

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



## COUNCIL

Monday, 11 December 2017

**YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2017 AT 6:30 PM WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED**

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**2. MINUTES.**

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Council held on 6<sup>TH</sup> November 2017.

**3. APOLOGIES.**

**4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS**

**6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

(Copy herewith)

**7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

(Copy herewith)

**8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Beardsworth to make a statement on 'Homelessness in Northampton'.

**9. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

(Copy herewith)

**10. TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW, HUNSBURY MEADOWS**

(Copy herewith)

**11. NOTICES OF MOTION**

- i) Councillor Haque to propose and Councillor Smith to second:

“This Council notes the new contractor for Environmental Services will be announced in January 2018. A new contractor will take over the running of Environmental Services from June 2018.

This Council believes that Residents, Resident Associations and Parish Councils understand best the environmental challenges in their area such as fly tipping hot spots and overgrown grass verges. They should be able to fully engage with both the Contractor and Borough Council so that information can be acted on promptly and effectively.

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet and the future Contractor to commit to positive and productive collaboration with Residents, Resident Associations and Parish Councils so they can input into its work in keeping Northampton clean and tidy. Cabinet will explain how this engagement will work in practice after the announcement of the Contractor but before June 2018”.

- ii) Councillor Birch to propose and Councillor Stone to second:

This Council notes the Greyfriars site remains undeveloped and it looks likely to remain a wasteland in the centre of town.

This Council therefore resolves to develop the site, to work with the County Council to reconfigure the Highway to bring the site into the town centre by removing the road between the site and the Grosvenor centre and creating a new dual carriageway on Lady’s Lane.

This Council further resolves to build a mix of family housing on the site including 50% social housing. The development will also include retail, amenities and leisure facilities. The development will be cost neutral after 5 years.

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

## **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  
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## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 6 November 2017 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Flavell, Golby, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Malpas, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam declared a personal non pecuniary interest in Motion iv) as his brother-in-law is an employee of Oxford City Council.

### 2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### 3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Chunga, Caswell and Choudary.

### 4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that since the last meeting there had been two former Councillors who had passed away and gave condolences on behalf of Council to the families of Trini Crake and Mary Dyer-Atkinson

The Mayor welcomed the newly elected Councillors, Councillor Graystone and Joyce.

The Mayor announced that he had attended numerous events of late which included: MK Dons vs Northampton Town Football Club. He had also welcomed Keith Holland Delamere to the parlour who had been the chair of a local residents association for over 20 years. The Mayor noted that he had participated in a number of Macmillan coffee mornings. He further reported that he and the Mayoress had attended a gala dinner for his chosen charity where almost £7000 had been raised for Alfie Bears Journey. The Mayor thanked the work of Michael Ellis MP for his work in helping award a resident, George Derven, the Legion d'Honneur by the French government for their heroics in the D-Day landings

The Mayor commented that the Mayor's Mash had been launched at Phipps Brewery

and thanked the pubs that had purchased the beer and urged members to support him. He further reported that the authority had signed the 'Dying to work charter' which would be beneficial to those who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness by offering them some protection

The Mayor reminded Councillors of the weekend engagements and urged them to attend and show support for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

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

Mr Pete Cartwright addressed the Council and stated that he considered some of the market traders were being treated unfairly by the Council as he believed there to be various charges for different traders. He stated that the presentation and environment of the Market Square was substandard which gave visitors and users of the market a poor impression of the town. He further commented that there was a need for the Council to step up and take responsibility for the upkeep of the market and urged them to stop unfair charges.

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

The Mayor advised that 14 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers that had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers were given as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the Council's website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below;

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Hallam commented outsourcing of Environmental Services was considered the preferred option and this had been robustly appraised cross party.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor Nunn commented that the revenue that was collected from car parks was reinvested in to the upkeep and maintenance of the Borough car parks.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Nunn commented that it would be impractical to use Albion House for temporary accommodation as there would be substantial conversion costs.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 14, Councillor Hibbert commented that the 100 new homes had yet to be approved by the Planning Committee and noted that there was no specific date as to when this would be started.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

The Leader, submitted his report and elaborated thereon and noted that included in his report was an update on the governance procedures and commented that there was emphasis on ensuring that his was engrained on the Council. He noted that the new Interim Chief Executive had a background in Monitoring and Governance and

would be undertaking a review of this. With regards to the History and Heritage projects he recognised the need for progress and promotion of the historical assets of Northampton. He noted that there had recently been a number of issues with illegal traveller encampments and noted that there had been ongoing work undertaken by the Council and the Police to address the issue.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Nunn explained that the Council was well prepared, with regards to infrastructure, for the relocation of the University of Northampton. He commented that there was a necessity for some Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) to accommodate some of the student community and reported that there was a need to ensure that the Town remained attractive and prepared for students. Responding to further questions, Councillor Nunn explained that there was a delay to the building of the 100 new homes due partly to the Police's opinion that there should not be all grouped in one specific area and that there were ongoing sensitive with them and the developer to address concerns. He stated that under the current administration, there had been 97 homes either built or refurbished. In response to a further question, he confirmed that in relation to Unitary status, he had been in discussion with the Leaders, local MP's and Chief Executives of District and Borough Councils and urged members to attend the workshops especially during the time of the financial issues that were faced by the County.

Councillor Larratt submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had been excellent training sessions for Councillors held including ones on Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy. He mentioned that there were further ones organised on Universal Credit and also debt management.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Larratt explained that training would be made available for Councillors on enforcement issues once the Environmental Services contract was in place. He further commented that a representative of the Council would be appointed to the East West Rail Consortium which would promote the needs of Northampton with regards to the impact and invest of the new Rail links.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and noted the work of the Forums and commented on the success of the Diwale Lights and parade held on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017 which had been attended by over 14,000 visitors. She referred to the success of the Council's Firework display held on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017 which had also been extremely well attended.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King confirmed that she was aware of the problems with regards to motorbikes being used irresponsibly in the Eastern District and noted that she had been working with the Police who were examining different sections of enforcement to tackle the problem and hoped to discuss the issue with the Police Crime Commissioner. Responding to further questions, Councillor King commented that the Museums project board minutes had not been requested from any Councillors and she would check as to whether they were private before sending them to Councillors on request. She stated that delays with the museum were due to the need to check that the project was being carried out to a good standard and noted that the work was expected to be completed by Autumn 2018, with money already provided for the project in the budget. Councillor King explained that there was a

need to check whether the business case was commercially sensitive and noted that any moves to transfer it to a trust would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She further commented that there had been a decrease in reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate crimes.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that recently 20 homeless women had been helped to get into either supported housing or temporary accommodation. He noted that a rough sleepers count was soon to be undertaken and that arrangements were being put in place to provide homeless people with emergency shelter when the temperatures is forecast to fall below freezing for at least 3 consecutive nights.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert reported that there were currently 500 HIMOs in Council stock. He explained that there were very few older people on the housing register waiting for homes; he further noted that attempts were made to house couples together who presented themselves as homeless but explained that it was not always a feasible option.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hallam explained that the tree programme would be implemented by the end of the financial year and explained that they were investing £500,000 over 5 years to look at tree issues that were facing residents. Responding to further questions he reported that the Air Quality Management areas were published on the Council's website and commented that the final Environmental Services Contract would be awarded in January 2018.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor informed Council that the allocated time had been met and that no further Cabinet Member reports would be heard.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Haque stated that that there was a need for the administration to work with market traders as they had been left feeling let down and excluded from changes that were being proposed. He explained that Northampton market had been in existence since 1235 and was an integral part of the Towns history and heritage. He commented that he recognised that the shopping habits of consumers had changed but noted that there were other instances of places where markets were trading well. Councillor Haque further reported that he was pleased with some of the improved features to the market area such as the fountain and noted that free parking had also helped although he questioned the price hike after the 2 hour free parking had expired. He commented that the Market Advisory Group (MAG) had worked hard but that many of the improvements they had requested, such as enhancing the gateway had not been done had disappointed the traders; the proposed new layout of the market square and the reduction of aisles had almost raised concerns from stall holders and questioned the plausibility of a reduce rent for regular traders.

Councillor Larratt, in response, questioned the attendance record of Councillor Haque at the MAG meetings during his time as an appointee to the Group. He noted that there had been changes to peoples shopping habits and a number of changes to global manufacturing had impacted on market traders. He stated that all market



traders had been given ample opportunity to participate in the consultation process and not one had done so.

Councillor Haque urged the administration to work with the market traders and not against them. He placed emphasis on the need for collaborative working to ensure that the Council and the traders could move forwards.

## **9. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST WEST RAIL CONSORTIUM**

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought Council's agreement to appoint a representative to the East West rail Consortium.

Councillor Patel seconded the report:

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Borough of Northampton be appointed to the East West Rail Consortium and that Council appoint Councillor Larratt to the Consortium.

## **10. CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

Councillor Patel proposed a report which sought Council's confirmation for the changes to the appointment to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Joyce be appointed to the overview and Scrutiny Committee  
And that Councillor Graystone be appointed to the Licensing Committee to replace Councillor Parekh

## **11. CHANGES TO NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES (NPH)**

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought Council's agreement for a Councillor to be removed as the Council nominated Director of Northampton Partnership Home Ltd.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Stone voiced some concerns about the reduction in numbers and questioned whether the Board members would be given allowances for their attendance and asked that the report be deferred.

Councillor M Markham explained that as a Board Member of Northampton Partnership Homes it had been made clear to them members that the reduction in number was done on a proportional basis and that opposition group members had been present when this had been discussed.

Council discussed the openness of the NPH Board and it was noted that it was a Board that had been set up by the Council and questioned the need to know how and what was being discussed.

Councillor Nunn commented that progress had been made with NPH and stated that the Board, and the Members appointed, were a credit to the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Russell be removed as the Council-nominated Director of Northampton Partnership Homes Ltd.

**12. NOTICES OF MOTION**

i) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor B Markham seconded:

“Council Notes:

1. Each year more than 300 homes for rent are lost in Northampton because of the Right to Buy.
2. In the 4 year period 2013 to 2017 over 50,000 homes were bought in England under Right to Buy.
3. That Northampton has a very high need for affordable housing, and in order to assist in meeting this Northampton Borough Council and Northampton Partnership Homes have developed plans to build more than 1,000 new homes for rent. The loss of affordable homes through the Right to Buy will undermine *this investment to increase affordable stock*.
4. Council notes that in Wales, the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011 allows for councils to request the power from the Welsh Government to suspend the Right to Buy for a 5 year period.

Council requests that the Chief Executive write to The Minister of State for Housing and Planning and our local Members of Parliament , seeking their support, for councils in England to be granted the same powers as our Welsh counterparts, and to report back to a future meeting of the council on progress”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

ii) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“Council notes that Northampton Borough Council operates local pay bargaining arrangements for employees on NBC Local terms and conditions.

Council further notes that the public sector pay cap is being applied to thousands of

public sector staff members who live in Northampton

Council believes that the continuation of the public sector pay cap is having a detrimental effect on levels of recruitment and retention across the public sector and is also having an impact on the living standards of thousands of local residents.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to request that the cap is removed to allow for meaningful pay negotiations and for the implementation of the recommendations of Pay Review Bodies and to request that any recommended pay increases are fully funded via central government financial settlement.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon the requisition of a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, Bottwood, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, Kilby-Shaw, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

iii) Councillor Duffy accepted an altered motion and Councillor Culbard seconded:

“This Council notes that Fixed Odd Betting Terminals (FOBT) are sometimes referred to the “crack cocaine of gambling”.

This Council further notes that due to a relaxation in gambling regulations introduced by the Labour Government in 1999, FOBT gamblers are currently able to bet up to £100 per go on the machines, allowing players to make substantial losses very quickly. People can place £100 every 20 seconds on FOBTs.

Council welcomes the outcome of the current Government’s consultation on stake reduction and that it will be taking action to reduce maximum stakes on FOBT to between £50 and £2.

This Council, therefore, asks the Chief Executive to write to our local MPs urging them to persuade the Government to reduce the stakes on FOBT to the lower end of the proposed spectrum, preferably £2.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Davenport seconded:

“This Council notes that at the last meeting a motion was passed calling for a review

of our HMO policies.

This Council asks the review to look at Oxford City Council as a case study and the benefits of adopting their approach. In Oxford the whole of the local authority area is covered by an Article 4 directive and any proposal to create a new HMO, including the change of use of any dwelling to an HMO, will only be permitted where the proportion of properties within 100 metres of street length either side of the property does not exceed 20%.

This Council looks forward to the review being completed in the near future.”  
Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

v) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Hill seconded:

“This Council believes that hate crimes have no place in our country, whether based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability.  
This Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. All Members of this Council are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society.

This Council will work to ensure that local bodies, organisations, and programmes have the support they need to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia and will reassure all people living in this Borough that they are valued members of our community.

This Council welcomes and acknowledges the UK Government’s announcement of December 11th 2016 that it will sign up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines on antisemitism.

This Council hereby resolves to:

- a) Adopt the definition of antisemitism as set out by the IHRA, and request that the Chief Executive ensure all relevant NBC codes of conduct are consistent with this;
- b) Work together as an entity to combat this pernicious form of racism.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

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

None

The meeting concluded at 9.24pm

**Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

**Question 1**

**Question to Cllr Hallam from Mr Steve Miller**

I'm sure Councillor Hallam is aware of the Council's legal obligation to provide an annual Progress Report with respect to the AQMAs in Northampton. Could he please advise when the Progress Report for 2015 (due by June 2016) and the Progress Report for 2016 (due by June 2017) will be published?

***Response***

The report for 2016 has now been finalised, submitted to DEFRA and posted on the NBC website. It is available at

<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/download/3454/air-quality-annual-status-report>

Councillor Hallam

**Cabinet member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 2**

#### **Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Beardsworth**

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing tell me how many people are being housed in emergency temporary accommodation at this time and how many of those are in Bed & Breakfast accommodation?

#### ***Response***

As of 30 November 2017, there were a total of 220 households in temporary accommodation. Of these, 75 were living in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 3**

#### **Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Meredith**

Are Northampton families still being housed in temporary accommodation in Wellingborough?

#### ***Response***

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, homeless families are still living in temporary accommodation outside the borough. As at 30 November 2017, there were a total of 12 families living in temporary accommodation in Wellingborough.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 4

#### Question to Cllr Eldred from Cllr Stone

Will the administration write to Government asking for the roll out of Universal Credit to be halted?

#### **Response**

At this time I won't be writing to the government, this is due to the announcement the chancellor made at the autumn budget and the guarantees he has given us on Universal Credits, he stated that claimants will not have to wait 7 days, the repayments for advances will be extended from 6 months to 12 months.

These changes have been welcomed by one of the Chief executives of Citizens Advice stating: 'the changes announced by the chancellor today are a very welcome step towards fixing the problems with UC, and shows that the government is acting on our evidence about the impact it's having on people's lives.

I will however monitor the UC and take the appropriate action if necessary.

Councillor Eldred  
**Cabinet member for Finance**



## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 5**

#### **Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Ashraf**

Please can we have the up to date figures for people in temporary and emergency accommodation? How many are families with children? How many children?

#### ***Response***

As of 30 November 2017, there were a total of 220 households in temporary accommodation. This included 178 families containing 369 children.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 6

#### Question to Cllr King from Cllr Duffy

Can we have the latest crime figures by category? Domestic abuse as a separate category.

#### ***Response***

All statistics are available in the link:

<https://www.police.uk/search/?next=policing%3Aforce%3Aneighbourhood%3Acrime%3Aindex>

In the new financial year I will provide a 12 month update of what has been achieved 2017-2018 and the next 12 months priorities, which are linked to crime statistics and ongoing trends in crime.

Councillor King

**Cabinet member for Community Safety & Community Engagement**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 7**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr Duffy**

How many children in the Borough are living in poverty?

#### ***Response***

Northamptonshire analysis captures various data sets and you can search by postcode. Includes lots of info on children and young people regarding education and health. I have copied the link below.

<https://www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk/profiles/>

Councillor King

**Cabinet member for Community Safety & Community Engagement**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 8**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Birch**

Who made the decision about which design to go forward with the town centre museum and why wasn't there public consultation as promised? When will the museum expansion be completed?

#### ***Response by Cllr King***

Cabinet made the decision to move forward with the museum expansion project and there was extensive public consultation.

Councillor King

**Cabinet member for Community Safety & Community Engagement**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 9**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr McCutcheon**

What difference has One Angel Square had on town centre footfall?

#### ***Response***

The footfall cameras in the town centre are located in Abington Street, Market Square, Sheep Street (opposite North Gate Bus Station) and top of the Drapery. Therefore these cameras do not show any significant changes.

However, since One Angel Square opened the St Johns multi-storey car park has shown significant increases in usage and growth in parking income. Since OAS opened we have had to close the car park every week on one day or another. In recent months we have closed the car park on most days (Mondays- Thursdays) with the closures commencing any time after 9.30am and these can last between 10 – 30 minutes.

With Christmas season and the additional 2 panto shows in the Royal & Derngate during the day, the car park closures have increased and are lasting longer.

Councillor Hadland

**Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 10

#### Question to Cllr Nunn from Cllr Smith

In this colder weather has the Council implemented the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) yet?

#### **Response**

The SWEP was implemented on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December and is expected to continue until 7.00am on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December. So far, it has been used by a total of 13 homeless people (11 men and 2 women) and, each night, it has been used by between 9 and 11 homeless people.

There is no strict definition of what counts as 'severe weather'.

SWEP will normally operate, however, when the temperature falls below freezing and is forecast to remain below freezing for a period of at least three consecutive nights.

In consultation with the Hope Centre, the Council will determine when SWEP should be activated. It will do this by closely monitoring the Met Office's weather forecasts and taking into account any weather (including extreme cold, wind and rain) that is likely to increase the risk of serious harm to people who are sleeping rough.

Although winter often poses the greatest risk to people's health, and the SWEP is used to address this risk and prevent risk of deaths on the street, it also provides increased opportunities to engage with entrenched rough sleepers and other hard-to-reach groups because they may be more likely to accept support at this time of year.

The importance of this opportunity to engage with rough sleepers struck me when I learnt that, of the thirteen rough sleepers that were identified across the borough by the rough sleepers count in November, five were known to us but not engaging, and four had returned to sleeping rough after having had accommodation provided to them. This illustrates the complexity of the issue.

#### **SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PROTOCOL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS WINTER**

Although the Council will continue to co-ordinate SWEP, and provide funding and volunteers, its priority is to make sure that Northampton's Emergency Night Shelter remains fully staffed and operational, so that it remains available for those who meet the access criteria.

**Northampton's Hope Centre** has kindly agreed that with the support of the Council, Midland Heart and NAASH, it will host SWEP during the winter of 2017/18 and will take the lead in ensuring that everything runs smoothly on the nights that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is operational. This means that, on those nights of severe weather, the Hope Centre will provide shelter for those people who are unwilling or unable to access Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter.

Councillor Nunn  
**Leader of the Council**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 11**

#### **Question to Cllr King from Cllr B Markham**

The administration commissioned a feasibility study for the expansion of the Central Museum and Art Gallery and has now received planning consent for their proposals.

To date this Council has not seen a business plan with such details as:  
the projected capital costs of the project  
the annualised revenue costs on completion  
information regarding possible income streams during the refurbishment and after the museum re-opens  
timescales for construction and fit-out.

Can the Portfolio holder advise when the business plan will be completed and made available for the Council and the public to inspect?

#### ***Response***

The full business case and business plan for the development and operation of the new museum service and detailed budget cost plan for the museum expansion project is still in development and will be finalised during January 2018. The business case and business plan will be referred to and inform a report to be presented to Cabinet in March 2018.

It is not usual for internal business case documents to be made available for public inspection.

Councillor King

**Cabinet member for Community Safety & Community Engagement**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 12

#### Question to Cllr Hibbert from Mr Neil Clarke

Extra homes that have been created (through the conversion and reconfiguration of existing buildings) in Eleanore House, Dovercourt and Woodstock.

Could you PLEASE give detail of how many extra homes

- a) Eleanore House
- b) Dovercourt
- c) Woodstock

#### **Response**

An extra 10 homes have been created in the three schemes:

- a) In Eleanore House, an extra 6 homes have been created (including 4 that are fully wheelchair accessible)
- b) In Dovercourt, an extra 2 homes have been created
- c) In Woodstock, an extra 2 homes have been created

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**



## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 13**

#### **Question to Cllr Hibbert from Mr Neil Clarke**

Construction work has started at Little Cross Street to provide 9 new flats and 9 new maisonettes.

Could you PLEASE give detail of how many flats were subjected to demolition to make way for them?

#### ***Response***

There were originally 23 flats on the site.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 14

#### Question to Cllr Hibbert from Mr Norman Adams

In your report to council you state:

NPH has been addressing fire and safety issues at Overslade House, Camp Hill and has decanted the scheme in preparation for major reconfiguration and refurbishment

Question:

- a) Will this reconfiguration result in more or less homes?
- b) Will installing a sprinkler system be part of the refurbishment?

#### **Response**

a) A number of options appraisals have been developed and these are subject to consultation with the local planning authority. As no decisions have been made yet on the new design and layout of the building, it is not yet known exactly how many homes there will be when Overslade House is reconfigured.

b) There is no mandatory requirement to install sprinklers. Consideration will be given, however, to the installation of sprinklers as part of the design.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 15**

#### **Question to Cllr Hibbert from Mr Norman Adams**

In your report to council you state:

Construction work is progressing well in relation to the 14 family homes being built at Lower Bath Street and the 2 large family homes being built at Althorpe Street, and these are due to be completed in February 2018.

Question: What rent model do you intend to use, will it be “social rent” or “Affordable rent”?

#### ***Response***

It will be 'Affordable rent'.

Councillor Hibbert

**Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 16**

#### **Question to Cllr Hallam from Mr Thomas Appleyard**

When will the Northampton Borough Councillors Litter strategy be ready to fall in line with the Governments April 2017 25 year Litter Strategy?

#### ***Response***

The council's litter strategy for the next ten years is embedded within the specification for our new environmental services contract which will go live in June 2018. In accordance with national litter strategy, our new contract will aim to apply best practice in order to achieve reductions in litter and littering behaviour. We have also just appointed a specialist enforcement contractor to help reduce litter, fly tipping and other environmental nuisances.

Councillor Hallam

**Cabinet member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 17**

#### **Question to Cllr Hallam from Mr Thomas Appleyard**

Over 1500 litter fines have been handed out in Northampton Town centre since January 2017 which is to be applauded. However, can you tell me how many litter fines have been handed out to business including shops and fast food chains in the same period?

#### ***Response***

During the period from 1 April 2016 to October 2017 (the period covered by the littering statistics) a total of three fixed penalty notices were issued to businesses for waste offences. The littering FPNs were mainly issued as part of the pilot of an environmental enforcement service which did not have powers to deal with waste from business premises. The new environmental enforcement service will potentially have powers to deal with a wider range of offences.

Councillor Hallam  
**Cabinet member for Environment**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 18**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Choudary**

What is going to happen with the Vulcan works site now the University has withdrawn from the scheme?

#### ***Response***

A report to the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 Cabinet meeting sets out how this project will be taken forward. Given that this is both a positive and full report there is nothing more to be said at this time.

Councillor Hadland

**Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

### **Question 19**

#### **Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Choudary**

Railway Station car park, town centre museum, Vulcan works, Greyfriars site, St Edmunds Hospital, Delapre Abbey and so on. Would you agree there are a few regeneration projects that have fallen behind schedule?

#### ***Response***

The timing of regeneration projects depends on a number of factors including prevailing market conditions, availability of funding and the appetite of partners, who we work we work closely with, to progress matters within particular timescales. It seem self-evident that sometimes these things take longer to deliver than first anticipated, be they public or private sector led, within or outside of Northampton.

The fact is that many projects are moving positively forward, such as Vulcan Works and Horizon Park (National Grid Site B), whilst others are being actively developed, such as NSCP and the Museum. Meanwhile, Delapre Abbey is moving towards completion.

When appropriate matters are reported to Cabinet which enable Council to see what progress is being made.

Councillor Hadland

**Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**

## Question for Full Council Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Question 20

#### Question to Cllr Eldred from Cllr Birch

Will Women's refuges still get receive the Housing Benefit for their residents if the proposed changes go ahead?

#### **Response**

No, Women's refuges will not receive Housing Benefit for their residents if the proposed changes go ahead. They will fall into the category of short term and transitional supported housing, which includes supported housing for homeless people with support needs, people fleeing domestic abuse, people receiving support for drug and alcohol misuse, offenders and young people at risk. This category will be entirely taken out of the housing benefit and universal credit schemes.

It is proposed that 100% of this provision will be commissioned at a local level, funded locally through a ring-fenced grant, and underpinned by a new local planning and oversight regime. This means all the funding for housing costs (including rent and eligible service charges) that were previously met from Housing Benefit, will instead be allocated to local authorities to fund services that meet the needs of their local areas.

This model will come in to effect from 2020.

Councillor Eldred  
**Cabinet member for Finance**



# Agenda Item 7

## Report of the Leader of the Council

### Northampton Borough Council

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017



Since my last report to Council, I have continued to work with the Cabinet, Members, Directors, and Officers across all areas of the council. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in Cabinet colleagues' reports, but other areas include those below.

#### **Unitary Status**

Whilst over the past year the possibility of Unitary Local Government in Northamptonshire has appeared at times to be unlikely, I can report that the subject now seems to be very much back on the agenda. The member Workshop with Deloitte, who will be describing the work that they have carried out on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs within Northamptonshire, will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 6.00pm, and I would therefore strongly urge all Members to attend the workshop.

#### **Governance**

The Interim Chief Executive has begun his review of Governance processes, most particularly assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the formal Boards and meetings that take place internally.

#### **Staffing and Council Officers**

The recruitment process for the permanent Chief Executive position is well underway, and it is currently scheduled for an appointment to be made towards the end of January. Whilst a number of other changes to areas such as staff conditions have been actively discussed, these will be formally revisited/ actioned following a permanent Chief Executive appointment.

#### **Strategic Economic Plan**

The council, and myself, continue to play an active part in SEMLEP, and on 8th November the 2017 South East Midlands Strategic Economic Plan was launched in Northampton at the Innovation Centre.

The Strategic Economic Plan sets the ambition and strategic economic direction for the South East Midlands to 2050, focusing particularly on the next 10 years. It details priority areas of focus for investments and actions to support the fundamental elements behind the successful growth of economy to achieve the doubling of GVA by 2050.

At the launch event in November the discussion included opportunities and challenges for growth, what actions SEMLEP, together with partners from across the public and private sectors will take as well as programmes and investments SEMLEP will deliver to achieve the area's ambitious growth targets.

## **Other Activity**

I was delighted to visit Quinton House School recently, and to see how the school manages to balance the running of a successful school with the preservation of a set of beautiful old buildings, owned by the council, and am glad that we are working with them to assist their further growth plans whilst maintaining the historical integrity of the buildings.

I was delighted (but not surprised) that Cllr. Anna King was recognised for her hard work through the LGiU and CCLA's Councillor Achievement Awards, which were held at the Guildhall, London recently. It was a pleasure to accompany her to the awards ceremony, which was attended by over 200 council leaders, chief executives, councilors, MPs and other stakeholders. Many congratulations to Cllr. King for this recognition, from an initial field of over 90 nominations.

Regarding rail transport, during the past month we have met with the new rail franchise operator to discuss all areas connected with rail services from Northampton, and also with rail specialists and representatives of the junction 15 rail freight proposal. As well as ensuring that residents' concerns over rail freight terminal development are raised, it has been important to understand rail line capacity, to ensure that passengers to and from Northampton have access to the best possible service.

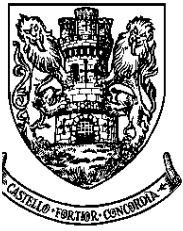
I was delighted to participate, along with around 30 other volunteers, in the Rough Sleepers count recently, and amazed to learn that of the 13 rough sleepers identified by the count, 9 were already known to staff of NBC or the other agencies involved. This is a complex issue, but the rough sleeper count has made a good contribution to furthering our intelligence to tackle it.

I was proud to be amongst NBC colleagues and others to mark Remembrance Day, and to see how many other people turned out to mark it.

Other meetings and activities have included meetings with Auditors, local businesses, the Royal & Derngate theatre, the Northamptonshire Sports Awards, Leaders and Chief Executives of other councils from the county, and, in some cases regarding infrastructure, Leaders from a number of neighbouring counties.

I have also recently held another meeting, open to all NBC staff, allowing them the opportunity to discuss or ask questions about any issue. We had a room full at this latest meeting, which was also attended by the Interim Chief Executive, and as always was a strong reminder of the commitment that our fellow colleagues show to the council and to Northampton.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn  
**Leader of the Council**



## Cabinet Member Report for Deputy Leader

### Northampton Borough Council

Monday 11 December 2017

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council, and can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

#### Market

A meeting of the Market Advisory Group (MAG) was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017. Unfortunately only one trader was present with his partner. The Chair and an employee of a trader were also present. I was very disappointed at the attendance by traders and have since written to them all to try and find out why it was so poor. I'm also seeking the trader's views on the format of the MAG going forward, especially in light of the recommendations in the Healthcheck Report we commissioned through the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) in May 2017. Responses are slowly coming in.

I have met with officers about the anti-social behaviour and other activities that appear to be occurring on the market in the evenings. Consideration is being given to ways of tackling this.

#### Councillor Training

The Councillor Development Group met on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Minutes are available.

There was a presentation from the Data Protection Officer regarding the future requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA). The data Protection Officer went on to provide details of caseworker.gov, a Councillor case management system that would meet the DPA requirements. The Group agreed:

1. That the Working Group gives its support to all 45 Borough Councillors being registered with the Information Commissioners Office.
2. That a presentation on caseworker.gov is given to all Members on 30 November 2017. Two identical sessions would be given. Within the sessions information regarding the principles of a potential in-house system would also be given.
3. That 15 Councillors (proportionally cross party) trial the preferred Councillor case management system; evaluate it and encourage other Councillors to participate.

Two systems were presented to Councillors on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and Members scoring of the systems presented are currently being analysed, although it appears that the caseworker.gov system was clearly Members preferred option. Once the analysis is complete the chosen system will be procured and the trial will commence.

Councillor Development and Briefing Sessions already scheduled are as follows:

- **12/12/17 – Benefits Briefing** - Open to all Councillors. One session focussing on Housing Benefits and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Partnership and Development Officer.

- **12/02/18 – Data Protection Training** open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Senior Information Governance Officer.
- **23/01/18 - Unitary Status Update - Councillor Briefing - Open** to all Councillors. One session 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Council's advisors.
- **01/03/18 – Personal Safety Training** – This training is to be delivered by an external trainer. It is limited to 15 Councillors and is already fully booked. Should there be further demand for this training, a further session will be considered.
- **07/03/18 - Universal Credit, Changes to Benefits and Zero Hours Contract Briefing** - Open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by Community Law.
- **21/03/18 – Debt and Debt Management** – This training is open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions one at 3.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by Northamptonshire Credit Union.
- **27/03/18 – Advanced Safeguarding Training** – Open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Head of Housing and Wellbeing.

Further details regarding these sessions can be obtained from Tracy Tiff.

Members are asked to register to attend these events with Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

A further briefing on the Social Lettings Agency will be arranged if there is enough interest / take up.

Efforts are continuing to be made to arrange an information / briefing session regarding FGM. Officers have been in contact with Safeguarding at Northamptonshire County Council about providing this and we are still awaiting their response

First Aid Training is continuing to be offered to Councillors as and when spaces become available on courses.

### **Web Casting**

I have met with the officer working on this to discuss the ongoing procurement of the equipment and services required to enable the Web Casting of Council and Committee Meetings. Various quotes have been received and are currently being evaluated in consultation with a Northamptonshire County Council officer. I expect to see a summary of the quotes in due course.

### **Street Lighting**

The Working Group continues to oversee progress and the delivery of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel. The Officer / Member Working Group is to meet again on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

We have finally resolved which lights this Council will take over responsibility for from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). As previously reported, most of these lights are in our Park & Open Spaces and Housing Areas and on certain footpaths / cycle tracks.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December, the Working Group will give further consideration to the specification of the survey of our complete lighting stock, including the lights we have taken on from NCC. Once the specification has been finalised the work will be tendered.

The installation of the heritage lighting on St Giles Square, George Row, Mercers Row, Wood Hill and Fish Street has now been completed, with the heritage lanterns being installed on 28/11/17. The lights look good and are very fitting in the heritage setting of the town centre.

Now that the transfer of lights from NCC is resolved, we've more or less got a complete and accurate asset register of NBC / NPH owned street lights. There are just a few minor ownership issues remaining to be resolved. All our lighting columns are being plotted on a map of the Borough in preparation for them to be added to our interactive mapping service and being assigned a unique identification / reference number to enable fault reporting.

The Working Group is continuing to pursue the issue of lights on South Bridge. Designs have been seen and we're still waiting to see a drawing as to how they will look on the bridge.

**Councillor Phil Larratt**

**Deputy Leader of the Council**



## **Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

### **Northampton's Rough Sleepers Count**

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the Leader of the Council and I took part in a borough-wide count of rough sleepers, meticulously organised by the Council's Housing Options & Advice Manager.

A total of 36 volunteers – representing a broad range of organisations, including local faith groups, Northampton Partnership Homes, S2S, Midland Heart, Northamptonshire County Council (Children's Services), SSAFA, the British Army, the Hope Centre and the Council – took part in the count, which covered all Wards and was carried out between Midnight and 3.00am.

The volunteers observed a total of 13 people (10 men and 3 women) 'bedded down' in the borough. On the night of the count, 11 men were staying in the town's Emergency Nightshelter.

All of the people found 'bedded down' were over the age of 25 and, of the 11 people who were identified during the count, 10 were already known to the Council's Street Outreach Team. Of these, 5 were refusing to engage with local services and 4 had recently been provided with accommodation but had lost it through their own actions.

This year's count was attended by a representative of Homeless Link (commissioned by the Government to monitor, observe and validate rough sleepers estimates and counts) who thanked all of the volunteers for their involvement and said that, of all the counts he had attended, Northampton's was the best organised and the only one that covered the whole of the borough.

### **Housing Enforcement Team**

On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, the Cabinet will consider a Business Case for using the income that the Council receives from civil penalties and rent repayment orders to fund a significant expansion of the Housing Enforcement Team.

If the Business Case is approved, the expanded Housing Enforcement Team will be in a much stronger position to tackle criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords and managing agents who knowingly rent out accommodation that is unlicensed, substandard and/or unsafe.

## Mandatory HMO Licensing

The Government has now confirmed that, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the definition of Mandatory HMOs will be extended to include all properties (not just those with 3 or more storeys) that are occupied by at least 5 people who are unrelated to one another.

As the Government intends to allow landlords six months' grace to license all of the HMOs that are affected by this change of definition, the Housing Enforcement Team is planning to publicise the changes to ensure that as many of the affected HMOs as possible (including those operating in the Far Cotton and Delapre areas) are licensed by 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

After 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018, it will be a criminal offence for landlords and managing agents to operate these larger HMOs without a valid HMO licence. Enforcement action – resulting in prosecution or the imposition of civil penalties – will be taken against as many of these offenders as possible.

## SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol)

As I explained in my last report, arrangements are in place to provide homeless people with emergency shelter, in the Hope Centre, during severe weather.

Although homeless people will continue to access the Nightshelter in the usual way, SWEP will become operational when it is forecast – by the Met Office – that the temperature in Northampton will fall below freezing for at least 3 consecutive nights.

Although the Council will continue to co-ordinate SWEP and provide funding and volunteers, the Hope Centre has agreed that, during the winter of 2017/18, it will host SWEP and take the lead in ensuring that everything runs smoothly on the nights that emergency shelter is required.

## Northampton Partnership Homes

Once every 2 years, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) is required to commission a survey, on the Council's behalf, to capture the views of tenants and residents on NPH's performance.

The survey, known as STAR (Survey for Tenants and Residents), is conducted independently and focuses on 7 standard core questions. This is the first STAR survey since NPH was created.

I am delighted to report that, since the creation of NPH, tenant and resident satisfaction has increased in every single area, with the improvement ranging from 4% (for 'Quality of home' and 'Overall service provided') to 12% ('Rent provides value for money'):

CORE QUESTION	2010	2012	2014	2017	Improvement since 2014
Overall service provided	78%	▼75%	▼72%	▲76%	4%
Quality of home	79%	▼72%	▼71%	▲75%	4%

<b>Repairs and maintenance</b>	72%	▼71%	▼67%	▲72%	5%
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	83%	▼72%	▼68%	▲72%	4%
<b>Rent provides value for money</b>	77%	▼70%	▼66%	▲78%	12%
<b>Service charges provide value for money</b>	N/A	51%	▲53%	▲61%	8%
<b>Views listened to and acted upon</b>	N/A	▼49%	▼46%	▲56%	10%

These results are a great testament to the Council's decision to create NPH.

#### Building new homes and improving existing ones

I am very pleased to report that Officers from the Council and Northampton Partnership Homes are close to recommending a delivery model that will enable at least 100 new council homes to be built every year for the next 10 years. Further details will be announced in January 2018.

In the meantime, NPH is continuing to build new council homes:

- Extra homes have been created (through the conversion and reconfiguration of existing buildings) in Eleanore House, Dovercourt and Woodstock;
- Construction work has started on Lakeview House to provide 45 homes in a brand new older persons' housing scheme);
- Construction work has started at Little Cross Street to provide 9 new flats and 9 new maisonettes; and
- Construction work is progressing well in relation to the 14 family homes being built at Lower Bath Street and the 2 large family homes being built at Althorpe Street, and these are due to be completed in February 2018.

Northampton Partnership Homes is establishing a pipeline of new development opportunities.

Planning consent has been granted for the demolition of 10 unfit, non-traditional homes at Toms Close, Collingtree and the development of 21 new family homes.

Implementation of the Council Garage Sites Strategy is ongoing. A contract to upgrade a number of garage sites has been let to Kiers and is progressing well. A number of redundant



garage sites have been evaluated for potential redevelopment with new family homes. These are in the process of being taken through the formal planning approval process.

NPH has been addressing fire and safety issues at Overslade House, Camp Hill and has decanted the scheme in preparation for major reconfiguration and refurbishment.

Work to regenerate Spring Borough is well underway, with works to upgrade the exterior of all blocks and to upgrade landscaping throughout the estate. Work to refurbish St Katherine's tower block – providing externally insulated cladding (all conforming to class 0 fire rating), new bin stores and an entrance lobby, upgrading all mechanical and electrical installations and installing a sprinkler system – will be completed by the end of March 2018.

External block refurbishment works at Kings Heath (including new balconies) have been completed, and landscape works are due to commence early next year.

**Councillor Stephen Hibbert**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing**



## Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 11 December 2017

### **Environmental Services Re-Provision**

The project is progressing according to the timetable.

Following the submission of the Initial Tender proposals by bidders on 18 August and the subsequent evaluation period, the Authority conducted a series of negotiation meetings with the remaining bidders during September and October 2017. The negotiation closed successfully and the Authority initiated the Final Tender stage on 23 October 2017.

The Final Tender submissions were received by the two bidders on 17 November 2017. The evaluation panel is currently completing evaluation and moderation of the bids through the application of the contract award criteria.

We anticipate that the recommendation to award the contract to the preferred bidder will be discussed at a future Cabinet meeting in early 2018.

### **Environmental Services (Direct Services)**

- Abington Park - A new memorial bench has been installed adjacent to the play train in the memory of the late former Mayor John Gardner. It is in recognition to the contribution John made in the Borough during his role as Mayor, as a local politician and a volunteer at the Northampton and Lamport Railway Preservation Society.
- The Racecourse – The play equipment at the St Georges Avenue/Barrack Road end has been refurbish, which also included a new roundabout. This was a joint venture with the Friends of the Racecourse and the Council. The large slide in the middle of the Racecourse has also been refurbished.
- Victoria Promenade - The Council owned footpath that runs along the front of the houses opposite Morrison's, has had additional cast iron traditional bollards installed to stop cars illegally parking and keeping the area safe for pedestrians.
- Becketts Park – On the corner of Victoria Promenade/Bedford Road additional cast iron traditional bollards were installed to stop vehicles accessing the park from that area.
- Victoria Park – The large piece of gym equipment near the MUGA has finally been repaired, after it was vandalised last year. Also at Victoria Park, the safety gates

that prevent children from accessing the river from the park were replaced after the original ones went missing.

- Dayrell Road – Bollards have been installed at the roundabout adjacent to the Hunsbury Park Primary School to make the area safer for children going to and from school.

### **Environmental Health**

The Low Emission Strategy has now been presented to Cabinet for adoption. Work is be progressing to implement the action plan. One of the first actions taken is the adoption of an emission policy for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles which has recently been agreed by the Licensing Committee.

The Council's annual Air Quality Status Report will shortly be submitted to DEFRA. This report details the levels of air pollution in the area and actions that are being taken to improve air quality in Northampton. This report will be made available on the NBC website.

The contract for the provision of environmental enforcement services has been awarded. Mobilisation is currently in progress and the staff will soon be out and about delivering an enhanced enforcement service.

**Councillor Mike Hallam**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**



## Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 11 December 2017

### **Town Centre Operations**

From 1 April to 31 October 2017 the Saturday free parking figures in the council's multi-storey car parks showed 254,274 visitors taking advantage of the free parking offer.

In the same period, the two hour free parking figures show 602,960 visitors taking advantage with 75% of visitors using the Mayorhold and Grosvenor car parks.

The total parking figures for the period 1 April – 31 October 2017 show 1,596,283 visitors accessing the council's multi-storey and surface car parks.

The footfall figures for October show 1,426,913 visitors, workers and shoppers in Abington Street and Market Square which is a fall of 4.8% in comparison with the same period in 2016. Overall footfall figures for April – October 2017 in Abington Street and Market Square have reached 12,032,723.

### **Regeneration**

#### Horizon House

The purchase of the Horizon House site from National Grid has been completed. An extensive range of security measures has been installed. These include intruder/fire and flood detection to the building and a hydrogen fuel cell powered CCTV towers in the grounds.

Preparations for the Development of the site as the Headquarters of Northampton Partnership Homes Office are progressing well.

#### Queen Eleanor Cross

Cliveden Conservation have carried out a condition survey and minor maintenance works. We are awaiting full report and recommendations for future works.

#### **Delapre Abbey**

Construction work, including repairs to the Lodge and the new Car Park are progressing well.

#### **Miscellaneous works**

Far Cotton Recreation Centre: Upgrading of CCTV installation.

Albion House: Clearance of weeds etc to grounds.

Guildhall: Fire Risk Assessment.

Billing Brook Lakes: Procurement Stage.

**Vulcan Works**

Asbestos has been removed from Amalgamated Tyres ahead of demolition which is scheduled for the end of January

**St. James Mill Road**

Ground Investigation Surveys will be completed by January 2018, and design work is progressing

The Planning Application expected for February 2018.

**Business Incentive Scheme**

No Change – There have been no Boards since the last update.

16 Businesses have been supported to date this year.

This support has leveraged nearly £900,000 private sector investment and created 52 jobs.

**Planning**

Local Plan Part 2: Sites Consultation (October – November 2017):

Members of the public, businesses and other organisations were asked for their views on a host of sites put forward for development as part of the Local Plan Part 2: Sites Consultation. Last year the Borough Council carried out a call for sites, seeking those who owned property and land across the Borough with development potential to come forward. The Consultation which closed on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017, gave members of the local community the opportunity to comment on whether development would be appropriate in these areas and, if so, what type they would like to see. The outcome of this consultation and further work will now be considered before any decisions are made about the future of these sites.

**Development Control**

N/2015/0872 – S106 has now been completed and planning permission issued for the outline planning application N/2015/0872 for the development of 34 dwellings on land off Banbury Lane.

**Councillor Tim Hadland**

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



## **Cabinet Member Report for Finance**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

#### **Finance**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November the Chancellor announced his Autumn Budget 2017, the main focus of which was on housing and infrastructure. Whilst there was little in the way of specific announcement for Northampton it was clear the Government is keen to support housing and provide the infrastructure to support growth. The council should receive more detail in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which is expected prior to the Christmas break.

As previously reported the council faces financial challenges in next financial year and over the medium term. These arise from reduced government funding and cost pressures on our services. In response to this and to ensure the council remains financially sustainable the Cabinet has continued to work on developing its Budget proposals for 2018/19 and over the medium term period. These will be presented to Cabinet at its Budget meeting in December, followed by a period of consultation prior to formally setting its budget and council tax in February 2018.

#### **Revenue and Benefits**

LGSS Revenues & Benefits is continuing to deliver against NBC's performance targets, with no current risks to service delivery presented to the performance board based on October's performance data. The on-going trials of the new service delivery model (First Point Resolution) has ensured that the call answer rate has exceeded target for 3 consecutive months in row.

The service is actively managing the increased demand against the Discretionary Housing Payment fund, and whilst there is concerns of a potential overspend for 2017/18, the service is continuing to explore and implement initiatives that will allow a robust management of the fund whilst ensuring a commitment to homelessness prevention. The service will continue to ensure that NBC is kept apprised on the ongoing situation on a regular basis.

**Councillor Brandon Eldred**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance**



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

**Northampton Borough Council**

**Monday 11 December 2017**

### **Councillor Community Fund**

Since the beginning of April 2015, a total of £281,728.75 has been spent on delivering 634 community projects that have been supported through the Cllr Community Fund.

### **Partnership Support**

Opening of St Crispin's Community Centre – fund day supported, successful event, lots of media coverage and a large amount of families from the local community attended the day.

### **Forums**

International Coming Out Day – staff event held on the Mezz floor – had approx. 25-30 members of staff attend for a cup of tea and some rainbow cake and 16 have signed up to become straight allies. We also used the opportunity to use our selfie frame to capture peoples support and posted on the intranet and social media to promote our commitment to our LGBTQ community and staff.

International Men's Day held on Friday 17 November, themed around 'being a man means...' exhibition in the Grosvenor Centre, containing portraits of a number of local men, showing their perspectives on what they think makes a man. Local men who have had their portraits taken include Father Oliver Coss, Broadcaster John Griff, Northamptonshire Police Chief Constable Simon Edens and Alaric Neville.

Men's health and wellbeing information stalls from organisations such as Northampton Leisure Trust, the Lowdown and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire, supported the event also.

Cake and Debate held on 17 November at the Guildhall with the three Northampton MPs and our Youth Forum to mark Parliament Week.

16 Days of Activism – commenced on 25 November. Working with Northampton Domestic Abuse Service, Northamptonshire's Rape Crisis Centre and Northampton University, information stalls have been provided at key locations in high footfall spaces, stories of resilience and a drama production, dealing with the issues of honour based violence was staged at the Deco, and a film showing of East is East has taken place at the Errol Flynn.

Public Service Announcements project supported through the Diverse Communities Forum, delivered by Inspiration FM. Six announcements were produced and broadcasted with the Youth Forum, capturing key events and projects across the forums.

### **Events**

The Remembrance Day Parade (Sunday 12th November) attracted thousands of visitors into the town centre to support our local armed forces as they march around All Saints Church headed by the Northampton Pipe Band, taking the salute in front of the Guildhall with the Lord Lieutenant and Mayor .

Saturday 18th November saw the switching on of this year's Christmas Lights by the winners of the Young Sportswomen of the Year Emily Williams and the Local Sportswomen Award winner Susan Corless. The visitors to the town were entertained through the afternoon by performances from this year's pantomimes including Aladdin, beauty and the Beast and Peter Pan.

Sunday 3rd December saw the Frost Fair on the Market Square with stage entertainment and a Christmas parade from the top of Abington Street to the Market Square attracting thousands into the town.

The Christmas igloo in the Grosvenor Centre offering a 360 degree film experience has been popular with people of all ages and will continue to run until the 22nd December.

The Christmas stage entertainment in the market square and food offer in Abington Street has been popular and will continue for another week.

It has been another successful year with events all across the town being attended, enjoyed and supported by thousands of residents and visitors alike.

### **Culture & Heritage**

October half term workshops for children were enjoyed by over 116 young people. A very popular Halloween event attracted 2,500 visitors with over 600 children taking part in the events, most of whom were in fancy dress.

An autumn series of five Art History lectures in October and November attracted around 40 attendees to each event. The autumn series of seven Over 60s lectures were in the main sold out and attended by around 65 adults at each. A Collectors Day in November attracted ten collectors and was attended by over 270 people. Displays included those from the Bassett Loake gauge 1 model railway, the Natural History Society, historical gardening equipment and the Rushden History Society. A Christmas Pudding workshop held in November sold out to 20 attendees.

A weekend Autumn Food Fair attracted over 3,060 visitors. Stallholders were given the opportunity to feedback whether they would support future events if they were two days or one – we have listened to their comments and the decision has been made to revert back to Saturday one day food fairs in 2018.

During October a wedding fair organised by Events in a Box took place at Abington. The event was successful and a further hire by the organisation is planned for March 2018. Three confirmed wedding bookings have now been taken for Abington Park Museum in 2018.

### **Museum Expansion Project**

The Planning application for the museum extension was submitted and approved. Work is underway on detailed design for the museum build and exhibition galleries. Tender documents are in production, and the project is expected to go out to tender in early February 2019.

### **Customer Services**



Partnership working is essential to our success in ensuring customers received the right support at the first point of contact. With the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) Full Service in July 2018 it is essential that we are working closely with many of our Agencies to help support customers prepare for this change. This includes ensuring they have the relative documentation including, a bank account in their own name, sufficient ID, Tenancy agreements, proof of rent payments. All of which will help prevent any delays in applying for UC and reduce risk of increased debt and risk of homelessness.

We are pleased to welcome Elaine O’Neil an UC Work Coach from Northampton Job Centre Plus. Elaine will be working within OSS every Wednesday from 6<sup>th</sup> December alongside NBC and our Partners in supporting citizens with the transition onto UC.

### **Community Safety**

Community Safety Actions plans have been drafted, detailing how the partnership will deliver the Community Safety Strategy.

Marble Arch – Planning Permission for the gates has been granted. Contractor currently obtaining a Licence to Excavate in order to install the gate posts.

Supporting NPH with public consultation for Thorplands regeneration plans.

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness training delivered to NBC officers and community groups.

**Councillor Anna King**

**Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety**

Appendices 4



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# COUNCIL

## 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**Agenda Status: Public**

**Directorate: Revenues & Benefits**  
(LGSS)

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Local Council Tax Support Scheme – 2018/19</b>
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### 1. Purpose

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1.1 That Council approve the proposal that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to remain at a 35% reduction in 2018/19.

### 2. Recommendations

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2.1 That Council endorse the recommendation contained in the Cabinet report attached no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 See Cabinet Report attached

### 4. Implications (including financial implications)

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#### 4.1 Policy

4.1.1 See Cabinet Report attached

#### 4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 See Cabinet Report attached

#### 4.3 Legal

4.3.1 See Cabinet Report attached

#### **4.4 Equality**

4.4.1 See Cabinet Report attached

#### **4.5 Other Implications**

4.5.1 See Cabinet Report attached

#### **5. Background Papers**

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5.1 See Cabinet Report attached

**Robin Bates, LGSS Head of Revenues & Benefits (ext. 7119)  
Glen Hammons, Section 151 Officer, Northampton Borough Council**

Appendices: 3



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report Title

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

## CABINET REPORT

**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Finance
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Brandon Eldred
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 This report recommends the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19, including amendments.
- 1.2 The report follows a period of consultation and provides the recommended scheme for approval at Council.

### 2. Recommendations

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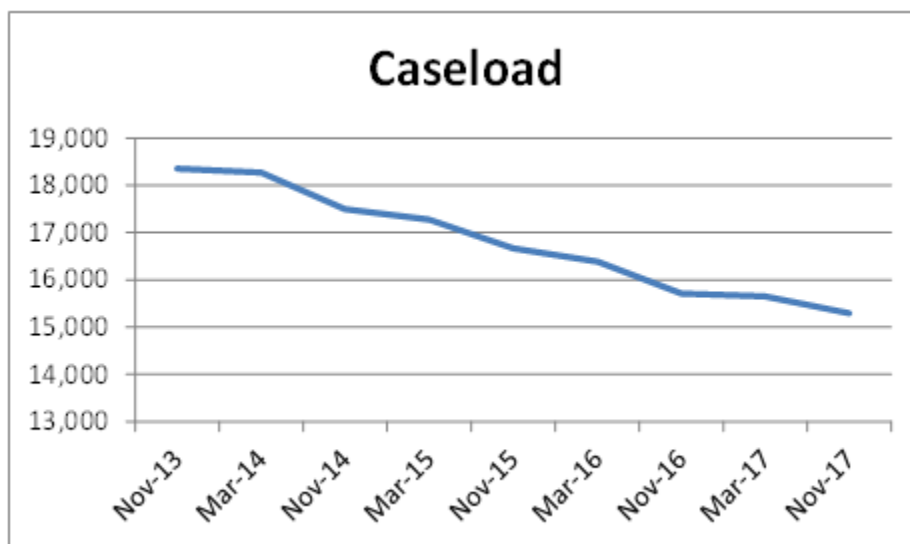
- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the recommendation for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to remain at a 35% reduction in 2018/19.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends the CTRS for approval at Council on the 11th December 2017.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Local Authorities are required to set up their own CTRS from the general funding allocation. This allocation is reducing annually at a forecasted rate of approximately 10% per annum until at least 2018, possibly longer.
- 3.1.2 Reduced funding means the Council is required to consider how to meet its commitment to the CTRS.
- 3.1.3 The graph below demonstrates that the CTRS caseload has continued to reduce. Monitoring closely over the period that the CTRS has been operating, has enabled modelling of final expenditure to be estimated more accurately.



- 3.1.4 Central Government suggested that Local Authorities could meet the funding deficit by implementing other changes, to ensure that Local Authorities maximise their opportunities to be financially efficient with the current budgetary pressures. As part of the implementation of the CTRS from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 we have already:
- Reconfigured funding, in particular its transfer of services to LGSS.
  - Used the new flexibility over Council Tax to remove the reliefs in respect of second homes and some empty properties; and other reforms of the council tax system, including the use of an electronic leaflet and removal of expensive printing costs traditionally associated with the annual billing process.
- 3.1.5 Under management from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), using devolved power under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended); Northampton Borough Council has been operating a means tested local reduction. This saw a 35% reduction in the support available to working age customers in 2017/18.

- 3.1.6 Local Authorities are expected to ensure their CTRS is suitable for its local community and promotes the Governments position on Welfare Reform, by protecting the vulnerable and encouraging work for those of working age.
- 3.1.7 Pensioners will not be affected by the proposed changes to our CTRS and will remain fully protected. This means that NBC will continue to administer protection for year 2018/19 for approximately 5,797 pensioners.
- 3.1.8 Claimant's aged between 18 and 62 are classed as working age (not of pensionable age) and are subject to the CTRS. Approximately 9,485 customers fall into this group and will be affected for collection and financial purposes by a reduction of their existing award. The reduction is applied by a reduction in benefit after all calculations have been made.
- 3.1.9 A full income disregard of War Widows Pension and War Disablement Pension will continue. This was originally adopted as part of the 2013/14 CTRS in Northampton. Protection for working age customers in receipt of these benefits will also continue.
- 3.1.10 Additional protection will continue for those in receipt of disablement benefits and **Appendix A** provides the groups afforded additional support under the scheme. The scheme will also continue to support people back into work through a 4-week run on period of support.
- 3.1.11 Part of the feedback from previous consultations is that people feel that reducing the amount of support would probably cause hardship for some people.

## **3.2 Issues**

- 3.2.1 The options for amending the CTRS, as detailed in 3.3 below, were consulted upon. These would reduce or mitigate the impact of the reduced funding for the CTRS.
- 3.2.2 Positive responses from the consultation centred on the concept of 'fairness' and everyone having to contribute to protect services
- 3.2.3 Negative responses included concerns about being able to afford increasing contributions toward Council Tax bills, in addition to already increasing priority bills and static incomes.
- 3.2.4 Questions were raised about how those already on a low income being able to afford additional money and the impact on their ability to afford necessities and increased debt.
- 3.2.5 It was also raised that the proposed percentages were too high and that any increase be kept to a minimum to support those most vulnerable
- 3.2.6 Suggestions were made on other areas that funding could be found such as cutting down on all community grants and charitable donations.
- 3.2.7 It was highlighted that these changes could impact vulnerable people and low income families.

3.2.8 Awareness was demonstrated of the impact of non-payment and subsequent increase on recovery costs.

### **3.3 Local Council Tax Reduction options for 2018/19**

#### **3.3.1 Option 1: No change - remain at 65%**

This would mean that CTRS is calculated the same as in 2017/18. However due to reduced funding for CTRS the Council would need to find additional funding.

#### **3.3.2 Option 2: The scheme remains at 65%, but increase the taper on excess income from 20% to 65%**

This means that the claimants in receipt of non-passported benefits would pay more and/or the council would be required to provide additional funding support for the scheme in 2017/18. Claimants in receipt of passported benefits would receive support at the same level as 2017/18.

Non-passported benefit claims are

- Earnings based
- Job Seekers Allowance (contribution based)
- Employment Support Allowance (contribution based)
- Universal Credit

Passported benefit claims are

- Income support
- Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment Support Allowance (income based)
- Pension Credit Guarantees

#### **3.3.3 Option 3: The scheme remains at 65%, but also apply an additional reduction of £1.20 to the final weekly award.**

This means that all claimants would pay more and/or the council would be required to provide additional funding support for the scheme in 2017/18.

#### **3.3.4 Option 4: Reduce the Maximum amount of CTRS from 65% to 57%**

This means that all claimants would pay more and/or the council would be required to provide additional funding support for the scheme in 2017/18.

#### **3.3.5 Option 5: Limit the liability on all awards to Band A then apply a 35% reduction**

This means that all claimants living in accommodation above Band A would pay more and/or the council would be required to provide additional funding support for the scheme in 2017/18.

### **3.4 Choices – Northampton Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

#### **3.4.1 Option 1: No change - remain at 65%**

The current scheme has worked well and provides additional protection and

support for the most vulnerable in the community, alongside supporting incentives to those starting work.

The funding for the existing scheme will reduce again in 2018/19, resulting in the Council being expected to find additional monies from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS. However the drop in caseload over the last year, as demonstrated in 3.1.3 has meant the current scheme remains self-funding.

Funding for the existing scheme would not change for the combined Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner, and Northampton Borough Council.

#### **3.4.2 The scheme remains at 65%, but increase the taper on excess income from 20% to 65%**

Funding for the existing scheme will reduce again in 2018/19 and therefore the Council would have been left to find £104,698 from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS.

This means that working age CTRS claimants in receipt of non-passported benefits would need to pay more Council tax. It would also act as a dis-incentive to people entering into work.

When the Council consulted for the 2018/19 scheme, respondents felt that the new proposals would cause additional hardship, that the proposed increase was too high, and suggested a lower weekly figure, and suggested alternative ways of funding the shortfall by reviewing Council spending on other projects.

This also means that the Council will need to fund the difference between the additional paid by the working age CTRS recipients and the funding available and will impact on the wider community in Northampton.

There was concern that increasing the amount payable to 43% would cause considerable difficulties for both individuals and the council in terms of collecting the shortfall in support.

Increasing the contribution rate is likely to lead to increased administration costs in recovering the Council Tax owed.

#### **3.4.3 The scheme remains at 65%, but also apply an additional reduction of £1.20 to the final weekly award.**

Funding for the existing scheme will reduce again in 2018/19 and therefore the Council would have been left to find £104,698 from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS.

This means that working age CTRS claimants would need to pay more Council tax.

When the Council consulted for the 2018/19 scheme, respondents felt that the new proposals would cause additional hardship, that the proposed increase was too high, and suggested a lower weekly figure, and suggested alternative ways of funding the shortfall by reviewing Council spending on other projects.



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There was concern that increasing the amount payable to 43% would cause considerable difficulties for both individuals and the council in terms of collecting the shortfall in support.

Increasing the contribution rate is likely to lead to increased administration costs in recovering the Council Tax owed.

#### **3.4.4 Reduce the Maximum amount of CTRS from 65% to 57%**

Funding for the existing scheme will reduce again in 2018/19 and therefore the Council would have been left to find £104,698 from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS.

This means that working age CTRS claimants would need to pay more Council tax.

When the Council consulted for the 2018/19 scheme, respondents felt that the new proposals would cause additional hardship, that the proposed increase was too high, and suggested a lower weekly figure, and suggested alternative ways of funding the shortfall by reviewing Council spending on other projects.

This also means that the Council will need to fund the difference between the additional paid by the working age CTRS recipients and the funding available and will impact on the wider community in Northampton.

There was concern that increasing the amount payable to 43% would cause considerable difficulties for both individuals and the council in terms of collecting the shortfall in support.

Increasing the contribution rate is likely to lead to increased administration costs in recovering the Council Tax owed.

#### **3.4.5 Limit the liability on all awards to Band A then apply a 35% reduction**

Funding for the existing scheme will reduce again in 2018/19 and therefore the Council would have been left to find £104,698 from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS.

This means that working age CTRS claimants living in accommodation that is above Band A would need to pay more Council tax.

When the Council consulted for the 2018/19 scheme, respondents felt that the new proposals would cause additional hardship, that the proposed increase was too high, and suggested a lower weekly figure, and suggested alternative ways of funding the shortfall by reviewing Council spending on other projects.

This also means that the Council will need to fund the difference between the additional paid by the working age CTRS recipients and the funding available and will impact on the wider community in Northampton.

There was concern that increasing the amount payable to 43% would cause

considerable difficulties for both individuals and the council in terms of collecting the shortfall in support.

Increasing the contribution rate is likely to lead to increased administration costs in recovering the Council Tax owed.

### **3.5 Recommended Option (Chosen CTR Scheme)**

- 3.5.1 A reduction of 35% in CTRS from working age recipients from 1st April 2018. This option balances the financial position in 2018/19. At the time of the consultation a greater reduction was a distinct possibility, however since the consultation the financial position has improved due to a reduction in the CTRS caseload.
- 3.5.2 Protection as set out in Appendix A will be continue to be afforded to ensure the Council protects disabled and vulnerable citizens, whilst ensuring there remains an incentive to work.
- 3.5.3 Alongside this the Council will continue to provide protection for recipients of war widows and war disablement pension. Therefore income and capital disregards for this group will be retained.
- 3.5.4 A four–week period of extended payments will continue to be provided for customers moving into work. This period will mean that benefit rates are retained for 4 weeks before any reduction is made.
- 3.5.5 The Council will review carefully the position in 2018/19. Alongside this it will ensure its policies and procedures to support those in hardship meet the needs of our citizens in providing or referring for financial advice.

## **4 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

- 4.1 The report outlines options for our CTRS, which if chosen, will set policy.

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 There are significant financial implications to the Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner as a result of the requirement to run a local council tax scheme, whilst protecting pensioners.
- 4.2.2 The Council aims for the CTRS to be self-funding. This means that the level of CTRS is set each year at a level were the forecast costs of the scheme match the funding of the scheme. The funding of the scheme is based on an assumed proportion of the Council's central government funding and business rates being allocated to CTRS.
- 4.2.3 Over the last few years there has been a steady reduction in the CTRS caseload – this has been reducing the cost of the scheme. However, at the same time there has also been a steady decrease in the level of central

government funding, reducing the funding for the scheme. Overall for the last few years the level of CTRS has had to be increased year on year in order for the scheme to break even against this notional funding level.

- 4.2.4 In 2018/19 it is forecast that CTRS caseloads will continue to fall. Central government funding is also continuing to fall. However, in 2018/19 the council is also forecasting some growth in business rates, which will partially offset the reduced central government funding. That means that in 2018/19 it will be possible to maintain the scheme at 35% and still break even against the notional funding level.
- 4.2.5 The current financial modelling undertaken on the recommended CTRS for 2018/19 is based on the latest intelligence around collection rates and government funding forecasts and is considered to be self-funding. However, the position would need to be closely monitored during the financial year and the position re-assessed for 2019/20
- 4.2.6 Increased recovery and associated court costs could see increased resource requirements within the revenues team. The impact of other welfare reforms could also contribute to reduced collection on Council Tax and wider corporate debts. The Council has taken full account of pressures across corporate income and debt in calculating the impact of the recommended CTRS.
- 4.2.7 If the Council fails to agree and implement an amended scheme by 31st January 2018 we will need to retain our current scheme. As a result the Council's budget would need to be balanced by other means.

### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 As part of the process of amending the CTRS, legal advice will be obtained in order to ensure that processes and procedures that underpin the CTRS are compliant.

### **4.4 Equality**

A full equality impact assessment has been completed - this can be found at **Appendix C**.

- 4.4.1 The equality impact assessment recognises that the amendment to the CTRS will place an additional financial burden on working age customers in 2018/19. Included within this group will be individuals and families with vulnerable characteristics.
- 4.4.2 In order to mitigate against the impact on this group and in particular those vulnerable citizens the Council has continued to afford protection within the more generous means-tested element of the CTRS. This can be found at **Appendix A**. Alongside this the Council will continue to consider fair debt collection principles and provide or refer those under financial pressure for debt advice.

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

- 4.5.1 Local Authorities are obligated to carry out a thorough consultation in-line with the Governments Consultation Principles July 2012, in order to reduce the opportunity for the scheme not to reflect the needs of the local population. The methodology and results of the consultation is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 4.5.2 Consideration required that any consultation that occurred be proportional to the needs of the community and time barred in line with good practice
- 4.5.3 Care must be given to ensure that all members of the community have access to this consultation to ensure that everyone is given a right to be heard on CTRS.
- 4.5.4 The Council's methodology and approach included the following:
- On-line survey
  - News release(s)
  - Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
  - Northampton Borough Council's internet pages
  - All e-mail communication from the Benefit, Council Tax and Customer Services mailboxes included an invitation link to take-part in the consultation
  - Display screens in the One Stop Shop
  - Details of the consultation were emailed to the Multi Agency Forum and our welfare partners, including registered social landlords.
  - Invitations to participate was sent to key stakeholders, including Precepting Authorities, parishes, local Councillors and Members of Parliament
  - Engagement with housing associations and voluntary and community sectors via their various networks
  - Northampton Borough Council's Community Forum members were invited to take part
  - 1,350 email invitations were issued to email addresses held on the Benefit and Council Tax database
- 4.5.5 Consultation results:
- The website was viewed 289 times during the consultation period. This demonstrates that media coverage of the consultation was active, however members of the public, did not complete the form to air their views.
  - A total of 17 people completed the on-line survey.
  - 2 people expressed an interest in attending the drop-in information sessions.
  - 22 individual comments were received in response to the consultation questions.
  - 0 people emailed for further information
- 4.5.6 Nationally, the response to Local Authority engagement on local Council Tax schemes has been low. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities has established that this is the case.

**4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

- 4.6.1 The CTRS is a statutory requirement as a result of national austerity measures and wider reforms of the benefit system.

**4.7 Other Implications**

None

**5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 Appendix A – Specific Protection
- 5.2 Appendix B – Consultation
- 5.3 Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

**Glenn Hammons, Section 151 Officer, Northampton Borough Council**  
**Robin Bates, LGSS Head of Revenues & Benefits**

## **Northampton Borough Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Northampton Borough Council's current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) provides for a means-tested reduction. This reduction takes the form of a discount and reduces the amount of Council Tax the person remains liable to pay.

This document provides an explanation of how the means-testing process incorporates specific protection for working age customers who may be considered vulnerable.

### **Applicable Amounts:**

The means-testing process for our CTRS begins with an applicable amount, which specifies the amount of income that someone needs to have before their discount decreases – prior to the application of any reduction. An applicable amount is made up of a personal allowance with additional premiums and is individual to the applicant and their family. Applicable amounts are more generous for disabled people, carers and couples or lone parents with children, in order to recognise the additional costs incurred with raising children, managing a disability or health problem.

### **Dependants' Allowance**

A customer's applicable amount is increased by a dependant's allowance for each dependent child. This ensures that the applicable amount reflects the additional costs of raising children.

### **Family Premium**

This is awarded in the applicable amount if the applicant or their partner has at least one dependent child or young person.

### **Disability Premium**

This premium is awarded in the applicable amount if the applicant or their partner is in receipt of either:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- The disability element or the severe disability element of working tax credit,
- Incapacity Benefit

### **Severe Disability Premium**

This is awarded in the applicable amount if the applicant or their partner has no non-dependents aged 18 or over and no-one receives Carer's Allowance for looking after them. Either the applicant and/or the partner also have to be in receipt of either:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance - care component at the middle or higher rate
- Personal Independence Payment – daily living component

### **Enhanced Disability Premium**

This premium is awarded in the applicable amount if the applicant, partner or dependent child is receiving:

- Disability Living Allowance - care component at the highest rate
- Personal Independence Payments – daily living component at the enhanced rate.

### **Disabled Child Premium**

This premium is awarded in the applicable amount for each dependent child receiving:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payments
- Or is registered blind.
- 

### **Carer premium**

This premium is awarded in the applicable amount where the applicant or his partner is entitled to Carer's Allowance.

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Weekly Applicable Amount Rates**

These are based on the 2017/18 figures, although the Department of Work and Pensions may increase these figures in-line with the Housing Benefit annual up-rating due by the end of January 2018. We also expect the applicable amounts for pensioners to be increased by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

<b>Applicable Amount Rates (Working Age)</b>	<b>April 2017 Rates</b>
<b>Personal Allowances</b>	
<b>Single</b>	
16 to 24	£57.90
25 or over	£73.10
Any age – entitled to main phase Employment & Support Allowance	£73.10
<b>Lone Parent</b>	
Under 18	£57.90
18 or over	£73.10
Any age – entitled to main phase Employment & Support Allowance	£73.10
<b>Couple</b>	
Both under 18	£87.50
One or both over 18	£114.85
Any age – entitled to main phase Employment & Support Allowance	£114.85
Dependent Children (for each child)	£66.90
<b>Premiums</b>	
Family Premium	£17.45
<b>Disability Premium</b>	
Single	£32.55
Couple	£46.40
<b>Severe Disability Premium</b>	
Single Rate	£62.45
Couple Rate – One member qualifies	£62.45
Couple Rate – Both members qualify	£124.90
<b>Enhanced Disability Premium</b>	
Single Rate	£15.90
Disabled Child Rate	£24.78
Couple Rate	£22.85
Disabled Child Premium	£60.90
Carer Premium	£34.95



## **Treatment of Income:**

### **Increased Earnings Disregards**

Net income from part-time or full-time work is taken into account when CTRS discount is calculated. However, a small amount of earned income is then disregarded, which helps incentivise people to move into work.

A higher earnings disregard applies for those who qualify for the disability premium or severe disability premium (or either component of the Employment and Support Allowance) in the CTRS. This means that less of the disabled customer's net earnings are taken into account when calculating the amount of discount they receive. This is also the case for lone parents and carers.

<b>Earnings Disregards</b>	<b>April 2017 Weekly Rates</b>
Single person	£5.00
Couple	£10.00
Disability or Severe Disability Premium	£20.00
Carer Premium	£20.00
Lone parent	£25.00

A further £17.10 a week is also disregarded for:

- Lone parents working 16 hours or more a week; or
- Couples where either/or member are working 24 hours a week, with at least one member working at least 16 hours a week
- Their applicable amount includes a disability premium and they work 16 hours or more a week.

### **Disregard of Disability Benefits**

The following income is ignored in the means-test of the CTRS:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payments
- Attendance Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- War Disablement Pension
- War Widows Payment

### **Non-Dependant Deductions:**

For certain disabled customers non-dependant deductions are not applied to the means test of their discount, regardless of the number of non-dependants that they may be living with them. This applies if the applicant or their partner is registered blind or if either of them are receiving:

- Attendance Allowance; or
- Disability Living Allowance – care component; or
- Personal Independence Payments – daily living component

<b>Non-Dependent Deductions</b>	<b>April 2017 Weekly Rates</b>
In receipt of state Pension Credit or in receipt of IS, JSA(IB), or ESA(IR)	Nil
Aged 18 or over and in remunerative work	
-gross income greater than £406.00	£11.80
-gross income not less than £328.00 but less than £407.99	£9.65
-gross income not less than £189.00 but less than £327.99	£7.65
-gross income less than £189.00	£3.80
Others aged 18 or over	£3.80

### **Childcare:**

The cost of eligible childcare (for a child up to the age of 15, or 16 (if they are disabled) can be disregarded up to £175 a week for one child or £300 a week for two or more children. This is providing that the applicant and/or their partner are:

- A lone parent working 16 hours or more a week ; or
- A couple where both of them are working 16 hours or more a week; or
- A couple where one of them is working 16 hours or more and the other is incapacitated

This provision is also aimed at incentivising people to move into work.



## **Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation (CTRS)**

Author           Kirsty Tomlinson  
Version         1.1  
Status          Report

## INTRODUCTION:

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme replaced Council Tax Benefits (CTB) in April 2013, when local authorities were required to set up their own discount.

Northampton's scheme for 2017/18 is based on the former Council Tax Benefit Scheme with the exception that all working age claimants could only claim a discount for 65% of the amount they would have received under the old CTB scheme. The council has to carry out an annual review of its CTRS scheme.

The findings from this consultation will help inform any changes that may be required. The scheme for 2018/19 must be agreed by the 31st January 2018.

This consultation took place from 16 October 2017 to 12 November 2017.

## METHODOLOGY

Our approach included the following:

- On-line survey
- News release(s)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Northampton Borough Council's internet pages
- All e-mail communication from the Benefit, Council Tax and Customer Services mailboxes included an invitation link to take-part in the consultation
- Display screens in the One Stop Shop
- Details of the consultation were emailed to the Multi Agency Forum and our welfare partners, including registered social landlords.
- Invitations to participate was sent to key stakeholders, including Precepting Authorities, parishes, local Councillors and Members of Parliament
- Engagement with housing associations and voluntary and community sectors via their various networks
- Northampton Borough Council's Community Forum members were invited to take part
- 1350 email invitations were issued to email addresses held on the Benefit and Council Tax database

The following companion documents were made available:

- **CTRS Option being considered** giving details of options considered and recommended
- **A Brief Guide to CTB**
- **Overview for finance of the proposed changes**
- **How much the proposed changes will cost the council**
- **Breakdown of Collection Rates for CTRS cases**
- **Equality impact assessment**
- **Examples of the effect of the proposed changes on Banding Charges**

To help support the public the following were made available and advertised in-line with the above:

- Dedicated email address for enquiries
- Our Customer Service teams were made available to help the public complete the on-line form to mitigate any accessibility issues.
- Five drop in-sessions were made available to provide a personal illustration on what the proposed changes would mean – to enable people to provide a fully informed response. Sessions were offered as follows:
  - ✓ Wednesday 18 October 2017 (1pm to 4pm)
  - ✓ Tuesday 24 October 2017 (4.30pm to 6.30pm)
  - ✓ Friday 27 October 2017 (1pm to 4pm)
  - ✓ Thursday 2 November 2017 (1pm to 4pm)
  - ✓ Wednesday 8 November 2017 (9am to 12pm)
  - ✓ Those who could not attend were invited to contact us to discuss their situation and how the potential proposals might affect them.

## **RESULTS:**

The website was viewed 289 times during the consultation period. This demonstrates that media coverage of the consultation was active, however members of the public, did not complete the form to air their views.

A total of 17 people completed the on-line survey.

2 people expressed an interest in attending the drop-in information sessions and 2 people attended.

22 individual comments were received in response to the consultation questions.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:**

Due to the type of questions asked in the on-line survey, and in-line with the number of responses received, the results are mainly qualitative. The data has provided an in-depth look at what the proposed changes mean to the respondents and how it will impact them.

## KEY RESULTS:

**Question 1** focused on collecting personal data and will therefore not be included in this report.

**Question 2** established whether the respondent was currently receiving a CTRS discount and whether they were responding on behalf of an organization.

- 11 respondents are currently receiving a CTRS discount
- 2 respondents responded on behalf of an organization:
  - Community Law Service
  - East Midlands Homes

The remaining questions focused on the 5 specific options being considered. To each question the customer was asked to what extent they did or did not support the proposal and given the option of 5 responses with the option to add further comments. These were:

- Strongly support
- Support
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support
- Don't know

## Question 3:

Proposal 1 would be not to make any changes and keep the scheme as it was during 2017/18. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. Previously the council has decided to adopt CTR schemes that have aimed to balance the significant cuts to the council's resource for CTR and the council's wider budget challenges, while also needing to support the most vulnerable members of our community. Any decision to keep the scheme at current levels will result in difficult decisions having to be taken elsewhere. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

15 responses were made and 2 respondents skipped the question.

The key comments received were as follows:

- 11 respondents confirmed that they preferred this option
- 6 respondents commented that those in receipt of CTR are already struggling to meet the current liability
- 1 respondent raised specific concerns regarding the impact on under 25 year olds.
- 1 respondent confirmed that as a registered charity they have seen a year on year increase in the level of council tax debt with many also being impacted by other welfare reforms.

#### **Question 4:**

Proposal 2 would see claimants in receipt of non-passported benefits through the DWP contribution remaining at 35%, but seeing an increase the taper applied to excess income from 20% to 65%. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the Examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

15 responses were made and 2 respondents skipped the question.

The key comments received were as follows:

- 2 respondents confirmed that they preferred this option
- 11 respondents confirmed that they did not support this option
- 1 respondent commented specific concerns regarding low income families leaving work as it is not financially viable
- 1 respondent commented that this would cause stress to families trying to survive on already low incomes

#### **Question 5:**

Proposal 3 would see working age claimants' contribution remaining at 35%, but seeing an additional reduction of £1.20 to their final weekly ward. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the Examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

15 responses were made and 2 respondents skipped the question.

The key comments received were as follows:

- 8 respondents confirmed that they did not support this option
- 1 respondent commented that this option would cause them financial hardship
- 1 respondent indicated that they did not support any reduction in the amount of support offered

## Question 6

Proposal 4 would see working age council taxpayers liable to pay approximately 43% of their council tax bill subject to other support changes. Currently those working age council taxpayers eligible for CTR pay at least 35% of their council tax charge, receiving a discount of up to 65%. This option proposes a lower level of financial support of approximately 57% from April 2018, therefore claimants would become liable for the payment of a higher percentage of their council tax charge (43%). This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. Under this proposal, a working age claimant or family on income support has a council tax liability on a band A, unparished, property a net increase of £1.63 per week and for a Band D, unparished, a net increase of £2.45 per week. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

16 responses were made and 1 respondent skipped the question.

The key comments received were as follows:

- 11 respondents confirmed that they did not support this option
- 1 respondent indicated that those in receipt of CTRS are already struggling to meet the 35% and an increase to 43% would be setting claimants on low incomes up to fail.
- 1 respondent commented that the poorest should not be hurt as any of the option would still leave a significant deficit.

## Question 7

Proposal 5 would see all working age claimants having a limit on the amount they are able to receive, set at Band A levels, before any reduction, up to a maximum of 35%, is applied. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work.

To what extent do you support this proposal?

14 responses were made and 3 respondent skipped the question.

The key comments received were as follows:

- 7 respondents confirmed that they did not support this option
- 1 respondent commented that this option would penalize the working households the most
- 1 respondent commented that this option could force them into debt with little or no chance of recovery.



### Question 8

We are running a number of drop-in sessions at the One Stop Shop over the next few weeks to give people a chance to discuss the proposed changes and how they may impact on people-particularly for those receiving or likely to receive CTR discount. If you are interested in coming along, please select your preferred option below to give us an idea of numbers:

- 2 people indicated that they would like to attend
- 5 indicated that they could not attend
- 2 people did attend one of the sessions offered

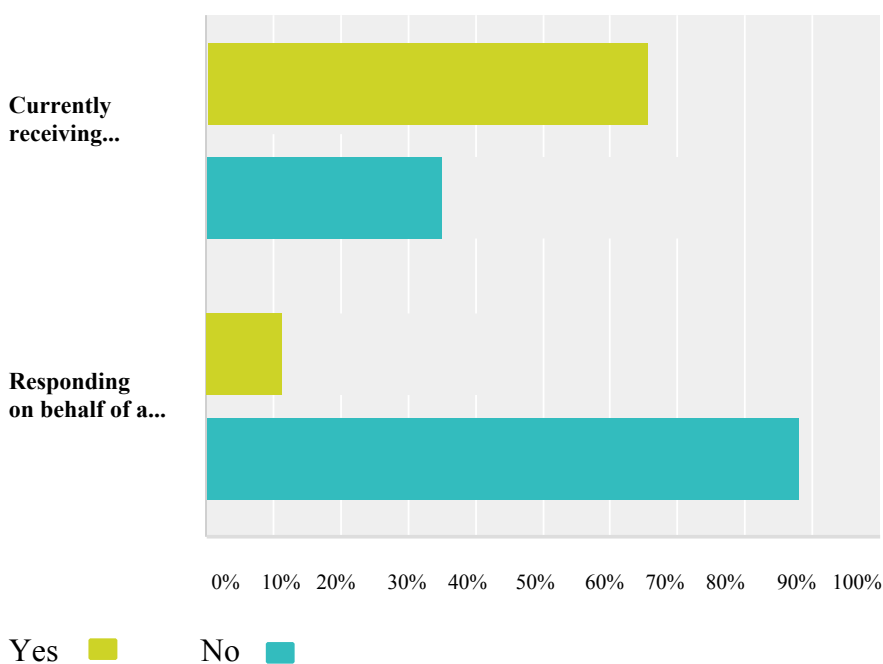
### Question 9

How did you hear about this consultation?

- 3 people heard about the consultation from the website
- 12 people heard about the consultation by email
- 2 people heard about the consultation from other sources
- 1 person heard about the consultation from social media

## Full responses

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation for 2018/19



	Yes	No
Currently receiving support through the Council Tax Reduction scheme	64.71 %	35.29 %
Responding on behalf of a community group or organisation (please provide details about the organisation in the box below)	11.77 %	88.23 %

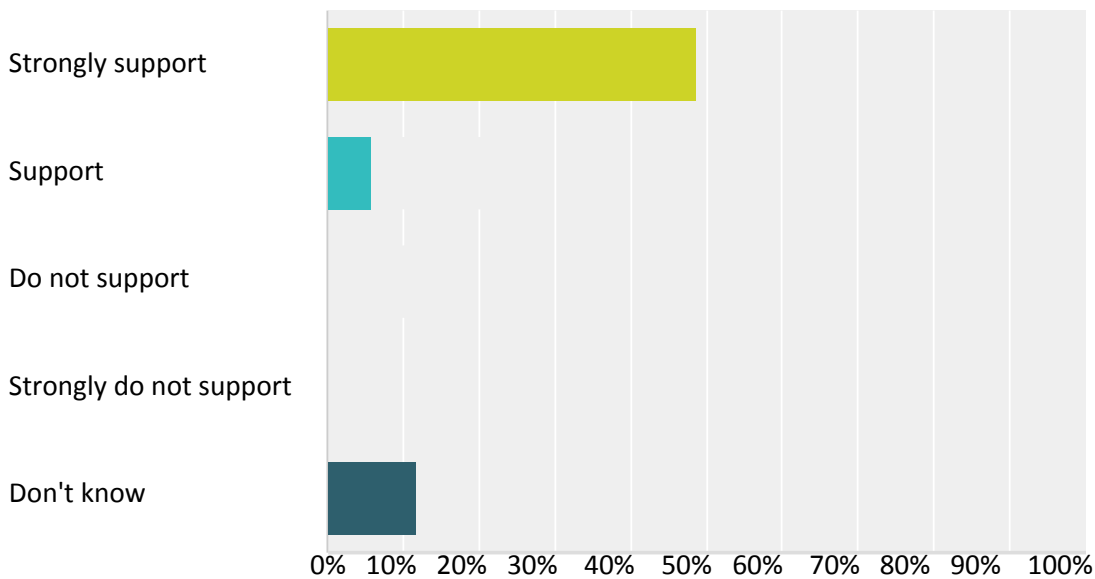
## Question

Proposal 1 would be not to make any changes and keep the scheme as it was during 2017/18. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. Previously the council has decided to adopt CTR schemes that have aimed to balance the significant cuts to the council's resource for CTR and the council's wider budget challenges, while also needing to support the most vulnerable members of our community. Any decision to keep the scheme at current levels will result in difficult decisions having to be taken elsewhere. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

## Answer

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Strongly support	58.83%	10
Support	5.89%	1
Do not support	11.76%	2
Strongly do not support		0
Don't know	11.76%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>

1. I think that people who receive benefits cannot afford another rise in council tax £104,000 is not much in the great scheme of things stop wasting money on new buildings that the county clearly cannot afford
2. We have seen an increase in the level of Council Tax Debt year on year. People we see are often on a low income. Many are also being impacted by other welfare reforms (eg bedroom tax, cap) and they simply do not have the money to pay this. Any further reduction in the help available via CTS simply puts them into more debt. We regularly see clients who have CT debt from 3 or even 4 years ago. For those on ESA/JSA/IS each debt is simply put on hold whilst the oldest is recovered at £3.70 a week from their benefit. The council should separately review the collection rate from people who are on a passported benefit, from those on CTS and those not on CTS when deciding on next year's scheme.
3. CTRS has been disastrous to those claiming benefits especially those under 25 who are on reduced benefits in the first place. CTRS is setting up residents to fail and incur additional costs, stress and anxiety.
4. Even the 35% is a lot to pay, being single mum of 2 and in benefits.
5. ALL OF THE PROPOSALS ARE POINTLESS ANYWAY, AS YOU WILL DO WHAT EVER YOU WANT TO DO ANYWAY.

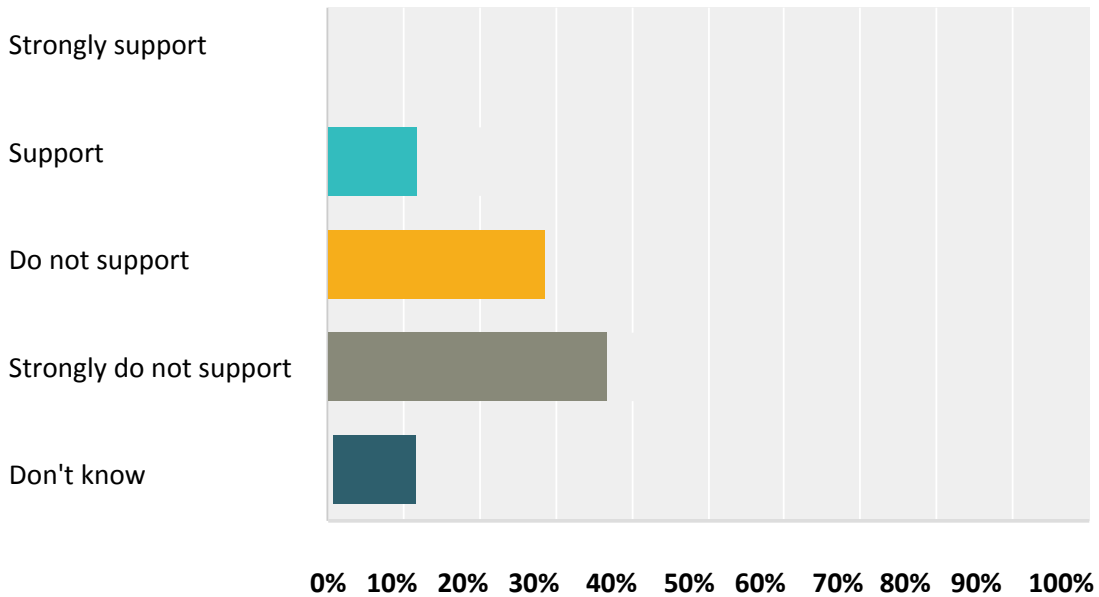
### Question

Proposal 2 would see claimants in receipt of non-passported benefits through the DWP contribution remaining at 35%, but seeing an increase the taper applied to excess income from 20% to 65%. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the Examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

## Answer

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly support	0
Support	11.76% 2
Do not support	29.42% 5
Strongly do not support	35.30% 6
Don't know	11.76% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

1. Again this is going to cause stress to families trying to survive on already low incomes.
2. This option would simply penalise the very groups the Government say they are trying to support - the working families on a low income who rely on in-work benefits to survive. By taking up this option working households with 2 children (in your example) would have an additional £439 per year to pay. In an extreme case, this could be the final straw resulting in them leaving work as it is not financially worth it.
3. See comment in BOX 1
4. Housing benefit already has a taper of 65%, if you now apply this taper to CTRS then claimants would be 30% worse off

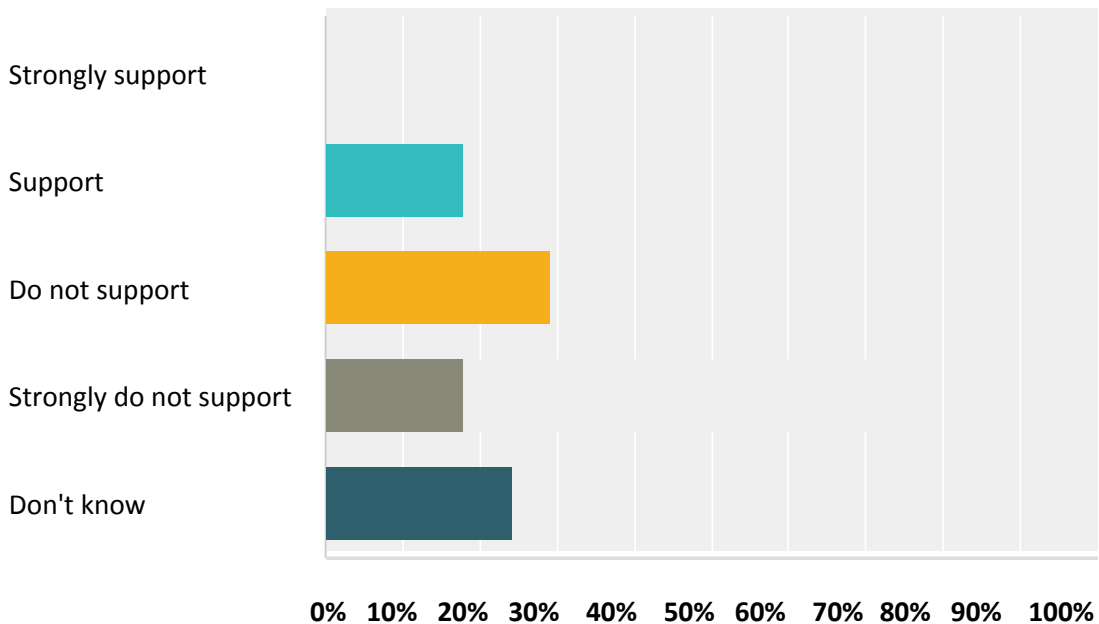
## Question

Proposal 3 would see working age claimants' contribution remaining at 35%, but seeing an additional reduction of £1.20 to their final weekly ward. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the Examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

## Answer

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly support	0
Support	17.65% 3
Do not support	29.42% 5
Strongly do not support	17.65% 3
Don't know	23.53% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

1. This type of rise in outgoings will cause further problems with us trying to make ends meet.
2. I do not support any reduction in the amount of help offered through the scheme for reasons given at option 1.

3. See comment in BOX 1
4. Over complicated, if you want to reduce the contribution then vary the percentage

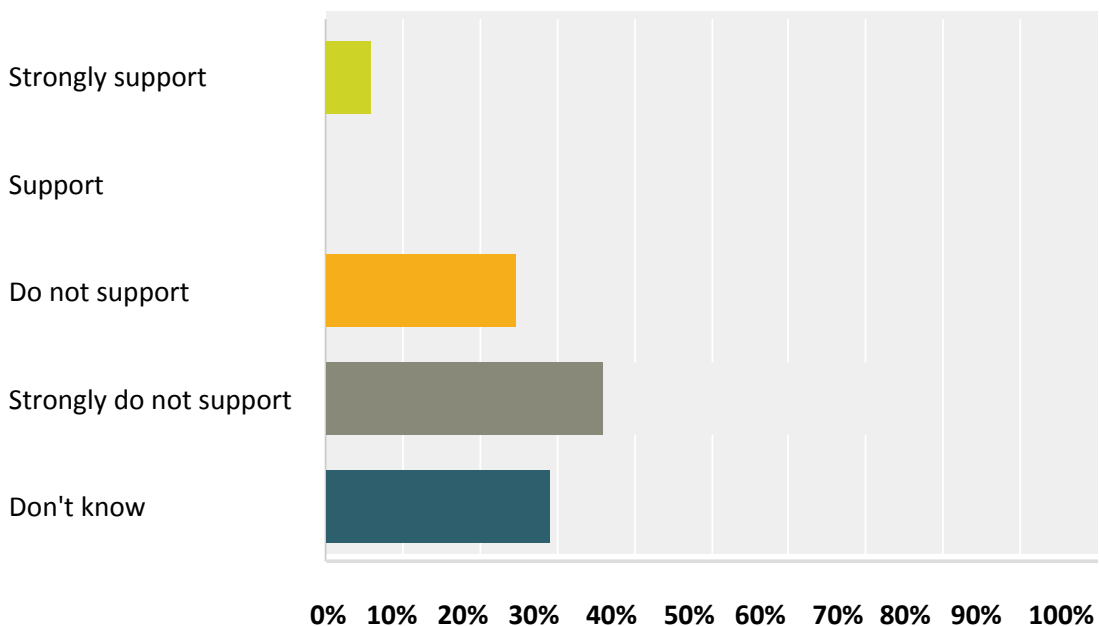
### Question

Proposal 4 would see working age council taxpayers liable to pay approximately 43% of their council tax bill subject to other support changes. Currently those working age council taxpayers eligible for CTR pay at least 35% of their council tax charge, receiving a discount of up to 65%. This option proposes a lower level of financial support of approximately 57% from April 2018, therefore claimants would become liable for the payment of a higher percentage of their council tax charge (43%). This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work. Under this proposal, a working age claimant or family on income support has a council tax liability on a band A, unparished, property a net increase of £1.63 per week and for a Band D, unparished, a net increase of £2.45 per week. To see further details of how this might affect you, please see our website

To what extent do you support this proposal?

### Answer

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Strongly support	5.89%	1
Support		0
Do not support	23.53%	4
Strongly do not support	35.30%	6
Don't know	29.42%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>

1. So whichever scheme you take up you will still need to find £104,000 so DONT hurt the poorest people
2. This option is totally unacceptable to us, as it would be a considerable rise in outgoings.
3. See comment in BOX 1
4. Residents on benefits are struggling at 35%, if you increase it to 43% then you will be setting up those on low income to fail. It would also go against any anti-poverty policy Northampton BC has.

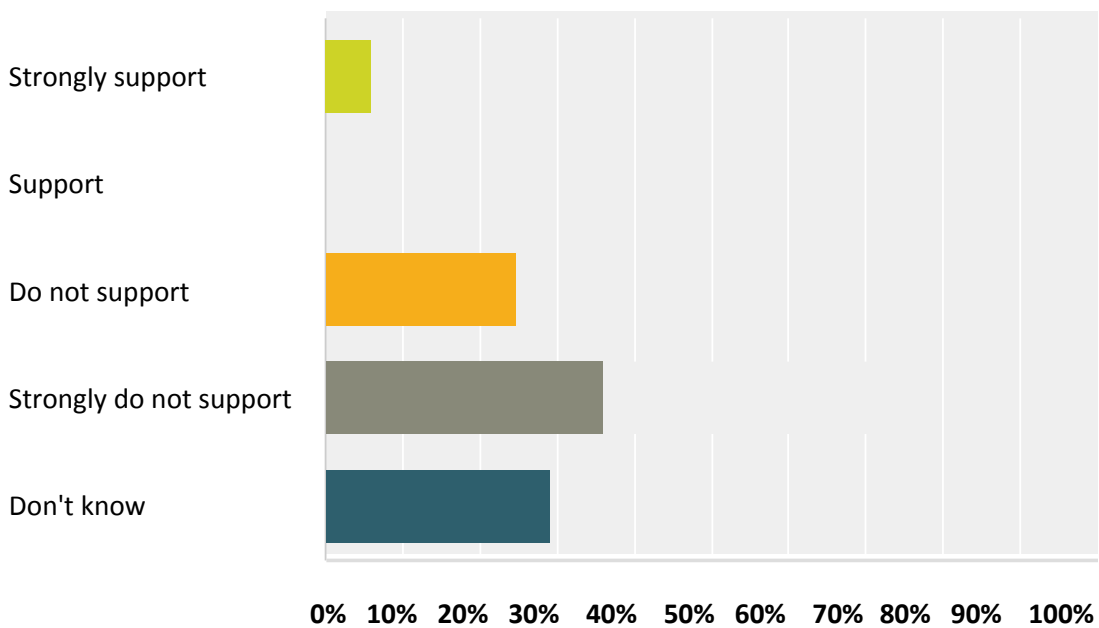
**Question**

Proposal 5 would see all working age claimants having a limit on the amount they are able to receive, set at Band A levels, before any reduction, up to a maximum of 35%, is applied. Scenarios of how this may impact on you are contained in the examples document on the website, accompanying this consultation. This would mean that the council would need to raise £104,698 from other sources. The existing additional income disregard afforded to recipients of War Disablement Pension will continue as part of the 2018-19 CTR Scheme. In addition disability premiums, which increase the level of support for individuals in this claim group will continue, alongside a four week run on period for those moving into work.

To what extent do you support this proposal?

**Answer**

Answered: 14 Skipped: 3

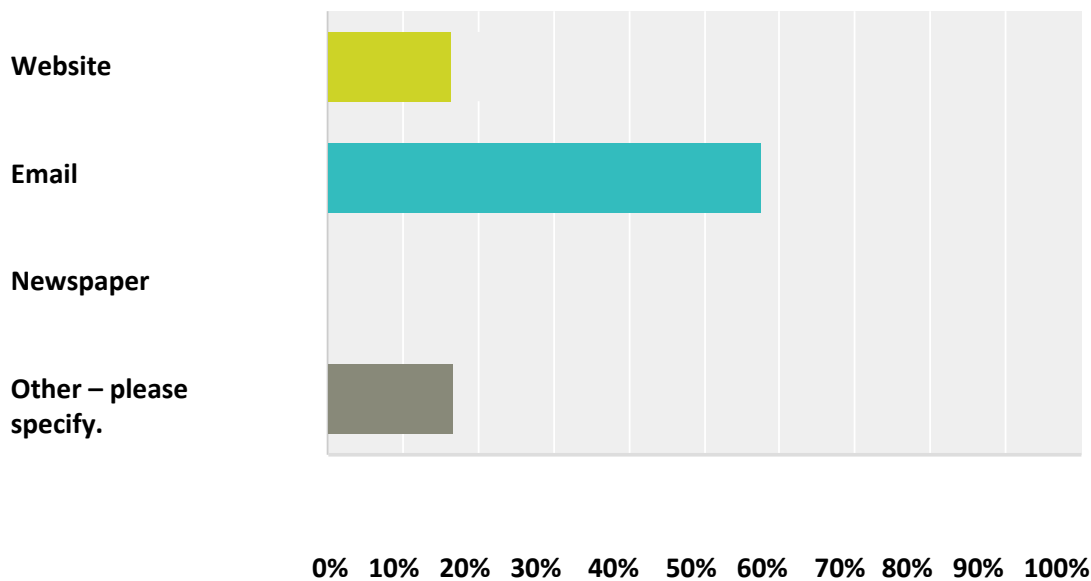


Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly support	5.89%	1
Support	17.65%	3
Do not support	23.53%	4
Strongly do not support	17.65%	3
Don't know	17.65%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>

1. This option would leave us short on an already low income, and could force us into debt with little or no chance of being able to get out of it.
2. Again this penalises the working households the most
3. See comment in BOX1

### How did you hear about this consultation?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0

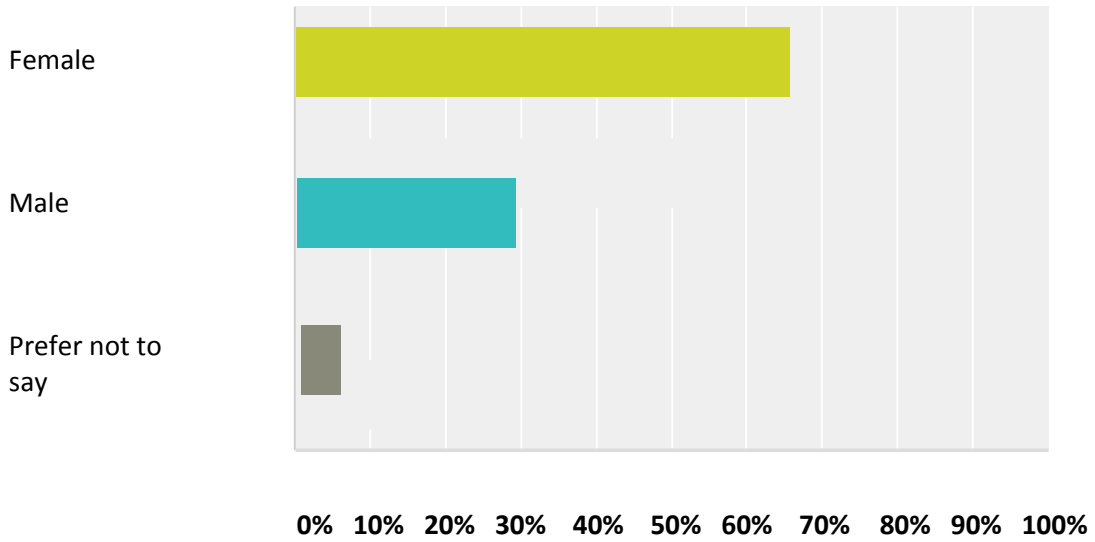


Answer Choices	Responses	
Website	17.65%	3
Email	64.71%	11
Newspaper		0
Other – please specifv.	17.65%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>



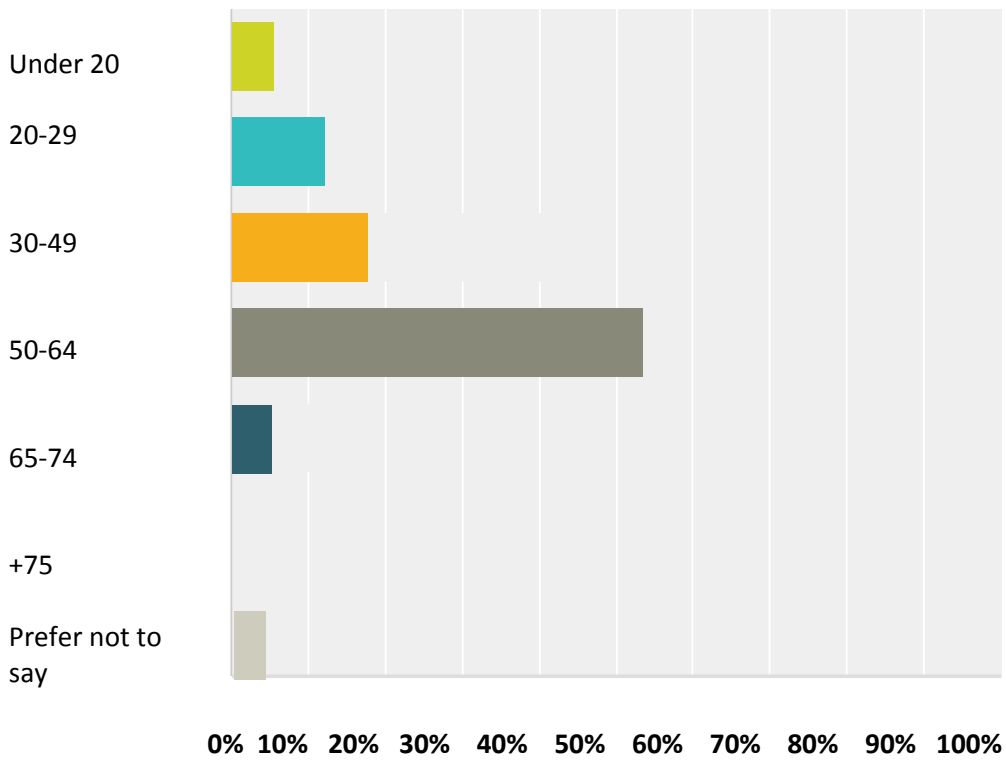
### Please can you tell us your gender?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



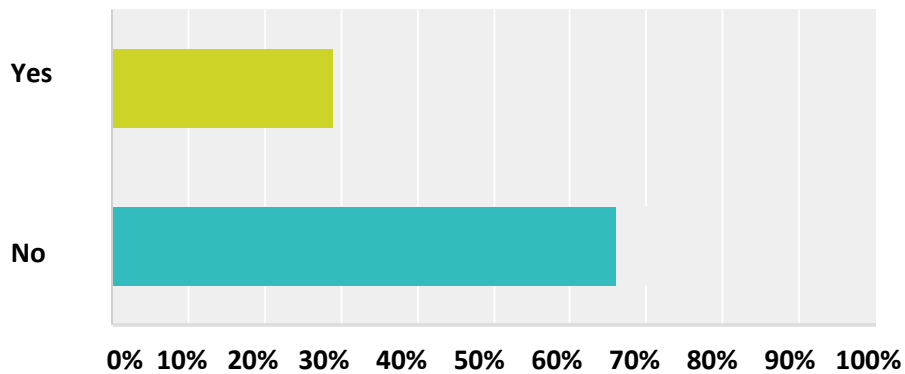
### How old are you?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



## Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



### EQUALITIES:

Of the respondents who completed the equalities questions, relating to gender, age, and disability or ethnic origin.

- 70.59% of respondents were female, 29.41% were male.
- In terms of age:
  - 5.89% were aged under 20
  - 11.76% were aged 20-29
  - 17.65% were aged 30-49
  - 52.94% were aged 50-64
  - 5.89% were aged 65-74
  - 5.89% preferred not to say
- 29.42% of respondents stated they considered themselves to have a disability.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

This assessment looks at actual or possible impacts of a change to our scheme in relation to equalities and human rights – to make sure it works fairly for people.

The first part of this form is to demonstrate the extent (or 'scope') of what this assessment covers:

<b>Name of policy/activity/project/practice</b>	<b>This is:</b>
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2018/19	A change to existing policy/activity/practice

<b>Screening undertaken by: (please complete as appropriate)</b>	
Director or Head of Service	Robin Bates (LGSS)
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity/practice	Robin Bates (LGSS)
Other people involved in the screening (this may be people who work for NBC or a related service or people outside NBC)	Revenues & Benefits Management Team (LGSS)  Finance

**Brief description of policy/activity/project/practice:**

Northampton Borough Council is considering making amendments to its Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to ensure it remains financially sustainable.

The proposed amendment reflects the fact that Government funding for Council Tax Reduction is effectively reduced year on year through cuts to the Revenue Support Grant. The Council's budget may not be able to cover a further shortfall in Government funding and so the proposed amendment helps bridge the funding gap.

The maximum assistance currently available to working age customers is 65% of their Council Tax liability. Due to the ongoing funding gap a further reduction in the amount of support available to working age customers is being considered. However, the scheme will still provide for a means-tested discount to provide financial support to low income families towards their Council Tax bill.

**The main issues that we have to consider in relation to the proposed changes to this policy in relation to equality and diversity issues are:**

Northampton Borough Council has a statutory duty to administer a CTR scheme, although once in place there is no statutory requirement to amend the scheme.

The proposal to further amend our scheme stems from the need to bridge the funding gap and to make savings in order to balance the budget.

Groups who are protected from the proposed amendment are:

- 1) Pension age recipients
- 2) Working age recipients in receipt of either of the following:
  - a. War Widows Pension
  - b. War Disablement Pension

The protection afforded to pensioners is a statutory requirement and we have no authority at a local level to change this. However, the decision to protect working age customers in receipt of the benefits listed above was a local decision made for the implementation of our CTR scheme from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.

The initial options for consideration in respect of 2018/19 include:

1. **No change – remain at 65%.**
2. **The contribution remains at 65% but increase the taper on excess income from 20% to 65%.**

3. **The contribution remains at 65% but also apply an additional reduction of £1.20 to the final weekly award**
4. **Reduce the maximum amount of CTRS from 65% to 57%**
5. **Limit the liability on all awards to Band A and then apply a 35% reduction**

The main issues that we have to consider in relation to the proposed changes to this policy in relation to equality and diversity issues are:

- The proposed changes outlined above will have a disproportionate impact on low income working age households because Council Tax Reduction is designed to provide financial support for low income working age households.
- The Council's budget cannot cover a further shortfall in Government funding without using reserves, increasing the Council Tax or reducing Services. Increasing the Council Tax charge has a knock on effect of increasing the CTR scheme cost as all awards would be based on the higher charge. Consequently, the proposed options, which aim to bridge the funding gap, are unlikely to impact on the wider community in Northampton.

## Evidence Base for Screening


The table below summarises the information or evidence that we have used in relation to each equality group.

Equality Group	<p>The following relates to each of the groups listed on the left:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLG Localising Council Tax Equality Impact Assessment and update</li> <li>• Northampton Council tax database</li> <li>• Council Tax Reduction database</li> <li>• EIA's from other NBC departments that are relevant for this assessment.</li> <li>• Past consultation responses</li> <li>• Unemployment by Constituency Research Paper (June 2017)</li> <li>• Public Health England - Health Profile 2017</li> <li>• Government briefing paper: CTR Schemes: Sept 2017</li> <li>• Family Resources Survey: financial year 2015/16</li> <li>• Nomis – official labour market statistics</li> </ul>
Age	
Disability	
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	
Sex	
Gender Reassignment	
Pregnancy and Maternity (incl. breastfeeding)	
Race	
Religion or Belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Human Rights	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	

NB: The Benefit data available only includes details of age, gender, receipt of disability award/benefit and relevant household composition.

## Step 2: Involvement and Consultation

Outlined below is the previous consultation exercise that was conducted in relation to this policy in 2016:

Equality Group	<p>A similar consultation was carried out in 2016, as part of the implementation of our year 5 CTR scheme.</p>  <p>Microsoft Word 97 - 2003 Document</p>
Age	
Disability	
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	
Sex	
Gender Reassignment	
Pregnancy and Maternity (incl. breastfeeding)	
Race	
Religion or Belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Human Rights	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	

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### Our previous consultations demonstrated the following in terms of resulting activities or services:

Our CTR scheme is a statutory service and is available for all residents of Northampton who wish to apply. Take up of the service is governed by a number of personal circumstances e.g. breakdown of a partnership or job loss and often goes hand-in-hand with applications for Housing Benefit made directly to the Jobcentre or Pension Service.

Our scheme is published on the Northampton Borough Council website with an on-line application form.

### Step 3: Data Collection and Evidence

**The current data and evidence that we hold provides the following baseline position for those who rely on the Council Tax Reduction scheme:**

The previous full consultation was undertaken and ran from the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to the 4th November 2016.

The consultation included the following:

- On-line survey
- News release
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Northampton Borough Council's internet and intranet pages
- All e-mail communication from the Benefit, Council Tax and Customer Services mailboxes included an invitation link to take-part in the consultation
- Display screens in the One Stop Shop
- Details of the consultation was emailed to the Multi Agency Forum and our welfare partners, including registered social landlords
- Invitations to participate was sent to key stakeholders, including Precepting Authorities, parishes, local Councilors and Members of Parliament
- Engagement with housing associations and voluntary and community sectors via their various networks
- Northampton Borough Council's Community Forum members were invited to take part
- 2,317 email invitations was issued to email addresses held on the Benefit and Council Tax database

Data available in addition to our consultation results shows that many claimants will also be managing the impact of other welfare reforms e.g.

- Social sector size criteria reductions to Housing Benefit
- Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments
- National benefit cap
- National roll out of Universal Credit
- Freeze on benefit rates for the working Age Group (excluding disability benefits)



## Step 4: Assessing impact and strengthening the policy

The following table highlights what evidence we have on how the proposed changes will affect different groups and communities in relation to equality and human rights:

All working age claimants are currently required to pay a minimum 35% contribution towards their Council Tax bill, irrespective of any protected characteristics:

Equality Group	Risks (Negative)	Opportunities (Positive)
Age	<p>The impact of the proposed option will disproportionately affect working age people. In addition, there may be an adverse effect on those under 25 as they receive reduced amounts of benefit based on their age.</p> <p>Children of low income families may also be adversely affected if their parent(s) have to find additional money to cover a reduced CTR discount.</p>	<p>The Government has recognised that low-income pensioners cannot be expected to increase their income through paid work and therefore are to be protected from any reduction in their entitlements.</p> <p>Our CTR scheme will continue to provide a more generous means-test for those with dependent children or young persons.</p>
Disability	<p>The impact of the proposed option will affect all working age customers, even those where either they or a member of their household have a disability.</p> <p>It will place an additional strain on their finances. This will be further impacted as the increased reduction is not linked to the increase of benefit rates.</p>	<p>Working age customers who are in receipt of War Disablement or Widows Pension will be protected from this change.</p> <p>Our CTR scheme will continue to provide a more generous means-test for those receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.</p>
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	<p>The impact of the proposed option will mean that all working age carers are affected regardless of who they are caring for.</p>	<p>The means-test allows for a higher applicable amount and an increased earnings disregard for carers.</p>
Sex	<p>A significant proportion of CTR customers are female single parents.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>None identified</p>	<p>None identified</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity (incl.	<p>None identified</p>	<p>None identified</p>

breastfeeding)		
Race	It is not intended that this policy will disproportionately affect any particular ethnicity. Consideration will be given to how the scheme is communicated in relation to potential language barriers.	We manage the current CTR & Housing Benefit schemes and are used to working with and supporting customer's whose first language is not English.
Religion or Belief	None identified	None identified
Sexual Orientation	None identified	None identified
Human Rights	None identified	None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None identified	None identified

## **Proportionality**

The scale and likelihood of these risks and opportunities are shown below:

Based on Northampton Borough Council's caseload data from October 2017 we have 15,473 applicants in receipt of a CTRS discount. Of these 5,829 are of pension age and are protected from these proposed changes.

This leaves 9,644 working age CTRS recipients who will be impacted if the proposed option is adopted. This is because they will receive less financial support as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 than they are currently receiving under the scheme this year. This equates to 62% of our CTR caseload.

21% of the working age LCTR caseload are currently employed but still require some level of financial support through the CTR scheme because their wages are relatively low.

29% of the working age LCTR caseload are in receipt of disability benefits. Many of these disabled people are unable to improve their financial circumstances by moving into work and their disability benefits are essentially provided to cover specific costs arising from their disability rather than to meet housing costs or Council Tax liability.

37% of the working age LCTR caseload are single parents (predominantly female) with one or more children.

Many working age claimants will also be managing the impact of other welfare reforms e.g.

- Social sector size criteria reductions to Housing Benefit
- Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments
- National benefit cap
- National roll out of Universal Credit
- Freeze on benefit rates for the working Age Group (excluding disability benefits)

**What measures does, or could, the policy include helping promote equality of opportunity?**

As a means-tested discount the policy would be applied equally to all working age applicants.

However, the policy could be designed to afford some protection to certain vulnerable groups, for example, where there are children under 5; where the disability premium is awarded or in cases where there are disabled children.

**What measures does, or could, the policy include addressing existing patterns of discrimination, harassment or disproportionality?**

There is a statutory requirement to ensure that all pensioners are protected from these changes, the results is that the proposed reductions will affect all working age customers.

**What impact will the policy have on promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?**

This is not within the remit of the policy, which is aimed at ensuring a balanced budget to prevent the impact on other vital local services.

**If the policy is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact'), what are the reasons for this?**

The policy will have a negative impact on those in Northampton who are working age and on low incomes. The reason for this is that the proposed option will reduce the amount of financial support they receive which could adversely affect their ability to afford their household expenses.

**What practical changes will help reduce any adverse impact on particular groups?**

Please see table above and Step 6 below

**Have you considered including treating disabled people more favourably where necessary? Yes**

**What evidence is there that actions to address any negative effects on one area of equality may affect other areas of equality or human rights?**

The means-test element of our CTR scheme is largely based on the legislation for the previous CTB scheme, from which there were no outstanding legal challenges.

**What will be done to improve access to, and take-up of, services or understandings of the policy?**

- All information about the scheme, including an electronic application form will be published on our website, along with other national websites.
- We provide a range of methods by which the service can be accessed:
  - On-Line
  - By telephone
  - In person at the One Stop Shop
  - Home visits
  - Use of Language Line and interpreters.
- The service is also promoted by the Jobcentre and the Pension Service along with a wide range of other welfare partners.
- Training and briefing sessions will be arranged for all affected internal staff, plus external welfare partners to ensure everyone is aware of the scheme and the changes.

## Step 5: Procurement and partnerships

Consideration of external contractor obligations and partnership working:

Northampton Borough Council has a statutory requirement to operate a local CTR scheme. The scheme is currently being administered under a 'shared service agreement' by LGSS on behalf of Northampton Borough Council.

The Revenues & Benefits team that provides this service for LGSS on behalf of Northampton Borough Council are the same team that administers the current CTR scheme. The team is also responsible for the administration of both Council Tax and Housing Benefit.

The wealth of knowledge and experience within the Revenues & Benefits team, along with a strong focus on performance management ensures that there are no concerns stemming from this arrangement.

## Step 6- Making a Decision

Our findings in relation to whether the policy will meet the council's responsibilities in relation to equality and human rights are summarised below:

We have identified the potential for these proposed changes to have an adverse impact on some groups with protected characteristics.

As this change will impact all working age customers there may be a disproportionate impact on groups with the following protected characteristics:

- Working age customers, including those with dependent children.
- Customers where either they or a member of their household is disabled.
- Carers
- Lone parents
- Families or lone parents where income is reduced to Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance

However, our CTR scheme will continue to operate as a means-tested discount, which will take into consideration applicants on a low income. In addition, the means-test is still more generous for applicants where there is a disabled household member, for those with dependent children or are carers.

## Collection & Recovery of Council Tax

In-year collection of Council Tax from the CTR cohort as of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 for CTR claimants is 54.09% compared to 54.16% in 2016/17. We have a specific recovery approach for customers in receipt of a CTR discount who also have Council Tax arrears:

- Recovery action commences after three months of arrears as opposed to two months for non CTR recipients.
- Small debts may not be summonsed, which means court costs are not added. These debts are reviewed regularly and will continue to be reviewed in-line with the impact if the proposed changes are implemented.
- To support CTRS we endeavour to contact customers separately before the issue of a summons, where telephone and email addresses as known, to make repayment arrangements wherever possible. These arrangements are then closely monitored to ensure those customers who are making every effort who help themselves do not incur the additional cost of a summons. This additional support comes at an additional cost to NBC.
- If we are unable to contact the customer by phone a voicemail message is left and an additional letter issued asking the customer to contact us.
- In the event that the debt still needs to be passed for Enforcement Agent recovery these are sent as a specialist welfare case, so that a more lenient approach is taken.
- For those customers that cannot, or won't, make an arrangement, they will be issued with a summons. Although customer attendance at court is low, we will still make an arrangement at this stage.
- Where customers are making realistic arrangements to pay these are often small amounts, over a long period of time, regardless of what point of the recovery cycle a customer has reached. Customers have struggled to maintain even these small value arrangements and this increases the cost to the Council to administer.
- There has been an increase in the number of summons issued in the first six months of the financial year.
- Where a Liability Order is obtained, the Council's preferred option is to serve an attachment of benefit, and the use of this method of repayment is on the increase compared to previous years. The Council currently collects £26k per month through AOB, as compared to £27.7k last year.

- It should be noted that the maximum amount of money that can be deducted is £3.70 per week, regardless of how much a customer owes, and the recovery of council tax is not a priority debt for deduction by the DWP. The maximum a customer in these circumstances can repay is £192.40 per year. In 2017/18, an unparished band A property with two adults would be liable for £1,060.25, reducing by maximum CTR would leave the customer liable to pay £371.10. The issue of a summons would add a further £82.40, leaving a customer with an annual charge of £261 more than the Council is able to recover.
- There is also a process to support customers whose debt is passed to Enforcement Agents, similar to that provided by the Council.
- The council will also consider writing debts off in exceptional requests of hardship.

The Council is unable to readily gauge the likely impact that any proposed increase in the liable percentage contribution for those of working age in 2018/19 would have on collection performance. However, it is very likely to result in further recovery action and administration, with an increase in the number of Council Taxpayers taken to Court.

In November 2016 the New Policy Institute published a study into the link between Council Tax Support changes and rising Council Tax arrears. The results led the NPI to conclude that authorities with the highest minimum payments had experienced the largest increases in uncollected Council Tax.

## **Step 7 – Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing**

**How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or activity?**

**How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?**

The proposed changes to our CTR scheme, and their impact on groups with protected characteristics, will be monitored, evaluating and reviewed through a number of mechanisms:

### **1) Impact on the Council Tax collection rate:**

The collection rate of Council Tax is monitored regularly and provides an accurate figure of the amount of Council Tax collected as a percentage of the total tax expected to be collected. This data is reviewed and discussed monthly, with comparisons drawn to previous years – this allows any changes in the collection rate can be identified.



This will provide a broad view of how people are responding to the repayment of an increased amount of Council Tax.

**2) Review of Council Tax recovery action:**

A review of Council Tax recovery action in relation to customers receiving a CTR discount will also provide an overview of the impact this change may have.

**3) Monitoring Debt Levels:**

Customers with 'small debts' (those under £82.40) are not subject to any further recovery action. However, where there is an accumulative effect from previous year arrears, further recovery action will be taken and this will result in these debts becoming subject to a liability order. These debts will continue to be ring-fenced and processed separately to ensure we provide additional support prior to issuing a summons.

**4) Feedback from other partners:**

Liaison with our financial inclusion, housing and customer service teams will provide evidence on specific issues encountered by those impacted by any change to CTR. Further liaison will allow take place with Community Law Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

## Step 8 –Action Plan

Actions	Target date	Responsible post holder	Monitoring post holder
Publish EIA	December 2017	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Liaison with Northampton Borough Council's Money Advice service to establish what scope they have to support affected customers who may require advice and budgeting support.	December 2017	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Consider communication to working age CTR recipients prior to annual billing to promote the national Money Advice Service and Northampton Borough Council's financial inclusion service.	December 2017	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Review the Council Tax recovery process for those receiving CTR	January 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Offer training and/or support to other services (both internal/external) so they are aware of changes to CTR and the impact on their clients.	February 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Full training to be provided to all Revenues & Benefits staff so they are aware of the changes and can ensure customers can be sign-posted to Northampton Borough Council's financial inclusion service.	February 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Internal Review by reporting and analysing the public response to annual billing.	March 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Review of CTR Year 5 project as a 'lessons-learned' exercise to identify other potential avenues to increase response to any future CTR consultations – particularly areas that focus on groups with protected characteristics.	April 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson
Review the impact of summons and other recovery actions on accumulated debt from 2016/17	July 2018	Robin Bates	Kirsty Tomlinson

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**For the record**

**The equality impact assessment should be signed off at Head of Service level before publication. Signing off means that the Head of Service will need to satisfy themselves that:**

- **You have consulted and involved stakeholders from each group**
- **You have gathered all relevant evidence**
- **You have an action plan**

**Date of sign off by Head of Service:**

**Name of Head of Service signing off this EIA:**

## **Equality Duties to be taken into account include:**

### **Prohibited Conduct under the Equality Act 2010 including:**

Direct discrimination (including by association and perception e.g. carers); Indirect discrimination; Pregnancy and maternity discrimination; Harassment; discrimination arising from disability.

### **Public Sector Duties (Section 149) of the Equality Act 2010 for NBC and services provided on its behalf:**

NBC and services providing public functions must in providing services have due regard to the need to: **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.** 'Positive action' permits proportionate action to overcome disadvantage, meet needs and tackle under-representation.

### **Rights apply to people in terms of their "Protected Characteristics":**

Age; Gender; Gender Assignment; Sexual Orientation; Disability; Race; Religion and Belief; Pregnancy; Maternity. But Marriage and Civil Partnership do not apply to the public sector duties.

### **Duty to "advance equality of opportunity":**

The need, when reviewing, planning or providing services/policies/practices to assess the impacts of services on people in relation to their 'protected characteristics', take steps to remove/minimise any negative impacts identified and help everyone to participate in our services and public life. **Equality Impact Assessments** remain best practice to be used. Sometimes **people have particular needs** e.g. due to gender, race, faith or disability that need to be addressed, not ignored. NBC must have due regard to the **duty to make reasonable adjustments** for people with disabilities. NBC must **encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life** or any other activity in which their participation is too low.

### **Duty to 'foster good relations between people'**

This means having due regard to the need to **tackle prejudice** (e.g. where people are picked on or stereotyped by customers or colleagues because of their ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and **promote understanding**.

**Lawful Exceptions to general rules:** can happen where action is proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim and not otherwise prohibited by anything under the Equality Act 2010. There are some special situations (see Ch 12 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010 Statutory Code of Practice – Services, Public Functions and Associations).

**National Adult Autism Strategy** (Autism Act 2009; statutory guidelines)

**Human Rights** – under the Human Rights Act 1998 which gives effect to the European convention: right not to be subjected to degrading treatment; right to a fair trial (**civil and criminal issues**); right to privacy (**subject to certain**

**exceptions e.g. national security/public safety, or certain other specific situations); freedom of conscience (including religion and belief and rights to manifest these limited only by law and as necessary for public safety, public order, protection of rights of others and other specified situations); freedom of expression; freedom of peaceful assembly and to join trade unions; right not to be subject to unlawful discrimination; right to peaceful enjoyment of own possessions (subject to certain exceptions e.g. to secure payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties); right to an education; right to hold free elections by secret ballot. The European Convention is given effect in UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.**

<p>Appendices: 1</p>
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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# COUNCIL

## 11 December 2017

**Agenda Status: Public**

**Directorate: Borough Secretary**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Terms of reference – Community Governance Review, Hunsbury Meadows</b>
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### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 A petition has been presented by Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council to undertake a Community Governance Review

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 That Council approve the Terms of Reference as set out below and receives a further report on the result of the consultation and other relevant matters for final recommendation and approval at a future meeting of Council.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Northampton Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to consider the following Parish matters.
- 3.1.2 This review is to consider the request to include the new Pineham Housing Developments within the boundaries of Hunsbury Meadows Parish and not be left within Upton Parish.
- 3.1.3 In undertaking this review the Council has considered the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, published in March 2010, which reflects Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

and the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972, Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010, and the following regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the Review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625). (The 2007 Act transferred powers to the principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission's Boundary Committee for England) Also, The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008

3.1.4 These Terms of Reference will set out clearly the matters on which the Community Governance Review is to focus. We will publish this document on our website and also in hard copy. Hard copies will be made available at The Guildhall and the Parish Council Offices.

### **3.1.5 Purpose of the Review**

3.1.6 The Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review at this time following the receipt of a petition from Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council requesting a formal review process to take place to consider the proposal for the Parish Boundary include the new estate of Pineham Village and the new Pineham Barns school within the boundary of Hunsbury Meadows Parish, as indicated on the attached map.

3.1.7 The Council must have regard to the need to secure community governance within the area under review such that it

- reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area,
- and is effective and convenient,
- and takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.

### **3.1.8 Community Governance Reviews**

3.1.9 A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes in the style of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

### **3.1.10 Determination as follows:**

- review parish electoral arrangements including boundaries and report recommendations to Council
- increase/reduce number of parish councillors
- change parish arrangements where agreed
- consider the results of the consultation exercise

**3.1.11 Consultation**

3.1.12 The Council has drawn up and now publishes this Terms of Reference document. This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies that the Council considers important in the review. A Timetable is set out in Appendix 1

In coming to its Recommendations in a Review, the Council will take account of the views of local people and stakeholders and report the results of such consultation as part of a final report to the next appropriate meeting of Council

The Council will:

- publish these Terms of Reference and take submissions via its website
- promote the process by means of general press releases and social media
- provide key documents on deposit at the Borough Council offices in The Guildhall, Northampton, noticeboards in Hunsbury Meadows and Upton, and the Hunsbury Meadows and Upton Parish Offices. There will be provision for collection of paper submissions or details of where to submit, at these locations, with postal submissions accepted at the Borough Council office (Northampton Borough Council, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE).

3.1.13 This Council will notify Northamptonshire County Council that a review is to be undertaken; they are a formal consultee of this process.

**Electorate forecasts**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Current Electorate</b>	<b>Forecast electorate</b>
Hunsbury Meadows	964	1348
Upton	5264	4880

**3.1.14 Parishes**

3.1.15 The Council notes the government’s Guidance that community cohesion should be taken into account in this review (DCLG AND LGBCE, Guidance on community governance reviews revised edition, March 2010, S.67-76).

The Council considers that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity.

With regard to parish boundaries, the Council considers that the boundaries between parishes will normally reflect the ‘no-man’s land’ between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers. These barriers will be either natural or man-made: they might include for example watercourses, marshland, and moorland or man-made features such as parks, canals, railways, major road and motorways - those barriers that oblige the residents of an affected area to have little in common with the remainder of the parish to which they may have been allotted

Should a reorganisation of parish boundaries occur as a result of the review, the Council will aim to select boundaries that are and are likely to remain easily identifiable



### **3.1.16 Electoral arrangements**

#### **Electoral cycle**

3.1.17 Changes to parish electoral arrangements normally come into effect at the next scheduled ordinary parish elections. Parish elections will take place in Northampton in May 2019 and then every four years thereafter.

### **3.1.18 Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement**

3.1.19 The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a Review) will be deposited at the Council's offices and copies provided to the parish clerks for East Hunsbury and Upton Parish Councils.

In accordance with the Guidance issued by the government, the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale that will not normally be smaller than 1:10,000. These maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government and at the Council's office at The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE. Prints will also be supplied, in accordance with regulations, to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

The provisions of the Order will take effect for financial and administrative purposes on 6 November 2018.

The electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into effect at the next elections to the parish council. Should this not coincide with the next ordinary local elections, the Council might have need to modify or exclude the application of sections 16(3) and 90 of the Local Government Act 1972 to provide for the first election to be held in an earlier year, with councillors serving a shortened first term to allow the parish electoral cycle to return to that of the district

### **3.1.20 Consequential matters**

#### **General principles**

3.1.21 The Council notes that a Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- the setting of precepts for new parishes;
- provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

In particular, the Council notes that the Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of the Council as an appropriate portion.

#### **4. Decision details**

- 4.1 The draft terms of reference contained in the Annex to this Report have been developed by taking into consideration the legislative requirements for undertaking a Community Governance Review, as well as the need to make the Review process as understandable and accessible as possible.
- 4.2 The publication of the Terms of Reference on the Council's website (as recommended) will allow the first round of consultation to begin on Monday 13 November

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

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##### **5. Policy**

- 5.1.1 The proposals in this report are in accordance with the council's community engagement strategy and supportive of the administration's commitment to enhancing local democracy and local participation in community decision-making.

##### **6. Resources and Risk**

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- 6.1.1 Financial Implications – It is anticipated that the initial consultation phases of the review process can be carried out at minimal cost to the council by effective use of existing resources to ensure maximum publicity and opportunity for engagement through community groups, forums and other interested parties. It is also anticipated that local councillors will have a key role to play in engaging their local communities with the review.
- 6.1.2 The financial costs associated determining public support for any specific proposals submitted for consultation with directly affected residents are more difficult to quantify at this stage as it is not possible to predict the level of community interest in developing specific proposals for their local areas.
- 6.1.3 If community interest were to be determined by direct postal consultation with potentially affected residents then the Council would incur the cost associated with the distribution of postal questionnaires to each potentially affected elector and the cost of a reply paid option for return of completed questionnaires. Both costs would again be variable dependent on number of specific proposals subject to consultation and number of replies to the consultation questionnaire returned to the council.
- 6.1.4 Non – financial Implications – the consultation phases of the review will require support from relevant council officers from within existing resources which may impact on other aspects of council activity. It is not anticipated that any impact will be significant. Additional resources will be required to

undertake validation of proposals submitted for specific consultation and to count referendum ballot papers should that option be the one which is taken forward.

## **7 Legal**

- 7.1 A Community Governance Review must be conducted in accordance with provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and other relevant statutory provisions.
- 7.2 The review will be undertaken in accordance with government guidance for the conduct of Community Governance reviews and ensure compliance with appropriate legislation and electoral law.

## **8. Equality**

- 8.1 No specific positive or negative implications have been identified for any sections of the community, including those with protected characteristics. Any proposed changes emerging from the review and relevant consultation activities may have perceived adverse and beneficial impacts for all diversity groups and could feasibly impact on all residents of the Borough, whether or not they are registered to vote in any referendum processes because the boundaries of Parish Councils within the town could be altered. There are no equality issues identified arising from the Terms and Conditions
- 8.2 The public's lack of understanding of the Community Governance Review is generally the greatest risk and could lead to poorly attended public meetings and little public participation in the process.
- 8.3 A comprehensive consultation programme will be implemented as part of the first stage of the review process with further opportunities for public participation on specific proposals which may impact directly on their local area in subsequent stages of the review. Consultation documents will be sent to all parties identified which will include press releases, Official Notices, possible open forums and other forms of local advertising as suitable methods of conveying information about the Review to citizens of Upton and Hunsbury Meadows.

## **9. Other Implications**

None

## **10. Background Papers**

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None

**Diana Bowden  
Electoral Services Manager  
Borough Secretary  
0300 330 7000**

	<b>What happens</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Date</b>
Commencement	Community Governance Petition is received		6 November 2017
Preparation	The petition is validated; research and information gathering; local briefings and meetings; Terms of Reference for the review are prepared agreed by Council and published	Two months	6 November – 5 January
Stage One	Initial submissions are invited	Two Months	6 January- 5 March
Stage Two	Consideration of submissions received – Draft Recommendations are prepared	Two months	6 March- 5May
Stage Three	Draft Recommendations are published – consultation on them	Three months	6 May- 5 August
Stage Four	Consideration of submissions received – Final Recommendations are prepared	Two months	6 August – 5 October
	Final Recommendations are published – concluding the review		6 October
	Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order		6 November