Trading in the Town Centre.
- 2.2 To agree to a virement of £47K from Corporate initiatives earmarked reserve for 2006/07.
- 2.3 That should all of the provision not be required that any under spend be returned to the Corporate Initiatives reserve
- 2.4 For future budgets, from 2007/08 to make the appropriate adjustment to reduce income from car parks 2.5. That, subject to the above, the amendments to the Parking Place Order (by notice of variation) be advertised.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 This report outlines a set of proposals in respect of amendments to Parking Concessions.

The current Parking Place Order provides for free parking on Christmas Day, Good Friday and bank holidays and the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day. Some Standard Zone car parks such as Midsummer Meadow also provide free parking on Sundays.

- 3.1.2 The current parking charges have been in operation since 5th June 2006 and are not due for review until 1st April 2008. During this period concessions have been implemented on season ticket prices with the introduction of a 25% discount for customers who either pay in advance or pay on direct debit over 12 months.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Northampton Town Centre is served by high quality, easily accessible car parking to support both trading and entertainment activity on offer to visitors and customers.
- 3.2.2 The Town Centre Partnership have worked with all partners to regenerate the trading and entertainment activity in the Town Centre to make it a vibrant, thriving place to be.
- 3.2.3 These improved concessions to the car parking operations are designed to facilitate increased retail and leisure opening across the

Town Centre.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Parking Place Order

It is proposed that the Parking Place Order is amended by notice of variation as follows:

- Free parking on Sundays in all Standard Zone car parks.
- A charge of 80p for all day parking on Sundays in all Premier Zone car parks, compared to the normal rate of 80p per hour, except on the 4 Sundays leading up to Christmas Day.
- Increase free parking from 4 Sundays to 5 Sundays leading up to Christmas Day

3.3.2 Other Changes not involving amendments to the Parking Place Order. In addition the following could be implemented without amending the Parking Place Order:

- Free parking on the Christmas late night shopping evenings.

3.3.3 On this basis, 2 concessions can be publicised:

- The continuation and extension of the free parking on all car parks in the 5 week lead up to Christmas Day and on Christmas Day, Good Friday and bank holidays and the Free Late Night Shopping Evenings leading up to Christmas Day. This will be seen as supporting the Town Centre over the important Christmas period.
- The implementation of the 80p all day charge on all other Sundays and free parking on all Standard Zone car parks on Sundays. This will be seen as supporting the aim to make the Town Centre a 7-day trading centre in line with national trends on retailing.

These concessions will be included in the Festive Season publicity including brochures, radio advertising, posters, and press releases.

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

Details of the policy change is confined to the operation and charging for Sunday car parking.

4.2 Resources and Risk

Finance

It is anticipated that the cost on Sundays will be approximately £40-£47,000 lost revenues based on volumes multiplied by the loss of the revenue from more than one hour's parking. This could be regenerated by an increase in parking volumes on Sundays. Any refunding not used in 2007/08 will be returned to the Corporate Initiative Reserve.

However if Sunday shopping becomes more attractive, this may transfer some Saturday demand to Sundays, but there are no statistics to measure this effect. Due to the way in which cash is collected from the pay and display machines it is very difficult to get firm statistics on usage per day. However the new Pay on Foot operations can provide this data and it will be examined to see what trends develop.

4.3 Legal

The consent of the County Council to the amendments to the Parking Place Order by notice of variation is required.

The notice of variation must contain specified information relating to all the car parks and as a minimum be advertised once in a newspaper at least 21 days before the proposals come into force; and be displayed in all the car parks.

4.4 Equality

The changes will allow for increased opportunity for all groups of people to be able to access the Town Centre during Sundays

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

Once implemented, consultation will take place with the retailers in respect of developing a Sunday Trading Policy via the Town Centre Partnership

4.6 How Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

Regeneration of the Town Centre

4.7 Other Implications

None specifically

5. Background Papers

5.1 Town Centre Operations report- Proposal re Parking Concessions.

**Report Author, Title and Extension
David Taylor, Corporate Director, ext 7379**

Appendices
4



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No.

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

COUNCIL'S SEVERANCE POLICY

AGENDA STATUS:

PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	3 September 2007
Key Decision:	YES
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Directorate:	People, Performance and Regeneration
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Brian Hoare
Ward(s)	ALL

1. Purpose

1.1 To seek direction from the Cabinet on the revision and content of the Council's Early Retirement and Severance Scheme (including Statement of Discretions) prior to a revised policy being brought for consideration to the October Cabinet and for subsequent approval, rejection or amendment by the Council's General Purposes Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To approve a review being undertaken of the Early Retirement and Severance Scheme within the timescales detailed in this report.

- 2.1 To agree the recommended process for consultation with the Council's recognised Trade Unions and other stakeholders affected by a policy change and ensure the results of consultation are considered at each stage.
- 2.2 To provide a steer on the preferred option(s) for inclusion in the redrafting of the scheme, which will then be subject to consultation.
- 2.3 To consider the case for extending the benefits in the current scheme to two staff who have not yet left under the budget / efficiency savings but who remain 'at risk', unless any revised scheme is more favourable to them.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1. Council approved a revised Early Retirement and Severance Scheme (and Statement of Discretions) on 26 March 2007. This review was required because of changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) that became effective on the 1 April 2007, and to ensure that the Council's scheme was compliant with the 2006 Age Discrimination Regulations.
- 3.1.2 Council resolved in setting the budget on 21 February 2007 that the then severance arrangements should continue for 6 months when they would be reviewed. This would allow staff to leave on benefits comparable with those who left under Root and Branch. The scheme adopted by Council on the 26 March 2007 therefore incorporated a statement that the next review of the severance scheme would take place no later than 1 October 2007.
- 3.1.3 At the time Cabinet and the Leadership Forum (consisting of the then Group Leaders) had reviewed in detail the options available to the Council to change the scheme and essentially those options are unchanged and are reflected in this report. The District Auditor requires Councillors to be presented with an appropriate range of detailed options on which a well founded decision can be made. The options are updated and dealt with in Section 3.3 of this report and will need to be considered by the General Purposes Committee when it makes a final decision.
- 3.1.4 Cabinet should be aware that there will be a 'new look' LGPS introduced on 1 April 2008. Work, including consultation, on the new look LGPS and the transition arrangements for existing LGPS members continues nationally and a date for final publication of the new regulations is not yet known. (For information the current details of the proposed new look LGPS are attached as Appendix 1 as background to this report).
- 3.1.5 It is possible for the Council to change its current severance / early retirement scheme now and incorporate any further changes necessary as a result of the LGPS changes when these are known later in the year / early next year. For this reason the focus of the current review is on the awarding of added years for pensions purposes and the calculation of redundancy payments only.
- 3.1.6 Cabinet should be aware that under pension scheme regulations any changes

made to the current scheme cannot become effective until a period of one month has elapsed from the date of publication of the revised arrangements (i.e following a decision of the General Purposes Committee).

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Consultation – Any revised policy will require consultation with the District Auditor, the local pension scheme administrator and the Council's recognised Trade Unions. Consultation will take place with each as a result of the direction given by Cabinet and the consultees will be provided with a copy of the recommended scheme prior to Cabinet on 3 October 2007 and prior to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee which has the power to decide the Council's severance policy.

3.2.2 In particular, consultation with the Trade Unions is recommended as follows:

- a. inform the Trade Unions of the review (actioned prior to Cabinet);
- b. inform the Trade Unions at the Management and Trade Union Consultation Meeting (MTUCM) on the 5 September 2007 of the option put before Cabinet, Cabinet's views on those options and invite their comments;
- c. provide the Trade Unions with a draft copy of a revised scheme by 14 September 2007 (subject to completion and preferably earlier) for discussion at MTUCM on 19 September 2007;
- d. agree how the Trade Unions views can be incorporated into the Cabinet report to be considered on the 1 October 2007 and the subsequent General Purposes Committee where a final decision will be made based on consideration of all the options together with a recommended revised scheme.

3.2.3 It should be noted that the current scheme (attached for information as Appendix 2) retains the right of the Council to "change the policy at any time without prior notice or consultation (although the Council will endeavour to consult with Unison / the recognised Trade Unions)". This is stated in section 6.1.

3.2.4 The implementation of the 2007/8 budget / efficiency savings raised a number of issues with regard to the application of the severance policy. Following good practice and previous arrangements under the Root and Branch agreement voluntary redundancy in the areas affected was considered as a first step. The results of this were that a number of staff who volunteered to leave were not permitted to do so, their combined redundancy and pension costs were such that their individual 'pay back period' for the costs of their severance / early retirement was 3 years or over. In order to secure the Council's budget savings identified members of staff were not granted VR if their pay back was in excess of 3 years. This caused some distress to a number of the individuals involved even though they were aware that applications to leave would not be granted automatically.

- 3.2.5 The current annual cost to the Council of funding added years pension payments is c.£750k. This includes unavoidable pension strain costs when the redundant employee is over 50 and in the LGPS, these cannot be avoided. However awarding augmented service added years increases this cost and is discretionary and made by individual employers.
- 3.2.6 A national and regional survey last February revealed a clear trend of many Council's reducing or stopping the payment of discretionary added years and the survey also revealed that this Council's provision of 2 added years for every 5 years continuous NBC service (to a maximum of $6\frac{2}{3}$ years) was at the higher end of provision.
- 3.2.7 There is a requirement that any severance scheme retains public confidence, it must be "workable, affordable and reasonable having regard to foreseeable costs". (Regulation 7 Discretionary Compensation Regulations 2006). The Scheme should reflect the assumptions and pressures of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The District Auditor will consider such factors in reviewing the application of the Council's severance scheme.
- 3.2.8 The Council has implemented a number of budget and efficiency savings as part of the 2007/8 budget. A number of areas specifically involved reductions in staff. These have largely been concluded and staff who left the Council did so under the terms of an equivalent scheme. However, in the case of one member of staff her situation is not yet resolved (pending recruitment to a vacant post) and a second member of staff is being retained for a period, by mutual agreement, to implement a major cost saving project for the Council. It is recommended, for fairness, and on an exceptional basis, that these two staff should retain rights under the existing scheme, unless any revised scheme is more favourable to them based on their personal circumstances

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 Section 3.1(5) above recommends the review at this stage is confirmed to a review of redundancy entitlement and the provision of augmented added years. Other provisions (ill health, regulation 31, VR on compassionate grounds, reemployment, efficiency of the service etc) should be reviewed when details of the new look LGPS are finalised. For reference the existing scheme is attached at Appendix 2 together with the current Statement of Discretions at Appendix 3.
- 3.3.2 The choices faced by the Council are as follows:
- a. Option 1. Retain the current scheme following consideration of the medium term plan and affordability.
 - b. Option 2. Revise the scheme and reduce the overall cost to the Council in relation to severance, either by reducing the redundancy lump sum provisions and / or reducing additional augmented added years pension provision. There are a number of detailed ways in which this could be achieved starting from the position that the lowest cost scheme would be to calculate the redundancy lump sum on the basis of the statutory formula and to cease the provision of augmented added years.

- c. Option 3. Change the balance of the costs of severance for example providing greater weighting to the redundancy lump sum and reducing/eliminating the ongoing future costs associated with granting additional pensionable service or vice versa. The redundancy lump sum is currently multiplied by a factor of approximately 1.5 of the statutory formula to a maximum of 45 weeks pay; this could be increased to x 2, which the survey undertaken earlier in the year demonstrated was a multiplier adopted in some other Councils. Regulations set a cap of 104 weeks pay;
- e. Option 4. The Council could investigate whether DCLG has removed some of the barriers which would allow scheme members to convert the cash sum in excess of statutory redundancy into additional LGPS membership. This could provide additional flexibility for individuals at no cost to the Council, but was found not to be feasible 6 months ago.

3.3.3 On the basis of the survey of other Councils policies and plans undertaken in February 2007 and the financial circumstances of this Authority, a specific proposal that would reduce the ongoing costs to the Council whilst ensuring a greater measure of affordability of redundancy costs would be to:

- (i) cease or significantly reduce the provision of augmented pension service;
- (ii) multiply the statutory redundancy formula by a factor of either 1.5 or 2 for all staff regardless of pension scheme membership;
- (iii) continue to pay redundancy at actual / average earnings, not the statutory maximum of £310 per week

3.3.4 The current scheme contains a section dealing with costs and affordability which reflects the content of the original 2004 scheme. On 1 April 2007 the local LGPS authority introduced a new requirement that the actuarially estimated lifetime costs of augmented added years would be recharged to employers over a maximum of 3 years and not over the lifetime of the employee / surviving spouse. This has had a significant impact on funding of augmented service as costs in the first 3 years dramatically increase. It has made it extremely difficult to afford a number of requests for voluntary severance. The Council has followed a policy of requiring the total severance costs to be repaid within 3 years, otherwise the cost is deemed as unaffordable. It is proposed that any revised scheme continues with this 3 year policy for the pay back of severance costs in line with financial planning assumptions.

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider changing the Council's Early Retirement and Severance Scheme adopted on 26 March 2007 as an equivalent scheme to the policy originally adopted in 2004.
- 4.1.2 The Statement of Discretions would also be subject to change to accord with any relevant new severance provisions.
- 4.1.3 Depending on the final changes adopted there may be impacts on policies and procedures involving employee consultation and redundancy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 Financial Implications. A reduction or cessation of augmenting pension service would reduce costs to the Council in the first three years of an employee leaving on grounds of redundancy. Some indicative examples are provided in Appendix 4. Any decision to increase the redundancy lump sum would have an impact on year one costs and examples are also contained in Appendix 4. These examples are all based on the same employee details regarding salary, length of service etc and they serve to illustrate the impact of the different options.
- 4.2.2. Risk and other implications. The period of consultation will ensure that 'stakeholders' to this policy have an opportunity to express their views. The Trade Unions were aware that Council had set a 6 month review and will no doubt assess the response of their members to any proposed changes. The Trade Unions have sought to ensure that staff who have left on redundancy after Root and Branch have enjoyed the same benefits as those before them. Although the budget / efficiency savings are largely implemented other groups of staff could find themselves affected at any time; however this is likely to be the case at any time the Council changes its scheme and therefore maintaining parity with past leavers cannot continue indefinitely.

4.3 Legal

Legal Implications. Changes to the scheme must be carefully scrutinised to ensure that the pension regulations are adhered to and the policy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory on the ground of sex, age, race, religious belief etc. This assurance will be obtained through consultation with the local pensions authority, consultation with the Council's Legal team and the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment.

A policy that was not considered to be affordable could be challenged on the basis it contravened the requirement in the 2006 regulations to retain public confidence.

4.4 Equality

This issue is covered in 4.3 above.

4.5 Consultees

NCC Pensions, Trade Unions (and their Regional Officers), District Auditor, Legal and Finance. Responses will be included in subsequent reports.

4.6 How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes

The revision of the scheme will ensure there is a further consideration of the costs of severance, the links to the medium term financial plan and in turn achieving the longer term objectives of the organisation as expressed in the Corporate Plan

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 New Employee Early Retirement / Severance Scheme; Report to General Purposes Committee 9 December 2004.
- 5.2 Revision to Council Severance Policy and Statement of Discretions; Consultative Group 20 February 2007.
- 5.3 Early Retirement / Severance Scheme; Council 26 March 2007.
- 5.4 LGE Summary of Local Authority Severance Schemes February 2007.

Howard Crabtree
Corporate Manager - Human Resources
Ext 7377

Extracted from Northamptonshire County Council LGPS Newsletter- July 2007

NEW LOOK PENSION SCHEME

Active from 1 April 2008

We have already identified the problems with the production of regulations however, it is important that you are aware of some of the changes that are expected so that you can take the necessary steps to ensure your systems (**especially payroll systems**) can cope with them.

Benefits, Membership and Contributions Regulations 2007

- New employees must have a contract of more than 3 months duration in order to join the Scheme
- All existing members will be transferred to the New Look Scheme
- It appears that although a new scheme, individuals who previously opted not to join the current scheme will retain that option. However, all employees eligible to join the New look Scheme should be made aware of that Scheme. Unsure if we will need to retain any proof that such information has been provided to individuals.
- New scheme provides a pension of 1/60th of final pay
- New scheme provides no automatic lump sum but affords ability to commute pension to lump sum ratio of 1:12
- Membership to 31 March 2008 will still be based on 1/80ths
- 25% of capital value of benefits can be taken as lump sum
- Contributions based on same definition of pay as now
- Contributions cannot be collected from pay after age 75
- **Contribution rates will be tiered and vary from 5.5% to 7.5%**
- **Protection will be afforded to existing 5% contributors. A phased increase will apply to those individuals**
- **Contributions are to be paid at a percentage based on a range of earnings. This is causing some considerable problems as to how this should be applied to individuals to prevent an increase in salary putting someone in a higher contribution bracket and potentially making them worse off. Further clarification and amending regulations are required, but at this time it seems that payroll providers must be able to use varying contribution rates dependent on earnings.**
- **Consideration is also being given to identifying an individual's contribution tier by reference to the previous financial year's earnings or earnings at commencement of employment.**
- Benefits will be based on Final Pay being the best one of the last 3 years.
- **Where a post is downgraded benefits can be based on the average of 3 consecutive years in the last 10. This may be an immediate provision so payrolls need to retain this data in case needed**

Appendix 1

- Normal retirement age will be 65
- Retain ability to draw benefits from 60 (with possible actuarial reductions)
- If retirement after 65 (but before 75) benefits will be actuarially increased. However the position needs to be reviewed as need clarity as to whether all benefits increased or just those that accrue before 65
- Flexible retirement is permitted from age 55 (existing members 50). However, the regulations do not indicate that employer consent is required. CLG say this is drafting error; however this error has been identified previously and has yet to be amended
- Benefits drawn before 65 will be actuarially reduced (employer can waive reduction)
- Redundancy / efficiency retirement from 55 (50 for existing members up to April 2010)
- Two tier ill health retirement. If the member's employment is terminated because of permanent ill health then benefits based on accrued membership plus 2 years membership:-
 - 25% of prospective membership between leaving and age 65 where the member is likely obtain gainful employment within a reasonable period of time but is unlikely to be able to obtain gainful employment before age 65, or
 - 100% of prospective membership between leaving and age 65 where the member has no reasonable prospect of obtaining gainful employment before age 65
 - Gainful employment is defined as "paid employment for not less than 30 hours per week for a period of not less than 12 months" The clarification of this will certainly lead to an increase in appeals and therefore additional medical determinations by employers. Hopefully initial decisions will not be open for review as to employability status.
 - Members aged 45 or over on 31 March 2008 are protected so they are no worse off
 - **NOTE** For members who employment is terminated on the grounds of permanent ill health but who are likely to be able to obtain gainful employment with a reasonable time period, it is proposed that employers will be provided with powers to pay a reviewable benefit from their revenue account (not Pension Fund) which would not continue if permanent employment was gained.
 - Employers will have to have a method in place for reviews to be carried out
- Death Grant of 3 times pay for deaths in service
- Death grant of 5 times pension if a deferred beneficiary
- Death Grant of 10 times pension less amount already paid if pensioner and dies before age 75
- Spouses pensions are to be based on 1/160th
- Civil partners and cohabitees also based on 1/160th but probably only for service post 5 April 1988
- Children's pensions based on number of dependant children and whether spouse's, civil partner's or cohabitee's pension payable

APPENDIX 2

Early Retirement / Severance Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There are a number of circumstances in which early retirement, or severance, may be appropriately considered for an employee. These circumstances may be related to the individual situation of an employee, for example in the case of ill health, or arise as a result of organisation changes.
- 1.2 The Council will in all circumstances make every effort to avoid compulsory redundancies. Where the Council decides, however, that after taking all considerations into account, early retirement, flexible retirement or severance is either unavoidable or appropriate for sound business reasons, the Council will ensure that:
- The processes used will be fair, transparent, reasonable and objective
 - Any enhancements given are affordable in the short and long term.
- 1.3 Any payments made under this scheme will be subject to tax regulations in force at the time of their implementation.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The provisions of the Council's early retirement and severance scheme applies to all Council employees who meet the relevant eligibility criteria set out in the remaining sections of this document, subject to legislation and regulations in force at the time of their implementation.

3. LINKS TO OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

- 3.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following existing Council policies and procedures and any relevant future policies which replace, change or amend the existing policies:-

Redundancy Selection Policy
Consultation Agreement
Attendance Management Policy and Framework

4 CRITERIA FOR EARLY RETIREMENT/SEVERANCE

- 4.1 There are a number of different, but specific, circumstances which might lead to early retirement or severance being considered. These are as follows:
- 4.2. Ill Health
- 4.2.1 To be eligible for retirement on these grounds the employee must be certified as suffering from ill health which permanently affects their ability to do the job for which they are employed. In addition there must be no comparable alternative employment available which the employee is able to carry out. The Council will ensure that the decision to allow early

retirement on the grounds of ill health is made solely on medical grounds. This will be based on an assessment by the Council's Occupational Health Adviser who will follow the advice issued by the United Kingdom Steering Committee for Local Government Pensions, drawn up by the Association of Local Authority Medical Advisers.

Note: Comparable employment is that as compared to the substantive post held.

4.3. Ill Health provision

4.3.1 Provided the employee is in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with at least three months membership, or has transferred rights from another pension scheme into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) the employee receives:

- the early release of pension
- the payment of a pension lump sum

Benefits to be calculated based on the length of membership in the scheme as follows:

Length of Service	Membership used to calculate benefits.
4 months – 5 years	- actual membership
5 to 10 years	- membership is doubled
10 to 13.33 years	- membership is increased to 20 years
13.34 years plus	- actual membership service plus 6. $\frac{2}{3}$ years.

In all instances these will be subject to maximum membership of 40 reckonable years. There is no enhancement beyond the age of 65.

Employees with less than three months membership in the LGPS who have not transferred pension rights from another scheme into the LGPS receive a lump sum payment, which is equivalent to a refund of the contributions they have paid, less the statutory deductions (20% tax) and an amount to buy them back into the state pension scheme.

Where a person is or has been part time, the LGPS Regulations specify how the membership used in the calculation of benefits is to be pro-rated.

If a person is already in receipt of an ill health pension from the LGPS they will not receive an enhanced ill health pension on any subsequent ill health retirement.

4.4. Redundancy

This applies where there is a redundancy situation as defined by the Employment Rights Act 1996:

- where business has ceased or diminished
- where the requirements for work of a particular kind have ceased or diminished

- where there has been a significant change in the place of employment and there is no suitable alternative employment available.

NB. There is provision for transferred redundancies, known as ‘bumped redundancy’.

4.4.1 The same provisions apply whether the employee agrees to retire voluntarily or is made compulsorily redundant.

4.4.2 The provisions are as follows:

For employees aged 50 or Over

Voluntary/ Compulsory Early Retirement on grounds of Redundancy

To be eligible an employee must be:

- 50 or Over
- in the LGPS with at least three months membership, or with transferred service.

The Scheme gives:

- early release of pension
- the payment of the pension lump sum
- a redundancy payment in accordance with the State formula although the specific calculation in each case will be based on the employee’s actual week’s pay rather than on the statutory maximum. This is applicable to employees who have at least 5 years membership of the LGPS **OR**
- an enhanced redundancy payment *as set out* in [\(District Auditor Recommended Change\)](#) Table 2 below where the employee has less than 5 years membership of the LGPS. See section 4.2.4.4 below.

Table 1

For each completed year of service between the ages of

–21 and Under ½ a week’s pay

22 – 40 1 weeks

41 Plus 1½ weeks

This is subject to a maximum of 30 weeks’ pay based on the last 20 years service.

Table 2

For each completed year of service between the ages of

-21 and Under	½ weeks pay
22 – 23	1 weeks pay
24 – 40	1.1½ weeks pay
41 Plus	3 weeks pay

This is subject to a maximum of 45 weeks.

4.4.3 **Regulation 52 : Awarding extra years of LGPS membership – Augmentation Provisions in the event of Compulsory / Voluntary Redundancy**

To be eligible an employee must be:

- aged 50 or over
- in the LGPS with at least five years membership.

In cases of compulsory redundancy or where voluntary redundancies are sought to avoid compulsory redundancy elsewhere, the calculation for augmenting pension service will be a ratio of two extra years for every five years continuous service at Northampton Borough Council, up to a maximum of $6\frac{2}{3}$ years. E.g. 18 years continuous Northampton Borough Council service = 6 and $2\frac{1}{3}$ 'years'.

The number of years granted cannot take the employee's total service to more than 40 years or to more years membership than they could have attained by the age of 65.

(Note: Breaks in service for maternity leave or reasons concerned with caring for Children or other dependants will not prevent the employees service prior to the breaks being included in the calculation of continuous service for the purposes of awarding augmented service, provided the break in service does not exceed 8 years and that no permanent full time paid employment has intervened .)

The Council has exercised it's discretion to enhance early retirement payments on redundancy for employees who satisfy the criteria outlined in this section by the award of augmented service up to the maximum permitted. Employees to whom these provisions apply will receive a redundancy payment based on the statutory redundancy scheme. The Council can not legally pay an enhanced redundancy payment in addition to the award of added years.

4.4.4 For employees under the age of 50

Voluntary/Compulsory Redundancy Payments

All employees who have not less than two years continuous service are entitled to receive a payment in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Statutory Redundancy Scheme. The payment is on the basis of the employee's actual weeks' pay and is not restricted to the statutory limit on a week's pay.

The scheme gives:

A redundancy payment based on the following state formula:

For each complete year of service between the ages of

–21 and Under $\frac{1}{2}$ a week's

22 – 40 1 weeks

41 plus $1\frac{1}{2}$ weeks

This is subject to a maximum of 30 weeks' pay based on the last 20 years service.

However where an employees has 2 years continuous service and has 3 months membership of the LGPS they will receive an enhanced redundancy payment based on the following formula:-

–21 and Under $\frac{1}{2}$ weeks pay

22 – 23 1 weeks pay

24 – 40 1.1\2 weeks pay

41 plus 3 weeks pay

This will be subject to a maximum of 45 weeks pay.

4.4.5 The business case for any proposed early retirement(s) on grounds of redundancy and/or redundancy payment(s) must be demonstrated. The business case must include:-

- The costs of the proposed early retirement/redundancy payment(s)
- The on going savings to be achieved
- The timescales within which the savings will be made

The business case must clearly show that there are significant on-going savings which are achievable after all the costs associated with the early termination of employment have been met. The Business case must be endorsed by the Director responsible for the service area where proposed changes will be implemented or the Chief Executive where the proposals will be implemented on a Council wide basis. The business case will be submitted to the Section 151 Officer and another Director who will

independently examine the merits of the business case and make written recommendations to the Chief Executive. The decision to approve the proposed early termination of employment and the associated severance payments will be made by the Chief Executive. A record of approved and rejected proposals will be maintained by the HR service.

4.5 Early Retirement on grounds of Efficiency of the Service

(Employees aged 50 or over)

4.5.1 This is a voluntary element of the scheme. An employee cannot be compelled to retire under this provision.

4.5.2 One of the following criteria must be satisfied for agreement to the early release of an employees' pension under this element of the scheme. In addition the financial criteria referred to in section 4.5.3 also needs to be met. The criteria are:

- the employee's ability to perform the job has been affected by changes which mean that it is difficult for them to adjust
- the job requires new skills or competences which the employee does not have and where retraining or investment in future development would not be appropriate
- early retirement would create internal job opportunities, or unblock promotion channels which succession planning could fill through an internal appointment
- structural changes could lead to savings being achieved through appointing a replacement at a lower pay level, or where a replacement removes or avoids a pay protection
- it avoids a redundancy situation by allowing an employee to be redeployed or transferred into the vacancy created

and, overall it is considered to be in the interests of the Council as well as the employee to grant the early retirement. (District Auditor recommended change)

4.5.3 Financial Criteria

The business case for any such proposal must be demonstrated. This must identify the relevant criteria outlined in 4.5.2 above which is applicable to the request. It must also identify the savings to be made and how they will be achieved. The business case must be signed by the Corporate Director responsible for the service area where the application originated. A pro forma will be available to document the required information. The signed document must then be submitted to the section 151 officer and a different Corporate Director who will independently examine the merits of the application and make written recommendations to the Chief Executive to approve or reject the application. The decision to approve or reject applications will be made by the Chief Executive.

Reasons for approval or rejection will be recorded in writing and this information will be maintained within the HR service.

4.5.4 To be eligible an employee must be:

- aged 50 or over
- in the LGPS with at least two years' membership whilst in NBC service.

4.5.5 Requests for early retirement on grounds of efficiency of service where approved will entitle the employees to receive the early release of their pension. The early release of pension without actuarial reduction on grounds of efficiency of the service will only be agreed where the business case demonstrates additional savings over and above the cost of funding the early retirement and any other associated costs and to the extent that such retirement is permitted notwithstanding the abolition of the rule of 85.

4.5.6 **Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (1997)**

This is commonly known as the Rule of 85.

Employees between the age of 50 and 59 can request early retirement and the early release of pension benefits provided that their combined length of pensionable service and their age totals 85 years. This would be at the employee's initiative and not in response to a request from managers. Employees wishing to be considered for Early Retirement under the rule of 85 should make themselves known to their corporate manager (*or alternatively HR*) so the matter would be dealt with either as redundancy or efficiency whichever is applicable. [\(District Auditor recommended change\)](#). Consideration may *also* be given to early release of pension with actuarial reduction in these circumstances provided that the business case identifies how the costs associated with the early release will be met. In addition consideration of the efficiency criteria outlined in 4.2.5.2 will be relevant to the decision – See 4.2.6.3 below.

4.5.6.1 To be eligible an employee must be:

- aged 50 or over
- in the LGPS.

4.5.6.2 What the Scheme gives:

- if the employee's combined age (in whole years) and LGPS membership (in whole years) reach a total of 85 years or more, the employee will receive his or her entitlement to pension and lump sum (with no added years) without any actuarial reduction.
- if the employee's combined age and LGPS membership do not exceed 84, he or she will receive their entitlement to pension and lump sum (with no added years) but with an actuarial reduction dependent on the date when 85 years would be reached *or when age 65 would be attained, if earlier*.

(NB: Under the pension regulations a request can be made from the age of 50. From the ages of 50 to 59 this subject to management approval, which is discretionary. The efficiency criteria (see above) will be relevant in these cases and will help to inform decisions on such requests. Decisions will also need to take account of wider organisational requirements. Because of the increased burden this scheme will place on the Pension Fund, management/Member discretion will only be exercised where it can be demonstrated to be in the Council's interest.)

The 85 year rule has been abolished with effect from 1 October 2006 as a result of the Amending Regulations 2006. There are however, transitional arrangements:

- ***providing protection for all existing contributors at 30 September 2006 on the benefits they accrue on service up to 31 March 2008.***
- ***Protection for those existing contributors at 30 September 2006 who will be 60 or over by 31 March 2016***
- ***A degree of protection for those existing contributors at 30 September 2006 who will be 60 or over between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020.***

4.6 Voluntary Early retirement – Compassionate Grounds

4.6.1 Employees who have left their employment with the Council with a deferred pension may request his\her deferred pension to be paid early on compassionate grounds. If the early release of the deferred pension is agreed the benefits will be paid in full with no actuarial reduction.

4.6.2 The Council may also consider requests to waive actuarial reduction where this would otherwise be the case in relation to the early release of pension benefits. The Council may do so on compassionate grounds. The circumstances where the council may exercise this discretion are set out below:-

a). In relation to employees who have left employment with the Council with a deferred pension and who request early payment of benefits under Regulation 31 above on or after age 50 and before age 60, or who voluntarily opt for payment of the benefit early on or after age 60 and before the normal retirement date or

b). In relation to current employees who are seeking early retirement to the extent permitted under Regulation 31 above on or after age 50 and before age 60, or who voluntarily retire on or after age 60 and before their normal retirement date.

4.6.3 For current employees to be eligible he\she must be:

- over 50/
- in the LGPS with at least two years contributions, or with transferred service.

4.6.4 Requests from past and current employees for the early release of pension benefits without actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds will be agreed by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Councils

section 151 officer. The decision will be based on a full evaluation of the financial implications for the Council

5. RE-EMPLOYMENT FOLLOWING EARLY RETIREMENT

- 5.1. Any former NBC Council employee who is in receipt of an early retirement pension on the grounds of efficiency, redundancy or at their own request, should not normally be immediately re-employed by the Council either on the basis of a contract of employment or a contract for service with the Council. If there is any doubt about the continuing need for an employee's services then early retirement should not be agreed.
- 5.2. However, it is recognised that there are some, very limited, circumstances when re-employment would be in the interests of the Council. In these cases a report should be submitted to the Corporate Director or his or her nominated senior management representative seeking approval to re-employ for a specified limited period.
- 5.3. Where an employee has been made redundant and receives a severance payment (and therefore without a pension) there should be no re-employment until the expiry of the period for which the number of weeks' severance payment has been given, e.g. if the employee has received a severance payment equal to 16 weeks pay, the earliest re-employment could be considered would be 16 weeks after the date of termination.
- 5.4. Where a former employee has retired on ill health grounds and subsequently applies for a job with the Council, this should be considered carefully bearing in mind the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. If it is proposed to appoint any such individual, approval must be given by the Council's Occupational Health Advisers and the relevant Corporate Director or his or her nominated senior management representative.

NOTE If someone in receipt of a Local Government Pension is re-employed their pension will be abated if in total their pension and pay for the job exceed the pay that they received in the job that they were in before they retired.

6. Non-fettering of the Council's Discretions

- 6.1 The above forms the Council's "current" policy. It should be noted that:
 - a. the policy confers no contractual rights, and
 - b. the Council will retain the right to change the policy at any time without prior notice or consultation (although the Council will endeavour to consult with UNISON / the recognised Trade Unions), and
 - c. only the policy which is current at the time a relevant event occurs to an employee / scheme member will be the one applied to that employee / member

7. Review of the Scheme

- 7.1 The provisions of this scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their on-going sustainability and affordability. The next review will take place no later than 1 October 2007.

8. Further Information

- 8.1 Advice and guidance on the application of the scheme is available from HR. More detailed written management guidance will also be developed to support the effective implementation of the scheme

MEETING THE COSTS OF EARLY RETIREMENT/SEVERANCE

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim is to ensure that:

- The costs of redundancy payments (including severance payments) and the increased cost of pension liabilities arising from the early payment of retirement benefits and any added years' enhancements are recognised and taken into account when early retirement decisions are made
- Responsibility for meeting such costs rests with the Service responsible for the early retirement decision.
- The costs of early retirement, severance and flexible retirement are taken into account against the financial benefits arising as a result of efficiency savings or workforce reductions.

1.2 When early retirements, severances or flexible retirements arise from budget or policy changes, there is still an obligation on Services (who have claimed the associated savings) to meet the additions of early retirement costs.

2 Ill Health Retirements

2.1 No specific charges against individual Services are made. The cost however has to be met by all Services through the employer's pension contribution set by the Actuary.

2.2 Redundancy

2.2.3 Services will be charged the actuarial cost arising from the early release of pension and any added years' enhancements and the one-off costs of redundancy and severance (or just the latter where there is no entitlement to pension)

2.3 Efficiency

2.3.1 Services will be charged for the actuarial costs arising from the early release of pension and any added years' enhancements.

2.4 Regulation 31 (Rule of 85)

2.4.1 Services will be charged any actuarial costs arising from the early release of pension.

2.5 Voluntary Early Retirement - Compassionate Grounds

2.5.1 Services will be charged any actuarial costs arising from the early release of pension.

3. Phasing

3.1 Wherever possible Services should attempt to meet early retirement and redundancy or severance costs as they arise, i.e. on termination of employment. However it is recognised that in some cases the costs are substantial. Costs in excess of £30,000 can therefore be phased over a period up to a maximum of five years, subject to any redundancy or severance costs being met in full in the year in which the employee is released. The provision to phase costs also applies in cases of flexible retirement.

3.2 For example, if an early retirement has the total costs of £79,700 (made up of £19,700 redundancy and £60,000 actuarial costs), the phasing, assuming use of maximum flexibility permitted, would be as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL
Redundancy	£19,700					£19,700
Actuarial		£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£60,000
TOTAL	£19,700	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£79,700

3.3 When retirements take effect before 1 October, Services will be expected to absorb Year 1 costs in the same financial year and to bring forward proposals for doing so as part of the Mid-Year Review. Where retirements take effect from 1 October, the following financial year will be deemed as Year 1. For trading services, operating on a net nil basis, Year 1 will be the year following the retirement, irrespective of when it occurs. This will allow early retirement costs to be included in subsequent years' pricing.

4. Bumped Redundancies

4.1 The principle is that the Service which benefits from the retirement/severance should also bear the costs. It is acknowledged that in the case of bumped redundancies the benefits may be shared. In such circumstances the costs would also need to be shared, matched to the benefit which each Service receives. The financial arrangements for funding will need to be judged on the specific circumstances of individual cases. Managers will need to include a supporting statement for consideration.

4.2 The impact of organisational restructuring, e.g. outsourcing, or other discontinuation of functions needs to be taken into account as it will necessitate that costs are managed centrally.

GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSFERRED/BUMPED REDUNDANCIES

- 1.1 All other options should be explored before redundancy is contemplated and the possibility of voluntary Early Retirement on the grounds of efficiency should be considered before a transferred redundancy.
- 2 **The Process**
- 2.1 This may in practice mean that a specific job is no longer needed or that a group of similar jobs is to reduce in number. Selection of employees for redundancy will in the first instance focus on those who are clearly ‘at risk’ and for whom there are no other reasonable alternative employment options. Volunteers should be sought.
- 2.2 If there are insufficient volunteers at this initial stage (i.e. before compulsion) then a second stage is possible – a transferred redundancy will be the subject of an organisational decision based on the need to match displaced or ‘at risk’ employees with the requirements of jobs occupied by volunteers. **The Council will not normally therefore seek volunteers generally : volunteers will only be sought where there is a threat of compulsion and a potential match of skills is available.**
- 2.3 The process of matching the jobs of volunteers with displaced or ‘at risk’ employees is likely to be a complex one involving discussions across the Authority. All potential transferred redundancies must therefore be handled by Corporate Personnel who will be responsible for facilitating the matching process within and across Directorates/Services of the Council.
- 2.4 All cases of proposed transferred redundancy must be supported by the Manager, (or both of the two managers concerned if across sections) and reported to the relevant Corporate Director(s) Proposals should include details of the circumstances of proposed transferred redundancy and resulting redeployment.
- 3 **Criteria**
- 3.1 All proposals for transferred redundancies should be assessed against criteria of cost, level and skill when they are submitted for approval.
- 3.1.2 **Cost**
- 3.1.2.1 Extra costs arising from the proposal should be avoided. Essentially the cost of making the affected employee redundant should be weighed against transferring the redundancy to someone else (including the actuarial cost of the release of pension, excess travel costs etc).
- 3.1.2.2 The cost of any pay protections should be taken into account in the costing exercise. These may occur where the employee is being redeployed to a lower graded job or there could be a saving where the person being made redundant was protected and the new incumbent is less/not protected.

3.1.3 Level

- 3.1.3.1 Transferred redundancies will normally be considered where there is a direct transfer at the same grade or where the transferred employee is currently protected for the same grade of job. This will result in a saving of protection costs either where the redundancy volunteer is on protected salary and the transferred employee is not, or where the transferred employee is returning to their original grade.
- 3.1.3.2 Transferring a redundancy to a higher graded employee will be exceptional. A proposed redundancy which results in a promotion opportunity cannot be targeted for transfer at one employee – it should be subject to a normal competitive selection process. There may, however, be exceptions where the specific skill requirements of the higher graded post can only be met by a specific group of employees – into which the unplaced employee could consequently be placed. In such cases there may be a case for ring fencing the promotion opportunity to suitably qualified and experienced staff. In any event, the proposal must demonstrate that it will result in the appointment of an otherwise unplaced employee.
- 3.1.3.4 Personnel will ensure in each case that the proposals for such ring fencing are cleared through appropriate consultation with the relevant trade unions and that they are specified in the proposal to the Corporate Manager/Corporate Director.

3.1.4 Skill

- 3.1.4.1 There should be a specific skill match between the job that is to be filled and the person proposed for transfer into the job.
- 3.1.4.2 Where selection needs to be made either of the employees to be transferred and/or those to be made redundant, careful consideration needs to be given to issues of cost, level and skills match. If, after considering these factors, there is still a selection process required, then that process should be clarified by Personnel and must satisfy all normal legislative and local procedural requirements.

APPENDIX 3

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

STATEMENT OF DISCRETIONS – APRIL 2007

Northampton Borough Council has decided to adopt the following discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

1. Reduction or Elimination of Employees Contribution After 40 Years Service

The Council has decided not to exercise its discretion to allow employees to pay no or reduced levels of contribution when they have reached 40 years local government service. Employees will therefore pay contributions for the whole of their period of service.

2. Early Retirement Under Regulation 31

The Council will permit retirement from age 50 without actuarial reduction where the Council's criteria for early retirement on the grounds of efficiency of the service are met and a business case identifies how the cost associated with early release will be met, and to the extent such retirement is permitted notwithstanding the abolition of the Rule of 85 and associated transitional arrangements.

To the same permitted extent, the Council will permit retirement from age 50 without actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds.

Service enhancements do not apply to retirements under Regulation 31.

3. Increase in Membership on Cessation of Employment

The Council has agreed to exercise its discretion to allow additional augmented service as detailed in the Early Retirement / Severance Scheme.

Where an active member of the LGPS takes early retirement through redundancy and the active member is aged 50 or over with 5 or more years continuous membership of LGPS and 5 years or more continuous NBC service, the Council will allow 2 additional years for every 5 years continuous NBC service subject to a maximum of

- 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ years
- not exceeding total service to more than 40 years or to more years membership than they could have attained by age 65

(service to be pro-rated for part time employees unless the equivalent of whole time service of 13 $\frac{1}{3}$ years has already been accrued).

4. Compassionate Grounds
The Council may permit active members and deferred beneficiaries the right to retire from age 50 on compassionate grounds without reduction.
5. Increase in Membership on Commencement of Employment
The Council has decided not to exercise its discretion in this area.
6. Flexible Retirement
The Council has decided not to exercise its discretion in this area.
7. Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme (SCAVC)
The Council has decided not to exercise its discretion in this area.

Other Discretions (2006 Regulations)

1. Use of Actual Pay in Redundancy Payments

The Council has decided to use actual pay instead of the statutory maximum when calculating redundancy payments.

2. Payment of Enhanced Redundancy Payments to Employees Without Immediate Access to their Pension Rights

The Council has decided to enhance redundancy payments to those under 50 who have at least 2 years continuous service and at least 3 months membership of LGPS, as stated in the Early Retirement / Severance Scheme and subject to a maximum of 45 weeks pay.

APPENDIX 4

EXAMPLE COSTS

Employee Profile

- Employee aged 55
 - Continuous Local Government and NBC Service 25 years
 - Pension Scheme member 25 years
 - Salary £28,000pa (the total cost of the employees income to the Council is £36,120 inclusive of on costs)
1. Cost of Severance * - Current Scheme
 - a) Redundancy = £17,485
 - b) Number of Added Years awarded = $6\frac{2}{3}$ (max)
 - c) Cost of added years ** = £2,345pa pension plus £7,035 lump sum = £9,380
 - d) Total cost = a+c=£26,865
(In this example redundancy is based on 32.5 weeks service)

 2. Cost of Severance * – Redundancy multiplier x 1.5; plus 1 added year for every 5 years service over 20 years
 - a) Redundancy = £26,227
 - b) Number of added years awarded = 2
 - c) Cost of added years ** = £700 pa plus £2,100 lump sum = £2,800
 - d) Total Cost = a+c = £29,027
(in this example redundancy is based on 48.75 weeks service)

 3. Cost of Severance * – Redundancy multiplier x 2; plus 1 added year for every 5 years service over 20 years
 - e) Redundancy = £34,970
 - f) Number of added years awarded = 2
 - g) Cost of added years** = £700 pa plus £2,100 lump sum = £2,800
 - h) Total Cost = a+c = £37,770
(in this example redundancy is based on 65 weeks service)

4. Cost of Severance * – Redundancy multiplier x 1.5; No added years

i) Redundancy = £26,227

j) Number of added years awarded = 0

k) Cost of added years = £0

l) Total Cost = a+c = £26,227

(in this example redundancy is based on 48.75 weeks service)

5. Cost of Severance * – Redundancy multiplier x 2; No added years

m) Redundancy = £37,770

n) Number of added years awarded = 0

o) Cost of added years = £0

p) Total Cost = a+c = £37,770

(in this example redundancy is based on 65 weeks service)

* Does not include pension strain cost for early release of pension which will be the same under any of the options in these examples

** The augmented pension service has since 1/4/07 been subject to an actuarial assessment of life-time cost and recharged to the employing Authority as a cost to be paid within 3 years

Agenda Item 13

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Agenda Item 14

EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF
PARAGRAPH(S)3 OF PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12A
OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

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