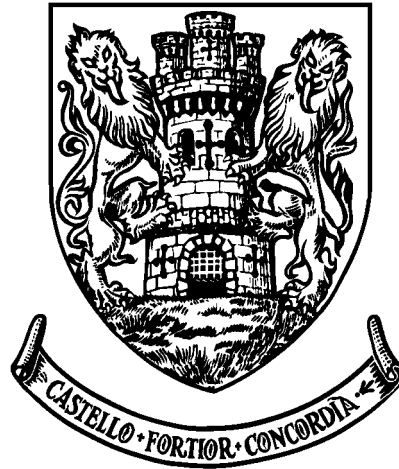


# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



## COUNCIL

Monday, 9 July 2012

**YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 9 JULY 2012 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED:-**

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**2. MINUTES.**

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meetings of the Council held on 24 March, 23 April, 24 May and 21 June 2012.

**3. APOLOGIES.**

**4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS**

**6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Attached are the questions of which notice had been given and the responses to them.

**7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

**8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Beardsworth to make a statement on The Big Society.

**9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

(Copy herewith)

## 10. NOTICES OF MOTION

(i) Councillor Eales to propose and Councillor Wire DL to second:

“This Council notes that Northampton is home to many different faiths and this is a source of great civic pride.

This Council further note that there is now a significant Muslim population and current prayer facilities are beginning to reach capacity.

This Council believes that to keep up with demand a new purpose built Mosque / Muslim Cultural Centre needs to be provided. Such a facility would be available to all relevant groups and be of benefit to our communities.

This Council therefore asks for a working party to be set up (4 Conservative, 3 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat), with the authority of the full Council, to investigate ways and come up with proposals in how to progress the creation of an all purpose built Mosque in Northampton. Particular consideration should be given to,

1. Assessing current demand and capacity.
2. Acquiring & transfer of land.
3. Planning Application process for a Mosque.
4. Public consultation and engagement on points 1,2,3.

The working party would also immediately give an input into the planning process to try and ensure multi-faith facilities are provided in the new Grosvenor Centre or very close by.

This working party would report back to full Council within 6 months of this motion being accepted with recommendations on how to proceed.

(ii) Councillor Palethorpe to propose and Councillor Stone to second:

“This Council notes that all of the current voting members of the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee are Conservative. The West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee (WNJSPC) oversees the development of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS). The WNJCS involves the delivery of 50,000 new homes in the West Northamptonshire area.

This Council also notes that the Conservatives on the WNJSPC have had a majority since it was created by statutory instrument in 2008.

This Council further notes a Conservative motion, carried on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011, by Cllr Larratt and Cllr Golby stating,

‘This Council calls on the WNJPU and WNJSPC to reallocate the dwellings

proposed at Buckton Fields to Daventry town and remove the development site at Buckton Fields from all development plans, including the emerging Joint Core Strategy for the development of West Northamptonshire’.

This Council also notes that the Conservatives have not removed the following from the emerging Joint Core Strategy.

Policy N5 – Northampton South SUE

Policy N7 – Northampton Kings Heath SUE

Policy N8 – Northampton North of Whitehills SUE

This Council asks the Leader of the Council at the next full Council meeting (September 2012) why this previous Conservative motion has not been upheld by his administration and also give the full rationale for the inclusion of Policy N5 and Policy N7 in the Joint Core Strategy despite the knowledge that there is strong local opposition in these areas.”

(iii) Councillor Davies to move and Councillor Wire DL to second:

“This Council notes that the previous Liberal Democrat Administration negotiated the contract with Enterprise (EMS). The contract was signed on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2011 and came into force on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2011.

This Council further notes that the Enterprise contract has not yet delivered the promised performance for Northampton nor given the expected value for money.

This Council therefore asks the Cabinet member for the Environment to start a comprehensive review, which will take an in depth examination of where the contract with Enterprise has fallen short and how this might be rectified in the future. The findings of such a review should be made public to all councillors and local taxpayers.

This Council further asks that the Cabinet to ensure that penalties are made in future when Enterprise does not fulfil its contractual responsibilities.”

(iv) Councillor Davies to propose and Councillor Gowen to second:

“This Council notes that our Parks are some of the town’s most vital assets.

This Council further notes that many people and families enjoy the parks across the town, particularly during the summer months. Our parks attract people from across the county into the town.

With reductions in Community Safety and recent high profile attacks in our Parks there is a big concern that families will be deterred from using them in future. Park Rangers can play a crucial role in liaising with the Police and Neighbourhood Wardens to ensure the safety of the law-abiding public.

This Council therefore asks Cabinet to consider making our all three Park Rangers full-time and employing an additional part-time Park Ranger. Park Rangers in future need to be more mobile so all our Parks can be cared for. Pocket parks are important as well. This can be funded through the New Homes Bonus.

(v) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor I Choudary to second:

“This Council condemns the decision of the Conservative Administration to cut Neighbourhood Coordinators.

This Council notes that there has been little consultation with ward councillors, residents and community groups. Neighbourhood Coordinators are now on a 30-day statutory consultation. This decision was not in the budget passed in February 2012 nor was it in the Conservative Manifesto.

This Council recognises the Neighbourhood Coordinators play a very important role in communities, particularly in areas that cannot afford Parish Councils. Neighbourhood Coordinators have brought in external funding into areas, helped formed resident associations, organised multi-agency surgeries and brought our communities together.

This full Council asks the Cabinet to urgently reconsider their decision on Neighbourhood Coordinators and keep these invaluable posts for the future.”

## **11. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.**

The Guildhall  
Northampton  
29 June 2012

D. Kennedy Chief Executive

### **Public Participation**

#### **1. Comments and Petitions**

1.1 A member of the public (or an accredited representative of a business ratepayer of the Borough) may make a comment or present a petition on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. A comment or presentation of a petition shall be for no more than three minutes. No notice of the nature of the comment to be made or of the petition is required except for the need to register to speak by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

(Public comments and petitions will not be taken and the Annual Council Meeting or other civic or ceremonial meetings.)

#### NOTES

- i. Comments may be on one or more subjects but each person has no longer than three minutes to have their say.*
- ii. The same person may make a comment and present a petition on different subjects. In such instances that person will have three minutes to make their comment and a separate three minutes to present a petition.*

## 2. Member and Public Questions

2.1 A member of the public (or business ratepayer of the Borough) may ask a maximum of two written questions at each meeting, each limited to a maximum of 50 words, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. Each question shall:

- be submitted in writing and delivered, faxed or e-mailed to Democratic Services no later than 10.00am seven calendar days before the day of the meeting; and
- include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the Cabinet member/Committee Chair to whom the question is put.

2.2 At the meeting, copies of all questions and the responses to them from the public and Members will be made available to the public and press. The Mayor may allow one supplementary question, without notice, that arises directly from the original question or response.

(Questions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or at civic or ceremonial meetings or meetings called to deal with specific items of business.)

#### NOTES

*In respect of paragraph 2.1 above, questions may be rejected on certain grounds that are set out on page 4-12 of the Council's Constitution and which may be viewed at [www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=1919](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1919) or by seeking advice using the contact details below.*

## 3. Motions

3.1 A member of the public may register to speak to a motion under the 'Notices of Motion' item on the agenda. Registration to speak must be made to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day to the meeting. Speaking to a motion is restricted to three minutes per person.

(The 'Notices of Motion' item will not be taken at the Annual Council meeting or meetings called for civic or ceremonial purposes.)

## 4. General

A member of the public may make a comment, present a petition, ask a question or speak to a motion at the same meeting subject to the restrictions set out above.

## 5. Contacts

Democratic Services: e-mail [democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk)

Tel 01604 837722

Mail Democratic Services  
Northampton Borough Council  
The Guildhall  
St Giles Square  
Northampton NN1 1DE

**MINUTES**

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON SATURDAY 24 MARCH 12 AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

**PRESENT:** HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Lane (in the Chair).

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Beardsworth, Bottwood, Caswell, Conroy, Duncan, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Larratt, Mackintosh, Malpas, Marriott, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Oldham, Palethorpe, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Wire DL and Yates

**1. APOLOGIES.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Aziz, Begum, Capstick, I Choudary, N Choudary, Davies, Eales, Golby, Gowen, King, Lynch, Markham, Nunn, Stone, Strachan and Subbarayan.

**2. AWARD OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON TO TS LAFOREY NORTHAMPTON AND WELLINGBOROUGH SEA CADETS**

The Mayor referred to the motion set out on the agenda paper that had been agreed by Council at its meeting on 11 July 2011 to award the Freedom of the Borough to the TS Laforey Northampton and Wellingborough Sea Cadets and invited Councillors Mackintosh, Mason and Beardsworth to endorse the motion.

The Mayor presented the Freedom of the Borough to Commander Chris Read RNR on behalf of TS Laforey Northampton and Wellingborough Sea Cadets. Commander Read thanked the Council.

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY 23 APRIL 2012 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

**PRESENT:** HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Lane (in the Chair).

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Caswell, I. Choudary, N Choudary, Conroy, Davies, Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Larratt, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Marriott, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Palethorpe, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Stone, Strachan, Subbarayan, Wire DL and Yates

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Oldham declared a Personal interest in Item 8- Opposition Group Business as a sheltered housing tenant.

Councillor Oldham declared a Personal interest in Item 10 (vi)- Notices of Motion as a sheltered housing tenant.

Councillor Hibbert declared a Personal interest in Item 10 (v)- Notices of Motion as a member of the Executive Committee of the Community Law Service.

Councillor Strachan declared a Personal interest in Item 10(iv)- Notices of Motion as a member of the Northampton Credit Union.

Councillor Beardsworth declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 10 (v) as a Trustee of Community Law.

Councillor Conroy declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 10 (iv) as a Council house tenant.

### 2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 29 February and 12 April 2012 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### 3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Bottwood, Capstick, Duncan, Gowen and King.



#### **4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Mayor noted that the Harley Davidson Run on 14 April had raised £1,600 for the Cynthia Spencer Hospice.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor expressed best wishes to Councillor Bottwood for his recovery from a recent illness.

The Mayor announced that Nat, a Peer Mentor of the Youth Forum, had won two awards from the Northamptonshire Volunteer Forum as Young Leader of the Year and Countywide Youth Volunteer. The Mayor presented Nat with the awards and in return Nat presented the Mayor with a Stamp Out Hate Crime campaign mug.

#### **5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS**

Mr Whitehead commented that Officers of the Council were sending correspondence in the form of a notice restricting the ability of an individual to make FOI enquiries contrary to the Freedom of Information Act. A similar situation applied to Access Requests. The Council was denying public rights. Mr Whitehead noted that the time limit of the notice would be decided by Officers and would be increased if the Information Commissioner were to be contacted. He believed that these circumstances were unique to non-whites. He did not understand what the Council was doing. As a non-white resident he was disgusted by this. He wanted to bring this situation to the attention of the Council.

Miss Harris on behalf of the Baby Café at the Friends Meeting House in Wellington Street commented that it had closed the previous week through lack of financial support. The Café had been used as a model nationally and some 1600 families had been helped, some on an ongoing basis. Miss Harris noted that some Councillors had previously helped to support the Baby Café with their empowerment funds; the Café needed £2,000 to be able to reopen. She stated that breast-feeding was a good thing. She had worked on the pilot project as a volunteer and had become an employee: it was sometimes difficult working with mothers to encourage breast-feeding. Through the café mothers formed their own networks to support each other. She asked Councillors to help.

Mrs Perryman related her own personal experience of where the Baby Café had correctly diagnosed her daughter's problems where the hospital and GP had not. Corrective surgery had meant that her daughter had had been able to breast feed for 13 months. She regarded the Baby Café as a valuable resource and noted that breast-feeding reduced the incidence of post natal depression.

Mrs Askew noted that the Baby Café had been established in 2004 and had been very successful helping some 1600 families. Breast-feeding might be natural and have many benefits but it was not always easy. She commented that Northamptonshire PCT was moving its own breast-feeding support out of Northampton that she believed would be a disadvantage to local mothers. She related her own experience of the help the Baby Café gave her and commented that a venue in the Town Centre where mothers could breast-feed was invaluable: She suggested that there was an economic benefit as mothers would come to the Town Centre to shop. The support County and Borough Councillors had already given was

welcome but the Baby Café was £2,000 short of the £16,000 needed to enable it to reopen.

Mr Adams commented that he had stated on several occasions that Councillors statements on housing matters should be factual. He referred to the response to a question under item 6 of the agenda that there were 37.5 full time equivalent officers employed in the Sheltered Housing Service. This compared with responses given to similar questions in 2006 when 53 officers were employed, 2008 when the number was 42 and the response to an FOI enquiry in February 2012 when the number was given as 35. He queried whether Councillors could really claim that the service had not been cut. He noted that the previous Council minutes referred to Councillor claims that a third of the housing stock would be demolished- this was an urban myth as was a statement in a motion under item 10 of the agenda that tenants would lose their right to buy. He urged Councillors to get their facts right.

Mrs Lapsa the Head Teacher at Vernon Terrace Primary School commented that she had concerns about the management of Vernon Terrace Community Centre. She understood that a key aim of a community centre was that it should work for the local community, supporting local groups. She had not seen a great deal of change to the current timetable. She noted that the management agreement required that the facilities should be available to local groups but asked what consultation had taken place; the school had not been contacted so far. Mrs Lapsa asked that if consultation had taken place that the results be shared with the school. She also queried whether local Councillors had been consulted. Mrs Lapsa also asked whether the Council had appointed a contract manager and what monitoring had taken place. She observed that the school provided many facilities to the local community.

## **6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Mayor advised that 18 questions had been received from members of the public and Councillors and that they and the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Councillor Hill asked Councillor Caswell as the relevant Cabinet Member about other Councils who were making financial savings by replacing grass areas with wild flowers in suitable locations and noted the response as tabled.

Mr Adams asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member about concerns about tenancy agreements that undermined statutory rights and corrective action and noted the response as tabled. As a supplementary question Mr Adams observed that tenants were still not being made aware of the error and asked that corrective action be taken. Councillor Markham thanked Mr Adams and commented that advice to tenants would be changed as of the Council meeting.

Mr Adams asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member to confirm the number of pendants issued to vulnerable tenants in 2011/12 and noted the response as tabled. As a supplementary question Mr Adams asked if the Cabinet Member agreed with him that the situation should never have arisen in the first place that vulnerable tenants had had to share pendants. Councillor Markham concurred.

Councillor Mason asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member to confirm that all the funding for Decent Homes Backlog from the Homes and Communities Agency would be spent and that the Housing Directorate had the expertise to make best use of the funding and noted the response as tabled. Councillor Mason as a supplementary question asked which areas of the town would be covered after the existing initial areas had been dealt with. Councillor Markham commented that tenders were currently being sought for phase 3 which would cover all those areas not covered so far.

Councillor Mason asked Councillor Mackintosh as the relevant Cabinet Member why the Council had withdrawn its bid to provide advice services to the County Council and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Mennell asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member about the availability of a "clean up" package to tenants after a major fire and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Davies asked Councillor Caswell as the relevant Cabinet Member about the funding for play equipment at Briar Hill Recreation Ground and whether similar funding might be available to re-equip Far Cotton Recreation Ground and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Davies asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member about concerns relating to the Housing Allocations scheme and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Davies asked Councillor Mackintosh as the relevant Cabinet Member about the Council's representation on the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust and noted the response as tabled.

In the absence of Mr McNabb it was noted that the answers to his two questions would be sent to him.

Councillor Palethorpe asked Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member about the progress of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Mennell asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member about the next update of the Tenants Handbook and noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Marriott asked Councillor Eldred as the relevant Cabinet Member about the future operation of the Community Forums and noted the response as tabled. As a supplementary question Councillor Marriott asked whether the Women's Forum would be re-established. Councillor Eldred commented that he would investigate this.

Councillor Marriott asked Councillor Markham as the relevant Cabinet Member why the Administration proposed to include the 52% of NBC housing stock that met the Decent Homes Standard in the stock transfer and noted the response as tabled. As a supplementary question Councillor Marriott asked whether the Government advice

that sheltered housing be included in any stock transfer could be made available to Councillors. Councillor Markham stated that Government and DCLG advice had been that sheltered housing should be included in any stock transfer and that tenants would be involved in the process and that this was only one aspect of the Housing Options.

Councillor Mason asked Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member about the proposed development at Rushden Lakes and its implications for the Grosvenor/Greyfriars redevelopment and noted the response as tabled.

In the absence of Mr Costello it was noted that the responses to his two questions would be sent to him.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

At this point each of the Cabinet Members made a presentation of their respective portfolios that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Mackintosh submitted his Cabinet Member Report and reported that Councillor Bottwood was recovering from his recent operation and expressed his best wishes to him. Councillor Mackintosh referred to his report and emphasised the statements concerning LGSS, Northampton Alive, the visit of the parliamentary Business Innovation and Skill Select Committee, the Jubilee Picnic on 3 June, Olympic Torch on 2 July and the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Spencer Percival. Councillor Wire DL asked how many jobs were expected to be created in the Enterprise Zone. Councillor Mackintosh commented that the Enterprise Zone in Northampton was the largest in the country. The planning rules would be relaxed through six Local Development Orders, one of which was already in place. Two planning permissions had been granted to date for the Carlsberg bottling plant and the Innovation Centre. These two developments would create 60 new jobs. In answer to a question from Councillor Davies, Councillor Mackintosh commented that the existing LGSS partnership was between Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils. Although partnership arrangements with other Councils, including other district Councils, had been considered this option was considered to be the only viable one. There would be a fuller briefing for all Councillors and Overview and Scrutiny should be involved from an early stage. In answer to a question from Councillor I Choudary, Councillor Mackintosh stated that he would draw the CSP's attention to the recent increase in burglaries. In response to Councillor Ansell, Councillor Mackintosh commented that he was aware of the LGA research into Chuggers and had seen for himself the situation in Abington Street and would consider whether a report should go to Cabinet on the subject. In response to Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Mackintosh noted that his presentation had taken a little time but opposition Councillors had previously complained about a lack of detail and only one Councillor from his Group had asked a question and he had answered everything else asked of him.

Councillor Mackintosh presented Councillor Bottwood's Cabinet Member Report in his absence.

Councillor Caswell presented his Cabinet Member Report noted that the consultation on changes to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle conditions had finished and that a report on the results would be presented to the Licensing Committee on 1 May 2012. He also noted that Cabinet the previous week had revoked four Air Quality Management Orders in the light of improved air quality conditions at four different locations in the Town. Councillor Palethorpe asked if the Cabinet Member was happy with the monitoring of the Enterprise contract and with the savings achieved. Councillor Caswell commented that he was happy with the arrangements so far. In answer to a question from Councillor Oldham, Councillor Caswell commented that it had been a difficult decision to switch off the fountain on the mini market but in the light of the fact that there was some water wastage from it he had agreed that it be switched off whilst the drought declaration was in place. Councillor Caswell noted Councillor Meredith's thanks concerning Enterprise's performance for litter picking in Talavera Ward and also commented that issues about grass cutting should be passed to him so that he could investigate them. In answer to a comment from Councillor Glynane, Councillor Caswell commented that Britain in Bloom entries could be watered using watering cans. He also noted that he had received good support from businesses for Britain in Bloom but support from Councillors had been disappointing so far. Councillor Glynane asked what corrective action the Cabinet Member was taking to improve the performance of missed bin collections, and improve recycling rates. Councillor Caswell stated that some corrective action had been taken and the figures were improving. In answer to a question from Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Caswell commented that a review of the Enterprise contract would take place after a year of its operation.

Councillor Hadland presented his Cabinet Member report and commented in respect of car parking that in March some 15,000 visitors had taken advantage of the one hour free parking making a total of 70,000 that had taken advantage of it to date. Also in March, those taking advantage of the reduced one and two hour parking had increased by 13%. He noted that the Local Development Order in St James was now in force and that over 600 members of the public had taken advantage of the Delapre Abbey open day. Councillor Hadland reported that a planning application for the bus interchange had now been received and that work on the skateboard park had commenced that day. It was intended that the skateboard park should be open in time for as much of the summer holidays as possible. In answer to a question from Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Hadland stated that both the Town Centre BID and Town Centre businesses had been consulted on the proposal to revive the St Crispin Street Fair. In answer to a question from Councillor Palethorpe, Councillor Hadland commented that SEMLEP funding was to encourage businesses to come to the Town; that the target number of jobs to be created across the Enterprise Zone was 7,000; and that it was impossible to estimate the total investment needed for infrastructure in the Enterprise Zone as this would depend on the nature of the businesses that chose to come to it. In answer to a question from Councillor Glynane, Councillor Hadland stated that the overall number of bus movements would not change by the change in location and that pedestrian safety was a major consideration in considering the new bus interchange facility.

Councillor Eldred presented his Cabinet Member report and in response to a public

speaker commented that Community Spaces Northampton had gone through a rigorous process before being awarded the management agreement for the Vernon Terrace Community Centre. Of the interested parties they had produced the best business plan. He noted that Mrs Lapsa had headed up a rival bid from the School, which although good, had not been as good as that from Community Spaces Northampton. Councillor Eldred made particular reference to the Olympic Torch, Jubilee Picnic, the reopening of the Central Museum, Street Parties for the Jubilee celebrations, Junior Wardens and the Leisure Trust as set out in his report. In answer to a question from Councillor I Choudary, Councillor Eldred stated that the operation of the management agreements agreed for various community centres would be monitored. In answer to a question from Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Eldred agreed that he would work with Mrs Lapsa and Community Spaces Northampton to establish a good working relationship. In answer to a question from Councillor Palethorpe, Councillor Eldred agreed that it was not good that schools had to go out of Town for athletics sports days and commented that he was willing to meet with Councillor Palethorpe and the Leader of the Council to discuss the condition of the Sixfields athletics track. In response to comments made by Councillor Strachan, Councillor Eldred stated that his comments concerning Vernon Terrace Community Centre were not intended to cause upset to Mrs Lapsa and that Community Spaces Northampton would be consulting Vernon Terrace Primary School. In answer to a question from Councillor Parekh, Councillor Eldred reported that the deadline for petitions under the Community Governance Review had been extended by three weeks to 18 May due to public demand.

Councillor Markham presented her Cabinet Member report and responded to Mr Adam's comments made earlier in the meeting that there was no question that a third of the Council housing stock would be demolished and confirmed that a stock transfer would not effect tenants right to buy. She highlighted the funding for the Preventing Repossessions Fund and detailed the consultation to take place on Housing Options. In response to a question from Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Markham commented that she had asked contractors to report progress on Decent Homes Standard works and noted that the tenders for the third phase of these works had been issued. In answer to questions from Councillor Mennell, Councillor Markham commented that she could not provide information on the amount of compensation paid to tenants for damage caused whilst the Decent Homes Standard works were being carried out for the years when she was not the Housing Cabinet Member but invited Councillor Mennell to write to her with details that she would investigate; and although bed and breakfast figures had risen the previous week to 31 the Council had the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest number of people put into bed and breakfast in the country. In answer to a question from Councillor Meredith, Councillor Markham commented that she as Cabinet Member for Housing had been invited to a press event in his ward. In answer to a question from Councilor Marriott, Councillor Markham commented that in respect of Decent Homes works the best was being provided for the money that was available, however, in her opinion the standard was set too low.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Mason stated that the future of sheltered housing was a concern for those

particular tenants. This came on top of the street light turn off and the rejection by the Administration of the Labour Group's budget proposal for how some at sheltered housing schemes could be switched back on. Transfer of the stock to a housing association meant higher rents, loss of security and loss of democratic control. The Administration were going back on their own promises and treating sheltered housing that same as the rest of the housing stock. An argument had been a lack of funding but this was not strictly true; Tens of millions of pounds were due to be spent on improving the housing stock to which could be added the £2m set aside for the publicity connected with the stock transfer. Councillor Mason noted the cuts the County Council were making to the Supporting People budget which was already another worrying factor for tenants. She believed that sheltered housing tenants should be protected and that the Administration should listen to the tenants, turn down the option for a stock transfer and keep sheltered housing within the Council's control.

Councillor Mackintosh commented that he agreed that sheltered housing was an emotive subject which was why they had worded their manifesto it the way it had been. However, when they had started to look at housing stock options Officers had advised that not to include sheltered housing could put this element of the stock at a disadvantage. This had been subsequently confirmed by DCLG and independent advice. Councillor Mackintosh stated that no decision had yet been made and that Councillors needed to be responsible and should not scaremonger.

Councillor Mason noted that written advice from DCLG had not yet been received and that Councils could borrow up to the cap limit to improve its stock. She stated that her comments were not scaremongering as this matter was already in the public domain.

## **9. CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN- SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

Councillor Hadland submitted a report that sought the approval of Council to the Central Area Action Plan, including the changes set out in the Schedule of Changes for submission to the Secretary of State for examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended 2012). Councillor Nunn seconded the adoption of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the CAAP be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended 2012).

## **10. NOTICES OF MOTION**

(i) The motion was withdrawn.

(ii) Councillor Palethorpe moved and Councillor Stone seconded:

This Council is concerned that the Conservative Administration appears to be renegeing on a promise by them to 'hold a series of public meetings' made at the last Council full meeting on 12th March 2012. The public meetings promised are

just adding the issue to the existing NBC forum agendas.

This Council believes that while consulting with NBC forums is a welcome move this is not what was entirely meant at the previous full Council meeting.

This Council notes that forums are held at times which are unfriendly to those who work long hours during the week. So whilst forums are open many sections of the our population are unable to attend any of them.

This Council therefore calls on the Conservative Administration to honour its promise to hold an inclusive public meeting and believes,

Such a public meeting should be widely advertised including posters in Greyfriars Bus Station.

Advertising must start at least three weeks prior to the public meeting.

The meeting to be held on a Saturday morning or afternoon in the Great Hall, Guildhall. A weekend means more people can come along and have their say.

Open to all members of the public with seats allocated on a first come first service basis.

Give a presentation and take questions from those members of the public present.

The panel should include the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and invite the relevant portfolio on Northamptonshire County Council to attend.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was lost.

(iii) The motion was withdrawn.

(iv) Councillor Subbarayan proposed and Councillor Capstick seconded:

“This Council notes that it supports a successful credit union, known as ‘Northampton Credit Union’. This is a lifeline to many people in Northampton.

This Council also notes many people in the town fall prey to loan sharks and pay day loan companies which charge exorbitant interest rates as they are unaware that NBC supports the work of Northampton Credit Union.”

Therefore this Council asks that all our tenants be notified of the Northampton Credit Union and the process for applying. In addition this Council also asks the Cabinet Members for Housing and Community Engagement to promote the Northampton Credit Union as part of their work programme to tenants and the general public alike”.



Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

(v) Councillor Beardsworth left the meeting in accordance with her declaration of interest set out at minute 1 above.

Councillor Glynane proposed and Councillor Meredith seconded:

“This Council believes that the voluntary sector plays a crucial role in providing services and supporting communities and vulnerable people in Northampton, and that Northampton Borough Council has a duty to work in partnership with the voluntary sector.

This Council notes with dismay the tender that was submitted to Northamptonshire County Council for advice services, in direct competition with Community Law and Citizens Advice Bureaus who were previously providing advice services.

This Council believes that the outcome of the tendering process in initially awarding the contract to Northampton Borough Council created a potential conflict of interest and critically undermined the voluntary sector in Northampton.

This Council notes that the bid has since been withdrawn, but believes that a bid should never have been submitted in the first place.

This Council calls on the Executive to review the decision to bid and calls for a full independent inquiry, and public report, into why and how this bid was put into the County Council in the first place.”

Councillor Mackintosh proposed and Councillor Caswell seconded “That the question be now put.” Upon a vote the motion “That the question be now put” was carried.

Upon a vote the motion was lost.

Councillor Beardsworth rejoined the meeting.

(vi) Councillor Conroy left the meeting in accordance with his declaration of interest set out at minute 1 above.

Mr Adams commented that he believed that the motion had been poorly worded and suggested that for it to make better sense the words “stand to lose their right to buy” should be omitted from the second paragraph.

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Meredith seconded:

“This Council notes the Conservative group’s plans to consult on stock transfer of Northampton’s Council Housing.

This Council believes that this is not in the best interests of Northampton's tenants who would stand to lose their right to buy, face higher rents and lose their democratic control over their landlords.

This Council further notes that the Conservative manifesto at the 2011 elections said:

"We recognise and value the special nature of Sheltered Housing in Northampton, and the need to protect vulnerable adults from uncertainty about the future of their homes. Because of this, Sheltered Housing stock would be retained under the control of Northampton Borough Council."

This Council is alarmed by media reports quoting the Conservative Cabinet Member saying that Sheltered Housing may be transferred, in direct contradiction to this manifesto promise.

This Council calls on the Conservative administration to keep to their manifesto promise and protect sheltered housing from stock transfer."

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Meredith seconded that the motion be altered by the omission of the words "stand to lose their right to buy" from the second paragraph. The altered motion to read:

"This Council notes the Conservative group's plans to consult on stock transfer of Northampton's Council Housing.

This Council believes that this is not in the best interests of Northampton's tenants who would face higher rents and lose their democratic control over their landlords.

This Council further notes that the Conservative manifesto at the 2011 elections said:

"We recognise and value the special nature of Sheltered Housing in Northampton, and the need to protect vulnerable adults from uncertainty about the future of their homes. Because of this, Sheltered Housing stock would be retained under the control of Northampton Borough Council."

This Council is alarmed by media reports quoting the Conservative Cabinet Member saying that Sheltered Housing may be transferred, in direct contradiction to this manifesto promise.

This Council calls on the Conservative administration to keep to their manifesto promise and protect sheltered housing from stock transfer."

Upon the question being put by the Mayor the alteration was agreed by Council. Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Malpas seconded "That the question be now put." Upon a vote the motion "That the question be now put" was carried.

Upon a vote the altered motion was lost.

**11. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.**

None.

The meeting concluded at 20.38 hours.

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON THURSDAY, 24 MAY 2012 AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

**PRESENT:** HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Conroy (in the Chair).

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Bottwood, Capstick, Caswell, I. Choudary, N Choudary, Davies, Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, King, Lane, Larratt, Lynch, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Marriott, Mason, Meredith, Oldham, Palethorpe, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Stone, Strachan, Subbarayan and Wire DL.

The Mayor announced the recent death of Mr Alan Hughes a former Mayor's Serjeant. Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

### 1. ELECTION OF MAYOR

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Glynane seconded: "That Councillor Roger Conroy be elected Mayor of the Borough of Northampton for the ensuing year."

The motion was carried and Councillor R. Conroy was appointed Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Chief Executive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Mayor then took the Chair.

### 2. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING MAYOR AND MAYORESS

Councillor Mackintosh proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded "That the thanks of the Council be given to Councillor Jamie Lane and Mrs Victoria McKee for the able and courteous manner in which they have discharged their duties as Mayor and Mayoress during their term of office."

The motion was carried.

### 3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor Wire DL proposed and Councillor Mason seconded "That Councillor Les Marriott be appointed to the office of Deputy Mayor."

The motion was carried and Councillor L. Marriott was appointed Deputy Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Chief Executive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### 4. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Duncan, Mennell, Nunn and

Yates.

## **5. LONG SERVICE**

The long service of the employees shown in paragraph 5 of the agenda was noted with appreciation.

## **6. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP**

Councillor Hadland announced that Councillor Mackintosh had been appointed Leader of the Conservative Group and that Councillor Caswell had been appointed Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group.

## **7. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION GROUP**

Councillor Eales announced that Councillor Wire DL had been appointed Leader of the Opposition and Councillor Davies had been appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

## **8. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP**

Councillor Meredith announced that Councillor Beardsworth had been appointed Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and that Councillor Meredith had been appointed Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

## **9. DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET**

Council noted the Leader of the Council's appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members as follows:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Councillor Caswell-  | Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment |
| Councillor Bottwood- | Cabinet Member for Finance                                      |
| Councillor Hadland-  | Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning        |
| Councillor Markham-  | Cabinet Member for Housing                                      |
| Councillor Eldred-   | Cabinet Member for Community Engagement                         |

## **10. COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that sought Council's approval of the number and Group proportionality of seats on each Committee.

Councillor Caswell seconded adoption of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the number of seats on each Committee be as set out in the report.
  2. That the representation of the political groups be as set out in the report.

## **11. COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The Mayor announced that the next Annual Meeting of Council would take place on 23 May 2013 and that other meetings of the Council would take place on 9 July, 10 September, 22 October, 3 December 2012, 21 January, 25 February, 11 March, 22 April, 3 June and 15 July 2013."

## **12.AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that set out amendments to the Council's Constitution to reflect changes that had occurred in the Council since March 2011 when the last amendments to the Constitution were approved and to propose other specific amendments.

Councillor Caswell seconded adoption of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the amendments to the functions of the Appointment and Appeals Committee outlined in the report and in the Appendix be approved.
  2. That the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer be delegated to change all references in the Constitution from "Portfolio Holders" to "Cabinet Members" to reflect currently used terminology.
  3. That the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer be delegated the power to take all necessary actions to implement the above recommendations.

## **13.APPOINTMENTS TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that set out the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel arrangements under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and sought the appointment of two Councillors and two substitute members to the Panel.

Councillor Wire DL seconded adoption of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the arrangements for the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel as set out in the report be agreed
  2. That Councillors Mackintosh and Wire DL be appointed to the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel and that Councillors Eldred and Davies be appointed as named substitutes.

## **14.APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that set out the detailed appointments to Committees for 2012/13.

Councillor Caswell seconded adoption of the report.

- RESOLVED:** That the appointments to Committees for 2012/13 be as set out in the report.

## **15. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that sought the confirmation of Council to the appointments to outside bodies for 2012/13.

Councillor Caswell seconded the adoption of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2012/13 be confirmed as set out in Appendix A of the report.

## **16. CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS**

Councillor Mackintosh proposed the Consultation Appointments as set out on the agenda.

Councillor Caswell seconded the adoption of the Consultation Appointments.

**RESOLVED:** Civic Matters (Chief Executive)

The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, The Immediate Past Mayor and Councillors Beardsworth, Hill, Mackintosh and Wire DL.

Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (Chief Executive):  
Councillors I Choudary, Flavell, Glynane, King, and Subbarayan.

Constitution Review Working Party (Borough Secretary)  
Councillors Beardsworth, Capstick, Hill, Malpas, Meredith and Wire DL.

Councillor Development Group (Chief Executive)  
Councillors Beardsworth, Glynane, Gowen, Hallam, Patel and Stone.

## **17. MATTERS OF URGENCY**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 hours.

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON THURSDAY 21 JUNE 2012 AT SIX O’CLOCK IN THE EVENING

**PRESENT:** HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Conroy (in the Chair).

**COUNCILLORS:** Beardsworth, Bottwood, Capstick, Caswell, Davies, Duncan, Eldred, Ford, Glynane, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, King, Lane, Lynch, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Mason, Mennell, Oldham, Palethorpe, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Stone, Strachan, Wire DL and Yates

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Begum, I Choudary, N. Choudary, Eales, Flavell, Hill, King, Larratt, Marriott, Meredith, Nunn and Subbarayan.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr Harley, the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee, commented that the existing statutory arrangements for Standards came to an end on 30 June 2012 and the new arrangements proposed in the report to Council would come into effect on 1 July 2012 as part of the implementation of the Localism Act 2011. As the Chair the Standards Committee had adopted the seven Nolan principles of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership; the Committee had always acted fairly and non-politically. He thanked the Monitoring Officer and his staff for their support and the various Leaders of the Groups for their co-operation. Mr Harley noted that in 2004 the Council had been rated as “poor” but by 2009 had been short listed for an award of “most improved Council”. This was largely due to the better ethical standards adopted by Councillors over that period of time. He referred to an article in the Chronicle and Echo in 2010 that analysed the proposals for a new voluntary standards regime and raising concerns and also to a letter he had sent as part of the evidence during the Bill’s passage through Parliament. Mr Harley commented that although the new system appeared to lack teeth he believed that it could serve the public well in supporting Councillors, creating a sense of ethical wellbeing, supporting the public and the democratic process and to publicize examples of good ethical behaviour. He noted that the Standards Committee on 18 June had made two additional recommendations that the new Committee should not be “whipped” and that it should have three independent members as part of its membership.



#### 4. THE NEW STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS- THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that set out the recommendations of the Standards Committee as to new arrangements for dealing with standards issues including a Code of Conduct, Arrangements for Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Conduct and consequential changes to the Council's Constitution including to Delegations. He also referred to the Addendum that had been tabled and set out two further recommendations made by the Standards Committee. Councillor Mackintosh on behalf of the Council thanked Mr Harley, the other Independent Members and the Parish Council Representatives for their work on the current Standards Committee. Councillor Caswell seconded adoption of the report and the Addendum.

Councillors Wire DL and Beardsworth expressed their support for the proposed new arrangements.

#### RESOLVED:

1. That the existing Standards Committee be disestablished with effect from 30 June 2012.
2. That a new Standards Committee be established, with effect from 1 July 2012 comprising nine Councillors, and that the Committee appoint such co-opted persons it considers appropriate as set out in Appendix A of the report.
3. That the number of seats on each Committee as set out in paragraph 3.3.1 of the Standards Committee report be approved.
4. That the representation of the political groups as twenty five Conservative seats, sixteen Labour and four Liberal Democrat be confirmed.
5. That the Group Leaders notify the Chief Executive of their appointees to the new Standards Committee including the naming of the Chair and Deputy Chair.
6. That the Members' Code of Conduct set out in Appendix B of the Standards Committee report be approved.
7. That the Arrangements for Dealing With Allegations of Breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Code of Conduct and Codes of Conduct Adopted by Parish Councils set out in Appendix C of the Standards Committee report be approved.
8. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to take the necessary steps under the transitional arrangements to appoint the Independent Persons.
9. That the Monitoring Officer determine the appropriate payment for the Independent Persons.

10. That the Council's Constitution be amended in respect of Responsibility for Functions as set out in Appendix D of the Standards Committee report.
11. That the amendment of the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer's Delegations and the Proper Officer's Appointments under Part 8 of the Constitution be amended as set out in Appendix E of the Standards Committee report.
12. That the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer be authorised to undertake any other minor adjustments necessary to implement the Standards Committee report and appendices.
13. That it be noted that briefing sessions for members will be arranged by the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer once the changes have been adopted.
14. That members of the new Standards Committee should not be "whipped".
15. That the new Standards Committee consider appointing at least three Independent Members.

The meeting concluded at 18:13 hours.

## Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### Question 1

#### Question to Councillor Markham from Norman Adams

'With the rise in applications under the Right to Buy Scheme (i.e. eighteen in April this year as opposed to two in 2011)

Could you give assurance that current rules relating to Sheltered and property suitable for the elderly will be followed? (i.e. Tenants in sheltered accommodation cannot apply to buy their property as sheltered properties are ineligible for the Right to Buy Scheme. Tenants of properties that are suitable for the elderly may also be refused.)'

#### **Response**

*Right to Buy applications are initially received by Housing, the application and accompanying information relating to the property and tenant is then passed to Legal Services, to assess whether the application should be accepted and if not, to refuse it.*

*Legal Services will continue to adhere to the Right to Buy legislation and not consider applications from tenants of sheltered accommodation as they are excluded by Statute from the scheme. Applications from tenants of properties that are deemed suitable for the elderly will also continue to be excluded and where paragraph 11 of Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985 applies.*

*Rules and guidance laid down by legislation will continue to be followed, irrespective of the increased number of applications from all tenants.*

**Councillor Mary Markham**  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 2**

#### **Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Stone**

'How much did the borough get from the sale of St Johns car park to the University?'

#### **Response**

*The University of Northampton paid a premium (capital sum) of £1,362,000 for a 150 years lease of the land at a peppercorn annual rental.*

#### **Councillor Tim Hadland**

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 3**

#### **Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Stone**

'The Community Café in Spring Boroughs has been closed for over a year. When will it reopen as a community facility?'

#### **Response**

*I am not aware of any plans to reopen a community facility to replace the former community café in Spring Boroughs. Clearly this is not a matter for the council itself to pursue or progress but, as the premises are owned by the council, if a proposal was brought forward by a community organisation it would of course be given due consideration.*

**Councillor Brandon Eldred**

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 4**

#### **Question to Councillor Bottwood from Councillor Stone**

'Is the Northampton Carnival Arts consortium going to be compensated for the losses it made when the borough unilaterally cancelled the carnival on June 9<sup>th</sup>?'

#### **Response**

*The Borough Council's first responsibility is to ensure public safety at any event and the decision to postpone the Carnival on 9th June was made on safety grounds. It was of course disappointing but nonetheless it was the only option available to the council in light of the substantial risk the weather conditions posed to life and limb. It would have been reckless, not to say illegal, to have done otherwise. Discussions took place on 8th June with the Carnival organisers and the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive where the full support of the Borough Council was offered to the Northampton Carnival Arts Consortium for losses incurred including financial support. Subsequent meetings were held the following week with the Cabinet member for Community Engagement and I am sure Cllr Stone is as pleased as I am that the Carnival was re-arranged for 14th July.*

**Councillor Alan Bottwood**  
Cabinet Member for Finance

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 5**

#### **Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Aziz**

'Can the Cabinet member for Planning & Regeneration please give an update on the possibility of the new Grosvenor Centre (if it ever happens) providing faith facilities?'

#### **Response**

*At the Full Council meeting on 24th October 2011, I gave an assurance to ensure that a multi-faith room, which people can use at their leisure, be looked at when considering design plans for the new Grosvenor Centre. The situation remains unchanged.*

*Through existing pre-application discussions between the Development Team and Legal and General the consideration of a multi faith facility within the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment has been raised by the Development Team for consideration within the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment.*

#### **Councillor Tim Hadland**

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

## Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### Question 6

#### Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Begum

'What is the Leader doing to help cut crime on the Racecourse and does the Administration have any future joint initiatives with the Police?'

#### Response

*Northampton Borough Council continue to work in partnership with Northamptonshire Police. Partnership analytical research continues as an ongoing process, looking at a range of crime issues across the town, and also includes issues relating to The Racecourse. Joint Police and Warden patrols take place across The Racecourse on a regular basis, and as and when required advice and support is provided to park users. October 2011 also saw the introduction of a Park Ranger to The Racecourse. The Ranger meets with the Police on a regular basis, and as with the Wardens, joint patrols are undertaken as part of their duties. Legitimate use of the park continues to be encouraged via organised events and sporting activities, as a busy park is less likely to attract criminal activity. Some examples of the activity being undertaken is Street Football, Street Basketball, weekly park runs and health walks. There is future planned partnership activity with local schools, which will see engagement with young people in order to raise awareness and provide advice around personal safety.*

**Councillor David Mackintosh**  
Leader of the Council



## Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### Question 7

#### Question to Councillor Markham from Mr Adams

'In relation to Right to Buy (RTB) would you agree that the discount can be reduced by a special rule called the cost floor ?

'Would you agree, that currently tenants under RTB are liable to the previous ten years being taken into account BUT in the case of PRTB the amount of years is fifteen?'

#### **Response**

*The right to a discount is based on the number of years a person has been a tenant, converted to a percentage. The actual discount which can be received is limited to a maximum of £75,000. A special rule called the cost floor means that a property cannot be sold for less than the aggregate of all costs incurred by the Council over a specified period of time. The period taken into account is 10 years for council tenants and 15 years for housing association tenants with a preserved right to buy. However, because of the current value of property, it is unlikely that cost floors will actually have any effect.*

**Councillor Mary Markham**  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 8**

#### **Question to Councillor Caswell from Councillor Meredith**

'Please can you tell me when the grass levels that surrounding estates will start to be cut reasonably and not left to grow out of control?'

#### **Response**

*The excessive rain during April has led to delays. Extra resources have been brought in to help catch up and we expect to be back on track shortly.*

**Councillor John Caswell**  
Cabinet Member for Environment

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 9**

#### **Question to Councillor Caswell from Councillor Meredith**

'Please can you tell me why it is taken three months to order paint to clean off graffiti on Talavera way in my division?'

#### **Response**

*I have made enquiries on your behalf and will write to you shortly with an answer. The delay sounds unreasonable and I apologise for the inconvenience that it has caused you.*

**Councillor John Caswell**  
Cabinet Member for Environment

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 10**

#### **Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Meredith**

'Can you tell me how the residents of Thorplands are going to get any input from the Council now that the neighbourhood management teams are going to be made redundant?'

#### **Response**

*All councillors are being encouraged to be community leaders in their wards. Many councillors already do this very well. To assist councillors two additional Neighbourhood Wardens will be recruited and an extra Park Ranger. Training will also be offered to those councillors who wish to take up the opportunity.*

**Councillor Brandon Eldred**

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

## **Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

### **Question 11**

#### **Question to Councillor Caswell from Councillor Beardsworth**

'At the Council meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April you advised members and the public that the time to review the Enterprise Contract would be at the end of the first year i.e. in June 2012. The way that you answered the question implied that no other formal reviews had taken place during the first year.

'Can you confirm that a joint Client Team was established with Daventry District Council to monitor the contract as detailed in the report to cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012?

'How many times have you as portfolio holder received formal reports from the Enterprise joint client team during the last 12 months?

'Have you as Portfolio Holder met Enterprise Management at any time during the last 12 months to formally express concern at the service delivery performance of the contract? When did these meetings take place and were you accompanied by any other cabinet member?

'It is reported in the media that Enterprise are to be fined £250,000 as a result of service failures during the first 12 months of the contract. It is surprising that Overview and Scrutiny and Councillors have not been supplied with details of the specific service failures. Will you please provide details of the failures which justify fines being applied in your reply to this question?'

#### **Response**

*I can confirm that a joint client team was established with Daventry District Council. I receive monthly performance monitoring reports and attend a quarterly partnership board, which is the key vehicle for monitoring the contract and for raising issues and concerns. These meetings are also attended by the relevant cabinet member for Daventry. The Leader and I have also met with senior representatives from Enterprise.*

*It is correct that I am implementing payment deductions against Enterprise, which could be in excess of £250k. These deductions will relate to performance failures in a number of areas, including complaints and missed bins. I am required to give Enterprise time to comment. Once the information is finalised I will share the detail with colleagues.*

**Councillor John Caswell**  
Cabinet Member for Environment

## Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### Question 12

#### Question to Councillor Markham from Councillor Beardsworth

*'This council's corporate plan states that one of the long-term outcomes that it wishes to achieve is meeting the Decent Homes Standard.*

*'The previous Liberal Democrat administration made budgetary provision to address the serious non-conformance to the decent homes standard from 2010 onwards.*

*'In your report to this council and in previous reports, you fail to report to council and the public on progress achieving this Corporate Objective.*

*'Can you provide regular updates in your future Council reports and in response to this question advise members and the public of the Decent Homes programme in 2012/13.*

- *What is the target number of NBC homes that were planned to be brought back within the Decent Homes standard during 2012/13?*
- 
- *How many additional homes have fallen outside the decent homes standard since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012?*
- *How many homes have been renovated since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and now comply with the Decent Home standard. How does this compare with the planned programme of compliance?*
- *How many households, where work has commenced, are currently experiencing an overrun to the programme to upgrade their home to decent homes standard?*

*'Has the expenditure year to date, delivered the number of decent homes that were planned?'*

#### Response

1. *The target for the end of 2012/13 is that we reduce NBC non decency to 41.1%, this equates to a 7.8% reduction. This means bringing back to decency 945 properties, approximately 236 per quarter.*
2. *This year a total of 273 will go from being decent to being non decent. (This has been reduced from the time of the Decent Homes Backlog bid from 330 due to the ongoing work being carried out in the Decent Homes programme.)*
3. *Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 238 homes have been made decent and a further 135 had elements done to keep them decent. This years Decent Homes Back Log funding requires that we make 546 homes decent at a cost of £4,540,000. In the first quarter we have made 238 homes decent at cost of £2,128,995, therefore we are well ahead of the requirements to get the funding.*

4. *Currently we have 160 properties open over the two Decent Homes Contractors and of these 45 have gone out of time both through contractor delays and access issues.*

Yes

**Councillor Mary Markham**  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Question for Full Council Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### Question 13

#### Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Beardsworth

'Will the Portfolio Holder advise the council of the future of the award winning Sheep Street Toilets?

- Have they been closed?
- Is this a temporary or permanent closure?
- What alternative provision has been provided to the market traders and the public?
- Does the Portfolio Holder believe a closure of these toilets would be detrimental to the attractiveness of Northampton as a shopping destination?

#### **Response**

*Brand new toilet facilities will be located at the Fish Market site as part of the Bus Interchange development. These new facilities will be open to the public in place of the old Sheep Street toilets.*

#### **Councillor Tim Hadland**

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning



# Agenda Item 7

**Council**  
**Date: 9 July 2012**

## **Cabinet Member Presentations**

**Report of the Leader of the Council**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**



**Leader of the Council**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

Following the evacuation of Billing Aquadrome on 3rd May I visited the evacuees at Lings Forum. Borough Council employees were amongst those who helped deal with the emergency, and thankfully there was no loss of life or property.

After months of talks and various meetings with the Secretary of State for Transport, Government funding for our new train station was formally announced on 14<sup>th</sup> May. This is great news for Northampton and will allow us to build a modern facility to the benefit of commuters and the reputation of our town.

Between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April the Northampton Alive event was held in the Great Hall, which gave myself and the Cabinet the opportunity to speak to people about regeneration projects such as Grosvenor/Greyfriars, the Bus Interchange and the St Johns development to name but a few. I am very pleased that over 1500 people showed so much interest and enthusiasm in the future of Northampton.

On 20<sup>th</sup> June I had the pleasure of launching the Enterprise Zone website with Dr. Anne Limb, Chair of SEMLEP. The new website will be an important tool through which Northampton's Enterprise Zone can be promoted and marketed.

The St Johns car park has now been closed following the transfer of the land to Northampton University. The closure will allow the University to start its exciting relocation programme by building new halls of residence that will bring hundreds of students into the heart of our town, and eventually help revitalise our Town Centre economy by bringing many more jobs and students into the heart of Northampton.

Northampton Borough Council and Legal & General met on 18<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the development agreement for the Grosvenor Centre extension. The Borough Council made clear its desire to see progress towards the redevelopment scheme as soon as possible and has asked for urgent clarification on timelines for the development. A series of fortnightly meetings has been arranged to give the project momentum. Northampton Borough Council is now waiting for further information on the proposed timescales for the review and a clear indication of what it might look like. It was also agreed that the Bus Interchange planning application should continue, as it is a vital part of the wider development of the town. What is clear is that this is the prime location for retail development in the town and moving ahead with the new Bus Interchange is central to any plans for regeneration in Northampton Town Centre.

On 21<sup>st</sup> July I will be attending the official opening of the Northampton Skate Park. This will be the first Northampton Alive project to reach completion, and represents significant capital investment for the benefit of the young people of our town, that will also help attract many visitors from outside the Borough.

As part of this administration's commitment to getting value for tax payer's money, preparations for entering into Local Government Shared Services are continuing well. Combining back room functions with other local authorities will allow us to make significant savings in back office costs, that can in turn be reinvested in front line services.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July Northampton was privileged to be visited by the Olympic Torch on its way to the opening ceremony in London. This was a once in a lifetime event for our town and it was great to see so many people visit the Town Centre to enjoy the occasion.

Over the long weekend between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June Northampton played its part in celebrating HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The main event in the county was of course the Big Jubilee Picnic at Delapre Park, which I am pleased to say was a success despite the bad weather.

Following the unfortunate postponement of the Northampton Carnival in June, I am pleased that following talks with the carnival organisers the event will now take place on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

On 25<sup>th</sup> June I had the great privilege of raising the flag at The Guildhall to mark Armed Forces Day. Our armed forces make a tremendous sacrifice for our country, and it was a real honour to be able to demonstrate our appreciation in this simple way to those who risk their lives in the service of The United Kingdom. Thank you to all those who came along and gave their support.

## **Legal Services**

Since 30th March the following prosecutions and court actions have been taken:

### Environmental Health

- S87 EPA £100 fine, £300 costs (cigarette dropping)
- S46 EPA £250 fine, £400 costs (rubbish on street)

### Benefit Fraud

- S111 SSAA 1992 – 12 month Community order with 200 hours Community Work and £300 costs
- S112 SSAA 1992 - £200 fine, £400 costs
- S112 SSAA 1992 - £800 fine, £500 costs

### Possession

- 2 x Possession of Property from Trespassers/squatters
- Possession of Property on grounds of anti-social behaviour and threats to residents, £475 costs

## **Commercial and Corporate**

Since my last report fourteen leases, eight Management Agreements and one leasehold disposal have been made in connection with the Community Centres.

Support is also being given to the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust and the Delapre Abbey Project Board in appointing consultants for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

## **Democratic Services**

The paperless trial is now underway for Overview & Scrutiny. The first meeting was held on 28th May and was an opportunity for councillors to trial various devices that would remove the need for paper to be printed for meetings. On this occasion, the new approach omitted the need for the 133-page agenda to be printed for those present at the meeting. Feedback was positive, with some areas of improvement being identified. The Committee and Panels will continue to trial this approach until an analysis and recommendations are published later in the year.

The Annual Canvass began this month. This year it is more important than ever that residents in Northampton confirm whether the details held for them on the electoral roll are correct as this register will be used for the Police and Crime Commissioner election on 15th November.

## **Community Safety**

Northampton Community Safety Partnership has launched a crackdown to drive out vehicle crime in the Borough. Posters and flyers giving advice to motorists to help keep their cars and possessions safe have been distributed in an effort to reduce the number of break ins.

With the country gearing up for a host of major sporting tournaments, domestic abuse support groups and community safety partnerships in Northamptonshire are appealing to victims to seek help and not suffer in silence. National statistics show that the number of domestic violence incidents reported increases by 30 per cent during major sporting events such as Euro 2012. Figures from local support organisations also show a rise in the number of people accessing their services during major tournaments. Support agencies from around the county have joined together with Northampton Town Football Club to raise awareness of the issue and tell people how to get help. Posters, mirror stickers and leaflets are being distributed at a variety of locations around the county over the next few months, including pubs, clubs, council offices, shops and sports centres.

On 17th May the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) was celebrated in The Courtyard at The Guildhall with a minute's noise. Councillors and officers from Northampton Borough Council along with representatives from community groups attended the event, which included speeches about the importance of IDAHO in raising awareness of people in the UK and around the world who are unable to speak out due to homophobia, transphobia, hate crime and prejudice.

The winners of the Anne Frank Awards (Northampton and County) for 2012 have been announced by Northampton Youth Forum. Set up to recognise the work of unsung heroes, the awards are a way to say thank you to inspirational people who make a real difference in their local community. My congratulations to all of the winners.

**David Mackintosh**  
Leader of the Council





## **Cabinet Member Report for Environment**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

#### **Environmental Health**

Since April our Neighbourhood Wardens have been stepping up patrols across the town to remind owners of the need to clear up after their dogs. As well as encouraging more dog owners to pick up after their pets, they have been appealing to the public to report incidents and problem areas to the council so that targeted action can be taken. Campaign posters are now up in parks, community centres, shops and other key locations as part of the council's educational approach to tackling the problem, and wardens have been offering information and free dog fouling bags to dog owners. 32 people have been given advice and one fixed penalty notice has been issued.

In May an individual was successfully prosecuted for littering in Northampton Town Centre. A fine of £100, with £300 costs and £15 victim surcharge was levied. On 1st June a resident was prosecuted for breach of a section 46 Notice (for persistently failing to put out their waste as required), a fine of £250, £400 costs and £15 was imposed.

Three cautions have been issued during May and June. Two of these were for fly-tipping and the third for failure in duty of care regarding controlled waste.

#### **Environmental Services**

The Town is looking bright and colourful in readiness for Britain in Bloom judging. The Council has been very well supported in its preparations by partner organisations and community groups. In partnership with the Town Centre BID, Northampton in Bloom hanging and barrier baskets have been put up around the Town Centre, making the gateways into the town look more inviting to visitors and shoppers.

The joint waste contract with our partner Daventry District Council is now twelve months old. I therefore consider it timely for a review to take place to consider such matters as performance, value for money, customer service and service improvement. An independent team has been asked to undertake this work. Ahead of the review, Northampton Borough and Daventry District Councils have decided to implement payment penalties for the months of April and May after continuing complaints from the public and poor performance in areas such as missed bins and boxes, and dealing with fly tipping and graffiti.

The Cemeteries Team has been awarded a Gold Standard by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management for continued improvement in memorial maintenance, grounds work, promoting environmentally friendly work practices and for their approach to dealing with the bereaved.

## **Licensing**

On 8<sup>th</sup> May the Licensing Committee opted to unify the taxi licensing policy for both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles as long as they meet a new condition policy. The decision follows a three-month consultation on whether the policy in relation to the age and engine capacity of vehicles needs changing in the interests of public safety, and so that the rules are the same for both types of taxis. Before making the decision the committee considered the results of the consultation as well as industry research that had been carried out to analyse MOT inspectors' reports on all Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles over a three-month period. As there is no evidence to suggest that the age of a vehicle determines its safety, the committee decided against introducing a new age limit. As the authority responsible for ensuring vehicles are as safe, reliable and comfortable as possible, the committee upheld the need for both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles to have two MOT tests each year and for all vehicles, including new vehicles, to undergo a six monthly test and check by the Council. The committee called for additional checks on the condition of vehicles to make sure required standards are maintained. These conditions will apply to all hire vehicles including those adapted for wheelchairs and those employed for specific events such as weddings.

## **Parks**

The renovated Abington Park aviaries were officially opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Work began in late March as part of a programme of improvements to parks and open spaces. Over the past eight weeks workmen have replaced the bird sheds, put in new feeding stations, breeding boxes and perches, repaired the path and installed new fencing alongside the path.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May school children from Cedar Road and Abington Vale primary schools helped plant a Jubilee inspired colour scheme of red, white and blue geraniums and aubrietias in the flowerbeds in Abington Park's old rose garden in preparation for the Jubilee weekend celebrations.

## **Carbon Management**

The Green Office Guide was re-launched on The Borough Council's intranet in May and has been promoted to staff. Managers have been encouraged to nominate potential Eco Marshalls who will promote good practice in energy management to colleagues across the council.

Three Salix funded projects are due to commence in the near future. These are the installation of improved loft insulation at the Guildhall, the upgrading of lighting in The Grosvenor Centre Car Park and the installation of LED lighting in St Michaels Car Park. The new lighting is expected to save 206,000Kw/hrs of electricity and almost £18,000 a year in energy costs.

Businesses, residents and schools in Northamptonshire were urged to recycle their broken or unwanted electronics at a three-day event held at The University of Northampton between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June. The event was hosted by The University of Northampton, Northampton Borough Council in partnership with Enterprise, Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, Northamptonshire County Council,

Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership, and European Recycling Platform (ERP), as part of a drive to increase the amount of electronic waste that is recycled.

**John Caswell**

Deputy Leader of the Council  
Cabinet Member for Environment





## **Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

#### **Neighbourhood Management**

This administration believes that responsibility for community leadership at ward level sits firmly with frontline councillors. In order to more effectively support councillors in this aspect of their role it is proposed that we delete the Neighbourhood Manager post and the three Neighbourhood Coordinator posts and create two additional Neighbourhood Warden posts and an additional part time Park Ranger post.

#### **Councillor Community Fund**

The Councillor Community Fund is now up and running. Training sessions have been attended by councillors and the first grants have been processed and issued. This scheme will empower Councillors to allocate funding directly to parts of the community where it can have the most benefit. This was a key manifesto objective of this administration.

#### **Events**

It is of course a very busy time of the year for the events team, who are now working to deliver this summer's extensive programme of events. All events so far have been well attended and well received by the public, and are a vital part of our efforts to attract more and more visitors into our town.

The Big Jubilee Picnic was held on 3rd June at Delapre Park, the main event in Northamptonshire to celebrate HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, which was organised by Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council and hosted by HM Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire. Some 3,000 metres of bunting were put up across Bridge Street, Gold Street, Drapery, Fish Street, Abington Street, St Giles Street, and Guildhall Road, and numerous street party applications, countless other parties in people's homes and gardens, and the biggest event in the county. To help get people in the mood for the Jubilee celebrations three free 'Crafternoons' were also held for children at The Guildhall during May.

Following talks with the Carnival Committee the 2012 Northampton Carnival has been rescheduled for Saturday 14th July, following the unfortunate cancellation in June due to bad weather and public safety issues. Local businesses have also been contacted for their views as to how in future years the event could be better used to help boost trade in our Town Centre.

After months of talks with operators and Town Centre businesses, it has been confirmed that this year's three day St Crispin's Street Fair will begin on Sunday 28th October. The fair is expected to bring thousands of extra visitors into the heart of our town over the course of the event, and is part of the administration's commitment to revitalise our Town Centre.

A 21st century Godiva that stands 33ft high will be stopping over in Northampton at the end of July as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad funded by Arts Council England. Northampton will host 'Godiva Awakes' on 31st July as it makes its way from Coventry to London. The puppet will be dressed by fashion designer Zandra Rhodes and shod in bespoke riding boots designed by Northamptonshire boot maker Horace Batten.

Games Time, a spectacular outdoor stage show combining music, dance, video, fireworks and professional dancers, will be performed in Northampton on 7th July. The show gives volunteers the chance to learn new skills working with professional dancers and choreographers, costume makers and set designers as well as seeing how a large outdoor show is put together. The event, funded by Legacy Trust UK to help build a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, has been produced by Derby based Déda, in partnership with Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the Royal & Derngate theatres.

In partnership with Northamptonshire based Formula 1 team Sahara Force India and the Royal and Derngate, from 2<sup>nd</sup> until 6<sup>th</sup> July a Formula 1 car will be on display in the auditorium of the Derngate Theatre. In the run up to the British Grand Prix the car will be a visible reminder of Northampton's place at the heart of the motorsport industry.

Preparations are now well advanced for this year's Christmas celebrations, which are scheduled to begin on the 22nd November with the switch on of the Christmas lights.

## **Culture & Heritage**

Northampton Borough Council's Museum Service has secured £21,200 in Heritage Lottery funding for its youth curators' group to carry out a world footwear heritage project. The group of young curators aged between 13 and 25 have been working with the museum for over a year to help develop 'The World at Your Feet' exhibition which opened at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery on 31st March.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> June Northampton Museum's Shoe Collection was showcased at the Four Counties Diamond Jubilee Garden Party at Burghley House. A pair of shoes that had belonged to Queen Victoria were singled out for presentation directly to HM The Queen.

On 18th May Northampton Museum & Art Gallery hosted 'Leather Heaven'. The event was an opportunity for people to discover more about the Waterer Spiers collection of leather and also featured magic by David Penn of 'Britain's Got Talent' fame, music by acclaimed jazz musician Lincoln Noel, and story telling by Alex Ultradish. The evening was delivered in partnership with the trustees of the Museum of Leathercraft Council and the Friends of Northampton Museums.

A touring exhibition that explores the mystery of where William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway opened at Abington Park Museum on 8th June. The exhibition included Costumes from the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2000 production of 'Romeo and Juliet', as well as others from productions of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Anthony and Cleopatra'.

A family-oriented exhibition inspired by local tales and legends is being held at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery from 9th June to 5th August. The 'Telling Tales' exhibition by artist Peter Slight combines models, papercut pictures and embellished photographs to tell the story of a missing Prince lost deep in mysterious wood. The tale is inspired by the rich variety of local stories and folklore associated with Northamptonshire

## **Community Governance**

As part of the Community Governance Review the Borough Council has received petitions signed by at least one in ten of the electorate in each of the following areas:

- Parklands
- Rectory Farm
- Sunnyside and Obelisk
- West Hunsbury
- Westone
- St James
- Hunsbury Meadow

The report was passed by the General Purposes committee on 20<sup>th</sup> June recommending that options to create a number of new Parish Councils across the town now be explored. Other proposals were for boundary changes to the north of Wootton & East Hunsbury Parish Council, between Wootton & East Hunsbury Parish Council and Collingtree Parish Council, between Hardingstone Parish Council and Great Houghton Parish Council, to the east of Upton Parish Council and for a division of Wootton & East Hunsbury Parish Council into two separate Parishes.

Earlier this year Northampton Borough Council agreed to transfer Duston Community Centre to the Parish Council. As the first community centre to be transferred to a Parish Council there are now plans to make the building the heart of local life. Over the next five-years the Parish Council will be looking to double the floorspace available in the community centre as well as double the usage of the facility by getting more events, groups and activities to use it. This is a great example of how local people can be given the power to make things work for their own communities. On 25th May a meeting was held at Duston Community Centre for Duston residents interested in what is being done.

## **ICT**

A new Contract has been agreed with the Borough Council's phone suppliers, which will mean annual savings of £16,000 for the next two years.

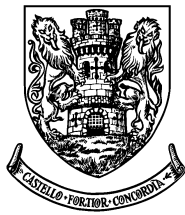
Several upgrades of existing systems have taken place, including the Northgate Revenues and Benefits System, E-Benefits (electronic benefit applications), Electoral Registration and the Financial Management System.

Wi-Fi has now been installed in our Westbridge Depot to provide greater flexibility for staff when doing their jobs.

Training has begun for Councillors to support the move to paperless Committee Meetings.

A Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy has been developed and “Good Technology” is being used to support officers and councillors to access information remotely and securely. Following a successful trial this technology is now being used more widely.

**Councillor Brandon Eldred**  
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement



## **Cabinet Member Report for Finance**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

Work during May and June has been focused across services on maintaining levels of performance. Alongside this the Revenues and Benefits, Finance and Facilities Management services have been working on outputs required as part of the Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) programme. This work will ensure that we have all necessary data to support options for entering into LGSS.

#### **Finance**

Work in April and May continued in order to ensure the completion of the final accounts process, and preparations are already being made for the 2012/2013 budget.

Northampton continues to lead and support the work of the Chief Finance Officers for Northamptonshire around assessing the requirements of reforms that impact on our financial management. In particular, the localisation of Council Tax support, Business Rates retention and Council Tax discount reform.

#### **Revenues and Benefits**

Work loads within Benefits increased again in May and April, following the implementation of the previously reported ATLAS system. We have already implemented the first phase of the ATLAS system, which has seen changes to Tax Credits being loaded straight into our Benefits system. This is the second phase, which picks up all changes to national Benefits. Duplication and early problems are still under review in order to ascertain if a change is required.

The service has been supporting finance colleagues in planning for the new replacement scheme for Council Tax Benefit. Work on this requires the Council to have a new local scheme in place by the end of January 2013.

#### **Facilities Management**

The Facilities Management team is currently working towards gaining British Institute of Cleaning Sciences (BICS) accreditation. This will ensure that we have four members of staff who are qualified to train our cleaning staff and become assessors. This would allow us to become a training hub for other organizations.

#### **Corporate Policy and Consultation**

As part of Self Regulation Framework the spring wave of the Residents' Satisfaction Survey has been carried out and the findings were reported to the Reputation Management Board on 6th June.

The recruitment drive for members of the Residents' Panel is still underway.

## **HR**

A confidential advice line and counselling service has been introduced for employees. The service has been developed and designed to support the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the Council's employees.

The New Starter e-process went live on the Council's intranet on 31st May. This has replaced several cumbersome manuals and forms used by different departments.

The Organisational Development eighteen month catalogue has now gone live on the Council's intranet and includes bespoke development programmes for all team members across NBC.

### **Alan Bottwood**

Cabinet Member for Finance



## **Cabinet Member Report for Housing**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

Delegates attended the Annual Housing Conference, which took place from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June. Issues covered included the economy, investment, demand for new homes and the importance of housing to economic growth.

#### **Property Maintenance Operational Performance**

Improvements in performance following the roll out of Personal Desktop Assistants (PDAs) are now being seen with performance ahead of targets in all the measured areas. Training has commenced on the release of the second phase of PDA's to repairs operatives, with full roll out expected by the end of June.

#### **Preventing Homelessness**

Northampton Borough Council has secured almost £500,000 to tackle homelessness after successfully bidding for two lots of Government funding. It follows months of bidding rounds and includes £250,000 for the national 'No Second Night Out' initiative and £240,000 towards homelessness prevention. Both pots of money have been awarded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) - part of a £20m DCLG fund to help local authorities tackle homelessness and rough sleeping nationally. The first allocation - £250,000 - has been awarded to the Borough Council and Northampton Association for Accommodation for Single Homeless (NAASH) from the Homelessness Transition Fund. The money will go towards rolling out the 'No Second Night Out' initiative. Northampton is one of only nineteen local authorities piloting the 'No Second Night Out' scheme and the only one representing the East Midlands region.

#### **Oasis House**

Oasis House has now opened for business, and the formal opening will be later this year. The scheme has been delivered in partnership with Midland Heart. The new housing provision consists of 48 units of accommodation, including 39 self-contained apartments, nine emergency units, four of which have dog kennels attached. It acts as a multi-functional site bringing accommodation at Acorn House and day-time drop in facilities at the Hope Centre under one roof. The scheme also includes NAASH, a day centre, IT suite, arts and crafts centre, a kitchen garden, housing advice service and training facilities.

#### **Landlord Services**

Landlord Services are working on a project this summer aimed at ensuring all of our estates and common areas are safe, clean and tidy. In addition to the usual monthly checks, housing officers are gathering information to report on the condition of communal areas to identify any additional works that need to be carried out.

## **Right to Buy**

The Authority has signed an agreement with the Secretary of State to enable us to retain and use some of the Right to Buy receipts to use towards the provision of affordable rented homes, either new build or existing properties. The exact amount of money we may have will depend on the number of sales that take place. As of May 2012 we had received 34 applications; 21 for houses and 13 for flats.

## **Call Care**

May saw the 25th anniversary of Call Care, the vital service that gives 7,500 elderly and vulnerable residents in Northamptonshire peace of mind and continued independence. Call Care is operated by Northampton Borough Council 365 days a year and 24 hours a day, and on average responds to 400 alarm calls a day from sheltered housing tenants and housing association residents as well as private homeowners across the county who pay for the service. Between April 2011 and March 2012, control operators dealt with 151,594 calls and in 97.9% of cases responded within 60 seconds. With the population living longer and more and more people wanting to live independently in older age, the need for services such as Call Care is more important than ever. Lifeline is being rolled out to Northampton Borough Council's sheltered housing tenants in stages and is also available to private/corporate customers. Private owner/occupiers can take advantage of the Lifeline service at the cost of £5/week. There are currently 1,270 private/owner occupiers who subscribe to Lifeline.

## **Mary Markham**

Cabinet Member for Housing





## **Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**Date: 9 July 2012**

### **TOWN CENTRE OPERATIONS**

#### **Bridge Street**

Initial clearance works have begun to remove the fire damaged materials from the old Angel Hotel building on Bridge Street to allow for a fuller examination of the site and a review of the scaffolding. This is part of the Bridge Street improvement work being conducted in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council. The supporting scaffolding will be reduced as soon as it is safe to do so.

The Go Safari animals, a collection of large plastic rhinos, elephants, lions, hippos and giraffes, have been installed around the Town Centre along with smaller animals in the shopping centres and local shops. Go Safari trail maps are available which highlight the animals locations and invite visitors to stroll around the Town Centre and enjoy all the things our town has to offer.

#### **Northampton Town centre Ltd (BID)**

We are currently working with the Town Centre BID and other partners to develop and deliver schemes to use the High Street Innovation Fund to reduce the number of vacant properties in our Town Centre.

#### **Market**

Special rates are available for anyone who wants to set up a business, or any out of town trader seeking to open a stall on our Market Square. Other deals have also been made available for existing Northampton market traders looking to expand their business or introduce new traders.

#### **Parking**

Following conversations with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) we were able to successfully negotiate the opening of the Claret Car Park on 5<sup>th</sup> May to help ease match day parking problems in St James. Discussions with both the Cobblers, Saints and the HCA are ongoing to finalise arrangements for the use of the car park on match days going forward once fixtures have been announced.

In partnership with Northamptonshire County Council we have arranged that all on-street car parking, and parking in Borough Council owned Town Centre car parks will be free on 2<sup>nd</sup> July for people visiting our town to see the Olympic Torch Relay. This is a once in a lifetime event and we want to encourage people to come and see the torch and enjoy a day in our Town Centre.

## **Heritage Open days**

This year's Heritage Open Day weekend runs from 6th to 9th September. Heritage Open Days weekend celebrates the richness of our town's heritage. This year we also have the opportunity to build on the spirit of the Jubilee and the excitement of the Olympics. We have invited many other organisations to get involved, and I hope 2012 will be a year to remember.

## **REGENERATION**

### **Train Station**

On 14<sup>th</sup> May we were pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Transport to Northampton to announce that the bid for Government funding for a new train station had been successful. Many months of hard work went into securing this money, and the Leader of the Council met with the Secretary of State for Transport on 8<sup>th</sup> March to push things along. The new train station will be a fitting gateway for people visiting our town, and will allow this important heritage site to be properly preserved and presented. Construction should start before the end of the year.

### **Northampton Alive**

Northampton residents were able to find out about Northampton's major regeneration projects by visiting the Northampton Alive exhibition in the Great Hall at The Guildhall. The week-long exhibition took the form of a large floor map of the Town Centre, accompanied by display panels giving details of individual projects. Around 1,500 people visited 'Northampton Alive' and spoke to me, the Leader, other Cabinet members and regeneration experts about development in the town. We have also presented Northampton Alive to residents' groups, businesses and Northamptonshire Chamber, and further roadshows and events are planned for later in the year.

### **Skatepark**

Construction is progressing well, and this will be the first Northampton Alive project to be completed. The opening will be on 21<sup>st</sup> July, in time for everyone to enjoy this exciting new venue during the summer holidays. It is a state of the art design, and we are confident that it will quickly acquire a regional and national profile.

### **Grosvenor Centre**

Northampton Borough Council and Legal & General met on 18<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the development agreement for the Grosvenor Centre extension. The Borough Council made clear its desire to see progress towards the redevelopment scheme as soon as possible and has asked for urgent clarification on timelines for the development. A series of fortnightly meetings has been arranged to give the project momentum. Both parties agreed that Legal & General would review the current scheme, following the announcement that it may no longer be viable. The Council is now waiting for further information on the proposed timescales for the review and a clear indication of what it might look like. It was also agreed that the Bus Interchange planning application should continue, as it is a vital part of the wider development of the town.

## **New Bus Interchange**

More than 1,000 people also visited Northamptonshire County Council's separate drop-in sessions to view the plans for the Bus Interchange and ask questions of the designers. The project is a vital component of the wider development of the Town Centre. The Planning Committee will meet to consider the planning application will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

## **Sixfields**

The Council is in advanced talks with Northampton Town Football Club and the Homes and Communities Agency on an agreement to pave the way for development in the Sixfields area. Any development will complement the plans for the Enterprise Zone and would attract businesses to invest and create jobs. This could ultimately see hotel and conference facilities, offices and retail use on the Sixfields site. The agreement would also enable the football club to move forward with the development of their stadium.

## **Student Housing**

St John's surface car park was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> June to allow the University of Northampton to build a 464 room halls of residence on the site and bring over £20m worth of investment into our town. The Lease to the University was completed the following week. The car park accommodated less than 150 of the Council's provision of over 5,000 spaces, and at any one time there are at least 1,800 empty spaces available. The development will start on site shortly with an eighteen month build schedule. It will be a welcome boost to the Town Centre economy. This is the second major development to start in the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone.

## **Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone**

The Business Plan was be presented to the Enterprise Zone Board on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

The website for the Enterprise Zone ([www.northamptonez.co.uk](http://www.northamptonez.co.uk)) was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> June at a breakfast meeting for partner organisations and business leaders. This will be an essential tool in promoting the investment opportunities that the Zone represents.

## **Abington Park Boating Lake**

Improvements to footpaths and drainage around Abington Park Boating Lake are due to be finished on 13th July.

## **Cemeteries**

Restoration of the Victorian chapel in Kingsthorpe Cemetery in Northampton was completed on 15<sup>th</sup> May. The chapel is one of two that are being restored as part of Northampton Borough Council's ongoing programme of works to safeguard the town's architectural assets.

## **PLANNING**

### **Neighbourhood planning**

Over the last few months the Castle Partnership, supported by the University of Northampton and Northampton Borough Council, has been working on developing the boundary of the area the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan would cover. Spring Boroughs is one of three "trial" Neighbourhood Plans in Northampton Borough. The other two areas are Blackthorn and Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish. The three areas are part of a government programme called 'Neighbourhood Front Runners' and were each given £20,000 to help them throughout the process. The consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Area ended on 6th July, and the application means that Spring Boroughs could become one of the first areas in the country to be a designated Neighbourhood Area.

### **Joint Core Strategy**

This document will be considered, together with the focussed changes adopted after public consultation, at the meeting of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July. This follows a series of meetings and work groups over recent months. This is a most important step in Planning Policy covering Northampton and its neighbouring authorities.

### **Tim Hadland**

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning



## Council 9th July 2012

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Report Title</b> | <b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012</b> |
|---------------------|--|

### Agenda Status: PUBLIC

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12, as attached at Appendix A.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.

#### 3. Background and Issues

- 3.1 Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees report annually to Council on their workings and make recommendations for further work programmes, and amended working methods if appropriate. Attached at Appendix A is the seventh Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report to the Council, covering the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It aims to provide a succinct summary of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees appointed, as well as the main issues scrutinised during the course of the year.

#### 4. Options

- 4.1 This report is for information and therefore there are no options for decision.

#### 5. Implications (including financial implications)

##### 5.1 Priorities

- 5.1.1 Effective Overview and Scrutiny arrangements leading to improvements in service design and delivery contribute to achieving the ambition of being a well managed Council where the customer is at the heart of what we do.

##### 5.2 Policy Framework

- 5.2.1 The work of Overview and Scrutiny plays a major part in the development of the Council's policy framework. This is identified in the Annual Report.

##### 5.3 Resources and Risk

- 5.3.1 Not applicable.

## **5.4 Legal**

### **5.4.1 Statutory power to undertake the proposals as set out in the report**

**5.4.1.1** The duties to undertake Overview and Scrutiny are set out in the Local Government Act 2000.

## **5.5 Equality**

5.5.1 Overview and Scrutiny carries out Equality Impact Assessments for its Reviews.

## **5.6 Consultees (Internal and External)**

5.6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2011/2012 has been consulted on the content of the Annual Report.

## **6. Background Papers**

Key background information: -

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee agendas and minutes
- Overview and Scrutiny Review reports

Report Author and Title: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer on behalf of Councillor Leslie Marriott, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Report of the  
**Overview & Scrutiny  
Committee**

**Annual Report  
2011/2012**



## **A Message from Councillor Les Marriott, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report published by Northampton Borough Council gives a summary of the Committee's activities over the past twelve months and maps out its plans for the forthcoming year. I emphasise the amount of work the Committee has undertaken this year, particularly in the light of Review work commencing in the summer rather than early spring due to the local elections 2011.

The Localism Act 2011 consolidates the contents of the 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2009 Act. It involves some minor amendments in particular in the powers of district Councils and the role of scrutiny as regards local partners. Therefore Scrutiny Committees play a crucial role in examining the work of local bodies helping make sure they offer a good service to residents and they will have greater flexibility about how they carry out this scrutiny role. Scrutiny has, and is continuing to ensure its work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and public – consulting with a wide range of organisations, partners and the public for suggestions for scrutiny review and then on the actual work programme. O&S works with the community and key partners to respond to concerns.

I was pleased that over thirty suggestions were put forward for Scrutiny Review by members of the public and local groups for Review work in 2012/2013.

Progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the last year is reported within the Annual Report. It is vital that the work of scrutiny adds value and improvement and I feel the conclusions and recommendations from the in-depth Reviews undertaken this year have really demonstrated that. Overview and Scrutiny continues to involve and work closely with external partners and organisations who, through the Reviews carried out this year, have all contributed to the well being of the people of Northampton. I emphasise that the support of all those involved in Reviews is required for a successful outcome.

I am pleased to highlight that Overview and Scrutiny continues to become involved with decisions at an early stage. Scrutiny provided its input into the de-pooling of Council dwelling rents and the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) – Proposed amendments for pre submission this year. It has pre-decision scrutiny already planned for 2012/2013.

I would like to commend that Induction Programme for Overview and Scrutiny. The majority of Councillors on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2011/2012 were newly elected and I am pleased that development sessions on Overview and Scrutiny and chairing skills were programmed in early in the new Year. This ensured that Councillors were equipped with all the relevant knowledge prior to the inaugural meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the first round of Scrutiny Panels. I have given my commitment to the continuation of the four year rolling training programme for Overview and Scrutiny.



**Councillor Les Marriott**  
**Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee**





# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Key Achievements

### How was this impact made during 2011-2012?

The current structure for Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) was introduced in May 2010, comprising an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three Panels. The Panels carry out in-depth Scrutiny Reviews, whilst the O&S Committee concentrates on strategic issues, including holding the Executive to account, performance management and scrutiny of crime and disorder. This structure has continued to attract increased public participation and the involvement of non-Executives in Scrutiny Reviews.

#### **Involvement of Non- Executives (not Scrutiny Members) in Overview and Scrutiny**

This O&S structure enables non-Executives, who are not O&S Members, to be fully involved in the O&S process.

**Key Example:** The Scrutiny Review of Customer Services was made up of five non-Executives, three of which were not O&S Councillors, demonstrating the complete involvement of non-Executives in the O&S process. A non-Executive from Northamptonshire County Council was co-opted to this Review highlighting joint scrutiny work.

#### **Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

In 2010 the scrutiny of crime and disorder was formalised, putting in place clear working arrangements between the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Committee. A bi-annual report from the CSP informs the O&S Committee of work undertaken, and non-Executives decide if further review or scrutiny is required. This report focuses on the levels of performance and whether crime has increased in the light of reduced resources, if so what measures have been taken to meet any shortfall in performance. This is an example of excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners. In addition to this approach to crime and disorder scrutiny, a Scrutiny Panel investigated mechanisms for the reporting of hate crime, details of which are given later within this Annual Report.

*“Overview & Scrutiny for Northampton Borough Council continues to show great interest and commitment to Community Safety/Crime and Disorder. The Committee has focused on crime and disorder issues from a public perspective and has worked in partnership with other agencies such as Northamptonshire Police. More widely their work has seen the further development of relationships and demonstrated the value scrutiny can add to partnership working.”*

**Debbie Ferguson,  
Community Safety Partnership Manager**



## Performance Management Scrutiny

At the start of the Municipal Year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received comprehensive training to enable non-Executives to undertake their performance management scrutiny role.



**Key example:** The Committee scrutinised the performance measure that looks at whether the percentage of Local Government Ombudsman correspondence dealt with on time percentage satisfied with the overall service provided by the Customer Services Officers, percentage of all calls into the contact centre answered and the One stop shop Percentage of all customers waiting less than 15 minutes. This piece of work highlighted that the Performance Indicator for the percentage of Local Government Ombudsman correspondence dealt with on time had been incorrectly drafted and has now been changed.

### Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Effectively scrutinising performance

*“.....the scrutiny review of specific measures takes place at Overview & Scrutiny meetings, following reporting to Cabinet. Measures are reviewed on an exception basis, with relevant officers being called to present, at the request of the Committee. Officers are scrutinised on performance, the causes of under performance and the corrective actions being taken. Members have undertaken active debate and offered support and challenge to the recommendations being made by officers to deliver service improvements.*

*During the year, Committee has used this opportunity to scrutinise performance and requested a briefing from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement on their customer satisfaction measures. These measures included Ombudsman correspondence dealt with on time, contact centre calls answered, and waiting times for customers in the One Stop Shop.*

*As a result, the Cabinet Member agreed to spend a day in the One Stop Shop and Contact Centre to monitor activities and gauge customer perception. He found that most people were happy with the services they received and happy to wait a little longer if their query was dealt with fully and efficiently, proving that quality of service is most important to the customer.*

*Through the challenge, there was also a recommendation for a change to the way the measure for the Ombudsman complaints was being reported, to bring this in line with the national reporting guidance.*

*The Committee has actively promoted the scrutiny of performance data and has undertaken this role effectively with deliverable outcomes and support to service areas.”*

**Kathy Brooks**  
Performance Team Leader  
Performance & Change”



## Critical Friend to Cabinet

### Robust Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The O&S structure enables regular, robust pre-decision scrutiny. Two in-depth pre-decision scrutiny activities were undertaken this year.

**Key example:** Scrutiny input into the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP)

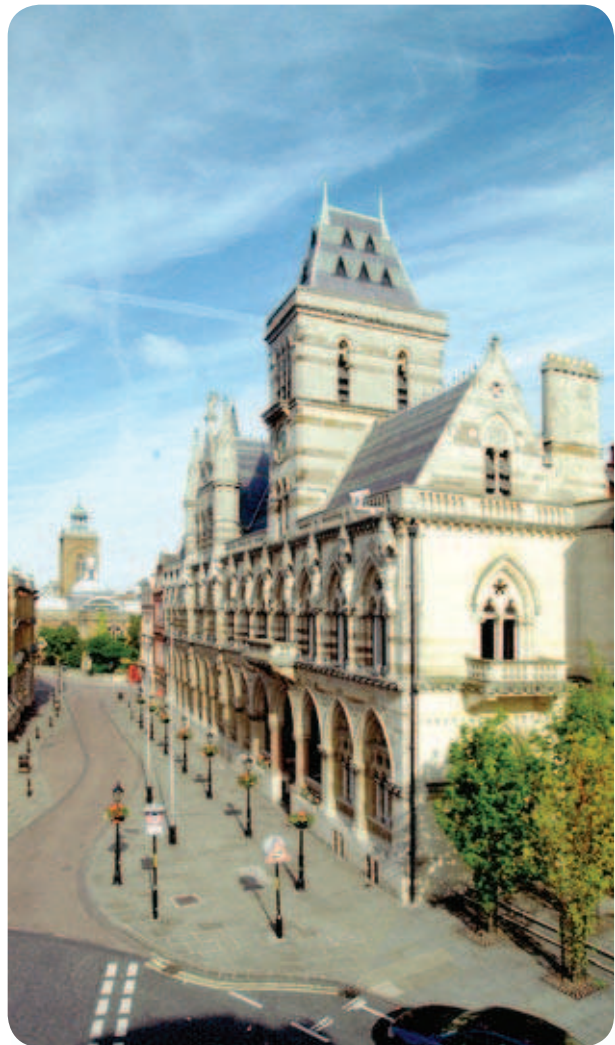
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the CAAP – Focused changes to the pre-submission over two meetings – 14th November 2011 and a specially convened meeting on 12 December 2011 in order that its comments could be put forward as part of the consultation process.

Information obtained from the following sources formed the main body of evidence gathered by the Committee:

- Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning)
- Head of Planning
- Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
- Planning Policy Team Leader

Upon completion of the pre-decision scrutiny activity, Overview and Scrutiny put two recommendations to Cabinet around the clarity of the wording in the document.

This pre-decision scrutiny activity demonstrates non-Executives providing input into the decision making at an early stage.



## Call-In

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly, and during 2011/2012 the facility was not used at all.

### Influencing Policy Development

Due to the local elections 2011, Scrutiny Panels commenced their Review work later than usual, with scoping commencing in the summer rather than the spring. Two in-depth Scrutiny Review reports will be presented to Cabinet early in the Municipal year 2013.

One report of the review work of 2011/2012 has received Cabinet's response. 50% of the recommendations were accepted, and 25% were enhanced by Cabinet, highlighting that Overview and Scrutiny is continuing to make significant influence of Council policy both in terms of holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development and the well being of the citizens of Northampton.

### Raising the profile of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton

The Scrutiny Review process at Northampton is widely recognised both within the Council and amongst the citizens of Northampton.

### Key Example: Councillor Community Fund

The purpose of the Review was to recommend a suitable scheme for a Northampton Councillor Empowerment Fund that enables Councillors to efficiently and effectively allocate money within their ward to make a positive impact on the areas they represent and to empower local residents to be active in their communities.

Non-Executives were able to add a new dimension to the focus of the proposed Councillor Empowerment Fund by bringing their own perspective and the expertise of key Advisers to the Review.

Key Community and Voluntary Groups (CVG) provided expert advice to non-Executives which demonstrates how Northampton's CVGs recognised the value of the O&S process and the input it can provide to significant issues. A Councillor Empowerment Fund benefits CVGs. Non-Executives ensured that CVGs were engaged in the Review. Upon the advice of the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Forum, a sample of CVGs provided a response to the core questions demonstrating an inclusive approach to engaging with CVGs. The Groups attended the same meeting and addressed the Scrutiny Panel together. They felt their views were heard and taken into account. The recommendations of the Review comprised innovative methodologies to gather further community feedback such as the Voluntary and Community Forum promoting the Scheme.

Recommendations of the Review were around the themes:

- Annual Councillor Allowance
- Easy to complete application form and comprehensive guidance notes
- Positive publicity
- Key partners promoting the scheme amongst CVGs
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Scheme



*The Councillor role is an important one and the Council's Scrutiny process is a good place for Councillors to make a real difference. I believe that in this report the Panel has done that and I would like to convey my sincere thanks to members of the Scrutiny Panel for their work on this Scrutiny Review.*

*The Panel received both written and spoken evidence from a wide variety of expert advisors including the Cabinet Members for Community Engagement and Finance, Northampton Borough Council, Officers of Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council and representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector.*

**Councillor Matt Lynch**  
**Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3**  
**Councillor Empowerment Fund**



*The Overview and Scrutiny Committee played a very important role in developing a key manifesto policy of introducing a Councillor Community Fund by drawing evidence from a whole range of sources. This examined the wider implications of the Localism Act and sought evidence from other local authorities in Northamptonshire with a similar scheme to ensure best practice in its delivery and enable councillors to efficiently and effectively allocate money within their ward to make a positive impact on the areas they represent and to empower local residents to be active in their communities.*

*The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also sought evidence from the voluntary and community organisations who will benefit from this new scheme and whose views would be key to making the scheme a success. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was a solid base of evidence that has allowed us to put in place the structures and foundations for this scheme which will begin on 1st April.*

**Councillor David Mackintosh**  
**Leader of the Council**



## Public engagement within the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton

O&S has included various issues referred to it from the public onto its Work Programmes. The details below provide key points of how O&S work has reflected the concerns of service users.

### Key example: Hate Crime

The purpose of the Review was to ensure that the approach to dealing with hate crime is embedded and responded to within Northampton Borough Council (NBC).

The Leader of the Council addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming event for 2011/2012 and informed non-Executives of the Council's priorities and challenges for the forthcoming year. Scrutiny of the Council's reporting mechanisms in respect of hate crime was identified as a key priority. This issue was therefore included within the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011/2012.

Additionally, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the public for suggestions for future Scrutiny Reviews and a suggestion was put forward for a Scrutiny Review regarding reporting mechanisms for hate crime.

Following approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011/2012, it was agreed that an in-depth Review would commence in July 2011 and conclude early in February 2012.

A Scrutiny Panel was established and the Review commenced in July 2011 and concluded its findings in February 2012.

Reporting of hate crime links to the Council's Corporate Priorities – CP4 - Helping to develop a place where people feel safe

Recommendations of the Review centred around:

- The publication of an Annual Report
- Awareness Training being an integral part of the Councillor Induction Programme
- Annual refresher training for all relevant front line staff
- Potential opportunities for the Keep Safe Group to work with the Council and O&S
- Increased awareness of reporting of hate crime in communities
- Monitoring activity



*It was a very interesting and informative Review; with clear evidence received.*

*The Scrutiny Panel held interviews with the Cabinet Member, Senior Staff at Northampton Borough Council and external expert witnesses who gave up their time to attend a number of meetings of the Panel, some travelling a considerable distance to give their evidence in person..*

*The result is a piece of work, which recommends to Cabinet a number of improvements to the reporting of hate crime mechanisms. I would highlight that the Scrutiny Panel found the Awareness Training both useful and information and is keen to see this rolled out further across the Council.*

**Councillor Brendan Glynane**  
**Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Hate Crime**



## Co-Opted Members

The Scrutiny process benefitted from the expertise and knowledge of two co-opted Members to Reviews this year.

*As Chairman of Northamptonshire County Council's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee I was delighted to be invited to work with and help develop this timely review of the Independent Living Strategy for older people. I have found the experience of working with Northampton Borough Council under the able chairmanship of Cllr Lee Mason a very rewarding experience.*

*I am sure that this excellent document and action plan will be of sound benefit to older people who wish to have the choice to live longer independently, in the secure knowledge that they have the support, information and expertise as laid out in this Strategy to enable them to do so.*

**County Councillor Judy Shephard  
Co-Optee – Scrutiny Panel – Independent  
Living Strategy**



## Scrutiny Panels

### How has the work of the Scrutiny Panels made a difference to the Council and our residents?

Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton has undertaken some good Review work.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel that investigated Independent Living Strategy for the Council presented how this important review was conducted to a seminar hosted by the Age Well Forum.



The Centre for Public Scrutiny commended the work of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton in its Scrutiny News' Bulletin September 2011 in the Section Best Practice from District Councils:

#### **Northampton Borough Council Increased participation in scrutiny**

Northampton decided to engage in work to enhance the participation in scrutiny by a range of stakeholders – cabinet members, the public and other partners. This has involved a more robust approach to pre-scrutiny of important decisions, contributing to major partnership strategies (such as the Northampton Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy). Through its proactive approach scrutiny has also been behind a number of major innovations for the authority, such as market-testing the waste, grounds and street care service, leading to a letting process in which scrutiny was directly involved.

Recommendations from three Scrutiny Reviews that were undertaken during the latter part of 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 are being implemented and monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People

As reported in the Annual Report 2010/2011, this high profile Review highlighted that the ageing population presents a huge challenge for the Council in a period of public spending cuts. It also presents a significant opportunity to improve the Services offered to older people in a way that effectively promotes independent living. The fact that there are more individuals aged over 60 than under 25 is a huge issue that should be addressed and the impact on Northampton understood and responded to. It was felt that the Council needs to develop a wide range of options to suit the needs of older and vulnerable people and that represent real choice in terms of the services offered.

The Review further concluded that the resident warden scheme should not be returned to as it would not improve services for older people. Another nine recommendations were called for which included improved consultation mechanisms with sheltered housing tenants and the introduction of a Policy for the storage of mobility scooters.

All the recommendations included in the Overview and Scrutiny report were considered for inclusion in the Cabinet report on the future of Sheltered Housing and Options for Older People that was produced after the completion of this Review. Cabinet formally congratulated the Task and Finish Group for the high quality of this report and the time and effort given to produce it.

This Review received a lot of public interest and press coverage. An interview with the Chair was broadcast on 'Anglia Tonight'.





## Community Centres

This Review called for a proper Policy being put in place for the management of Community Centres. The Review concluded that it was clear that there was a need for Community Centres and such a Policy would be core to the way forward. It emphasised that there needs to be accessibility to community facilities for all Groups and put sixteen recommendations to Cabinet

In considering the report of this O&S Review, Cabinet directed those conducting the current review of the future of Northampton's community centres to have due regard to Overview and Scrutiny's recommendations as it develops policy and practice for Northampton's community centres.

## Neighbourhood Model

- To investigate which groups will be engaging with and who the Council will be working with.

The recommendations of the Review included:

- A Workshop for all ward Councillors to be held, with the purpose to discuss the best use of resources in respect of the public meetings or other methods, alternative methods of engaging the public within the Neighbourhood Model be introduced by 1st October 2011
- In each area a minimum level of least two public meetings per year or equivalent alternative methods
- Officer Boards be redesignated Area Boards and ward Councillors and chairs or representatives of Parish Councils and Residents' Associations be invited to also attend

- A budget of £4,000 pa for 2011/12/13 for the publicity of public engagement events be granted
- The Head of Public Protection, in conjunction with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), introduce mechanisms that enable Area Action Plans to complement and enhance identified Community Safety priorities for the area



## Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector

- To investigate the development of a Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The key recommendation of this Review was:-

- The development of a consultation draft of a Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector by a Partnership Working Group made up of representatives of the Council, Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (CEFAP), and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

The Committee will monitor the implementation of the accepted recommendations at its first meeting in the Municipal year 2012/2013.

- **Lease between Northampton Borough Council and Northampton Town Football Club and the contractual arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club** – The purpose of the Panel was to review the operation of the lease that Northampton Borough Council has with Northampton Town Football Club, the contractual arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club, and make recommendations for improvement to the facility, if appropriate.

The recommendations of the Review included:

- Instructing officers to enforce, as is legally possible, all obligations that Northampton Town Football Club has under the Lease in respect of the condition of the athletics facility
- To explore all opportunities with Northampton Town Football Club, taking into consideration the reasonable representations of the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club, regarding changes to the Lease structure
- To communicate with Northampton Town Football Club to require that it takes all necessary steps in the ongoing management of the athletics facility and in-field to help prevent damage to the Track and athletics equipment.

- To write to Northampton Town Football Club asking that, as a gesture of goodwill and positive intent, it agrees to permit athletics participants and spectators to park near to the Athletics Track when using the facilities and operating a security regime in co-operation with Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club that facilitates this
- To explore with Northampton Town Football Club, the potential opportunities for educational establishments, Leisure Trust and other such bodies, entering into an agreement with NTFC for the overall management of the athletics facility
- To write to Northampton Town Football Club requiring that it ensures that the athletics infield is made available to organisations hiring the facility for the purpose of athletics training and competition. Football training should continue to be permitted on the infield as well as making it a dual purpose facility. Equipment should be removed at the end of all training sessions and competitions by all parties utilising the facility.

The Committee will begin to monitor the implementation of the accepted recommendations contained within this report in autumn 2012.

### Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy

The purpose of this Scrutiny active was to review the local delivery of Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy in Northampton.

The Review recommended, after considerable scrutiny input:-

- The adoption of the Northampton Alcohol Harm Action Plan.
- The support of Northampton's three MPs to be sought, to raise the issue within Government regarding the concerns that licensed premises have difficulty in obtaining polycarbonate bottles and glasses at appropriate prices.

The Committee referred this report and its recommendations to the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and is continuing to monitor its implementation, along with important evidence being provided by the Police.



## Review work 2011/2012

### Councillor Community Fund

Please refer to page six for a precis of this Review.

### Independent Living Strategy

The purpose of the Review was to evaluate the draft Independent Living Strategy for older people and make recommendations for development of this Strategy.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2010/2011 agreed at its work programming event in March 2010 to include a Review of Independent Living Strategy to its work programme for 2010/2011.

It was not timely for the Review to commence in July 2010. In January 2011, when there was space on the Work programme for further Scrutiny Reviews to commence, it was agreed that the allocated timescale of just two months was not adequate. Therefore, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to postpone the Review and to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming event 2011 that a Review of Independent Living Strategy be included within its work programme 2011/2012. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its inaugural meeting on 30th June 2011, agreed that a Scrutiny Review of Independent Living Strategy should commence in July 2011.

A Scrutiny Panel was established and the Review commenced in July 2011 and the Scrutiny Panel concluded its work March 2012.

This Review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Corporate priority CP2 Ensuring Homes are available for Local People – Support vulnerable people to live independently.

Recommendations of the Review are around the themes:

- Independent Living Strategy
- Partnership working
- Working with older people
- Service delivery
- Sheltered Housing
- Funding Opportunities
- Monitoring

It was realised that the numbers of older people are increasing at a time when resources are reducing. Key documents were consulted such as "A Good Place to Grow Older" (CfPS) and "Breaking The Mould" (NHF). Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources, including the Housing Directorate, Age UK (Northamptonshire), CIH Consulting, Northampton NHS Foundation Trust, Adult Social Care (NCC), Northampton Pensioners Forum and the GP Consortium, Nene Commissioning. Therefore, in a time of change there is a need for a strategy to guide all Partners through this substantial change.

**Councillor Lee Mason**  
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2 – Independent Living Strategy

**Ageing Well seminar series:  
Learning the lessons and taking them forward. 15 March 2012**

*"On behalf of LGA, we wanted to thank you very much indeed for speaking at the Ageing Well 'Learning the lessons and taking them forward' seminar on 15 March 2012.*

*The feedback we received for the sessions has been very positive and this was in no doubt due to your excellent contribution."*

**Kate Connell**  
Conference Manager  
Event-X Ltd (Working on behalf of LGA)

### Hate Crime

Please refer to page eight of the Annual report for details of this Review.



## Customer Services

The purpose of the Review was to evaluate all customer services with a review of the customer contact centre, customer satisfaction and the refurbished and extended one stop shop.”

A Scrutiny Panel was established and the Review commenced in January 2012 and the Scrutiny Panel concluded its work April 2012.

It was highlighted that over the last two years there have been significant improvements made within customer services throughout that the Council and new and innovative improvements have been made.

This Scrutiny Review demonstrates the importance of good quality customer services to each and every customer

Recommendations of the Panel centred on:

How a call is passed around the Council  
Additional methods for the public to contact the public  
Improvements to signage and other ways to improve the customer experience  
Additional methods for the public to contact the Council.

**Councillor Mike Hallam**  
**Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Customer Services**



## What are our Challenges for 2012-2013?

- To build on Overview and Scrutiny’s achievements by setting stretching targets to broaden our impact. An example would be to ensure the Committee continues to undertake pre-decision scrutiny activities.
- To ensure the Overview and Scrutiny work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and public – consulting with a wide range of organisations, partners and the public for suggestions for scrutiny review and then on the actual work programme.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny works with the community and key partners to respond to concerns.
- To ensure that Overview & Scrutiny is able to respond effectively to legislative requirements, such as the new powers for example wider powers to influence policy and public service delivery in their area – for example investigated issues beyond its traditional remit but affect local people.
- To continue to ensure that the work of O&S has a positive effect on decision-makers and provide evidence that it has made a real difference. Recommendations made in 2011-12 will be monitored and their impact reported on in 2012-13 Annual Report.
- To increase public participation in O&S at Northampton by increased public suggestions for scrutiny Review and increased attendance at O&S Committee and Panel meetings.



## Glossary of Terms

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### **Call-In**

The process by which the O&S Committee considers whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision.

### **Cabinet (Executive)**

The Executive body responsible for day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which they take executive decisions.

### **Councillor (Member)**

An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole

### **Pre-decision Scrutiny:**

O&S may inform Executive decisions on topics on the Forward Plan by making evidence based recommendations or advice prior to formal decision by the Executive.

### **Review**

A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other councils' countrywide, and challenge existing practice where relevant

The Review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken

## Contact details for more information

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Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, is always very happy to speak to local people about the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest areas which may be appropriate topics for future work, you can speak to her by calling 01604 837408 or by emailing [ttiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:ttiff@northampton.gov.uk).

You can view recent agendas and minutes on the Council's website at [www.northampton.gov.uk](http://www.northampton.gov.uk) or by contacting Democratic Services [democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk).

Overview and Scrutiny has its own dedicated website within the Council's website. The current work of Overview and Scrutiny and the reports already published are available on this site. The address is [www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)





If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Tracy Tiff on **01604 837408**.

Jesli angielski nie jest Twoim jezykiem ojczystym a potrzebujesz pomocy w przetlumaczeniu tego dokumentu, prosze skontaktuj sie z Tracy Tiff pod numerem 01604 837408

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