

Northampton Borough Council

Corporate Plan 2012-2015 (2013 update)

Putting Northampton back on track

Welcome to the 2013 update of Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2012-15. This plan sets out our priorities, explains what we want to achieve over the next two years and highlights the progress we have made as we put Northampton back on track.

We are working hard in a difficult and uncertain economic climate where local authorities have a responsibility to make sure we protect our town's most vulnerable residents, support our business community and continue to attract growth and investment.

Under the Northampton Alive banner we have brought together many exciting projects that are transforming our town.

This year we have seen commitment to invest millions of pounds into Northampton. More than that, we have seen work start on a number of key sites including the new bus interchange, an expansion of Carlsberg's UK headquarters, new railway station, new halls of residence for our University as well as plans for a 104-bed hotel and restaurant provided by Premier Inn.

There is a growing confidence in Northampton. The Waterside Enterprise Zone has helped put us on the map and people are taking notice of what we are doing and that our town is a place to do business and new investment is welcomed. Employers know they can create new jobs and employ innovative, creative and hardworking local people.

And, we will be seeing more news about Northampton Alive later in the year.

In the current climate we must also look how we are doing things, delivering value for money and protecting frontline services. In 2013 we expect to enter into an agreement with LGSS that will see us share many of our support services. This will create savings we can reinvest into our frontline services, the services our residents rely on.

Our plan will therefore focus on two themes;

'Your Town', recognising the importance that investment and growth in local business and jobs will have on the long term prospects for the town and those people that choose to live and work here.

'You', acknowledging the significant challenges that the current economic climate and future welfare and housing reforms will have on the lives of people impacted by the changes and the importance of the role the Council will have in supporting people through the change.

We have made significant progress over the last year in putting Northampton back on track and will continue to deliver against our commitments.

David Mackintosh
Leader of Northampton Borough Council

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YOUR TOWN

A town to be proud of

A successful vibrant town centre economy is an essential part of prompting growth and prosperity. Our focus is on regenerating the Town and raising its national profile. The Council recognises it cannot achieve this alone. It is actively working with others to keep the Town clean, safe, attract new investment, visitors and jobs, whilst enhancing the Town's heritage and cultural opportunities.

We recognise that our parks and open spaces and the facilities available within them contribute to our sense of wellbeing. We will work with local communities and groups, benefit from their experience and their contribution to improve our beautiful parks and open spaces across the Town. Having access to a wide variety of cultural, leisure and sport activities and events is also a key part of having a vibrant and successful Town. We will also work with partners to improve access to cultural opportunities such as our Museums, cultural events programme and through our support to the local Theatres.

The establishment of the Northampton Cultural Quarter will provide a driving force for economic and social regeneration of the town. It presents an opportunity to celebrate both the town's rich history and to showcase its unique contemporary offer. Raising the profile of Northampton as a great place to live, visit, work, study and invest, the Northampton Cultural Quarter has the potential to significantly enhance the town's reputation as a first class cultural venue, a place with a diverse and extensive offer, a great atmosphere and a tangible energy.

As well as taking a leading role in the future development and growth of Northampton, the Council must ensure that Council Tax payer's money is spent wisely. The Council will continue to review how it is organised, to ensure it has the right skills and capacity and to identify the most effective methods of delivery. This will reduce our costs in order to prioritise spending to allow us to promote the Town's economic growth, regeneration and protect frontline services.

Our key priorities are:

- ◇ **Priority 1- Northampton - on track**
A vibrant town
- ◇ **Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods**
Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment
- ◇ **Priority 3 - Celebrating our heritage and culture**
- ◇ **Priority 4 - Making every £ go further**
Provide Value for Money to protect local services

Priority 1 - Northampton - on track

A vibrant town

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- An economically prosperous, successful and vibrant Town
- The Town is nationally recognised as an economic hub and a place to do business
- Increased numbers of visitors
- Increased job opportunities and an improvement in the quality of jobs available
- A Borough Wide planning policy that will preserve the identity, history and heritage of the Town but that encompasses and enables growth and development of the Borough as a whole;
- Delivery with partners of major town centre regeneration projects, such as the re-development of Grosvenor Greyfriars, a new bus interchange, and the re-design of the railway station
- The Town's history, heritage and culture is promoted and preserved
- An improved vitality and attraction of the St Johns quarter of the Town Centre
- A successfully and nationally renowned Waterside Enterprise Zone, delivering business and employment growth

How we will do this.....

- Deliver the new Enterprise Zone to regenerate the Waterside area of the Town, by developing and introducing:
 - a strategy to dispose of public land
 - a marketing plan to attract new businesses
 - Local Development Orders to simplify the planning application process for new businesses
- Work to focus on reducing factors deterring people from visiting the Town, to stimulate the local economy by;
 - Reviewing the Parking Strategy
 - Conducting a review of parking charges
- Work closely with Northamptonshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to deliver the new bus interchange in 2013/14
- Work collaboratively with the Local Enterprise Partnerships for Northamptonshire and the South East Midlands
- Support partners in the re-development of Northampton's Castle railway station
- Progress plans for Grosvenor Greyfriars Shopping Centre regeneration
- Progress development plans for St Johns, including the building of new student halls of residence
- Work in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council to deliver regeneration projects within the Town Centre
- Identify ways of incorporating the Marina and the waterways into the life of the Town to exploit it to its full potential as a tourist attraction
- Support the independently chaired Market Square body to:
 - oversee any proposed changes following the governance review and direction of the Market Square
 - assess Market Square events and give feedback for the future

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- Secured Government funding of £10 million towards a £20 million redevelopment of Northampton railway station to create an impressive new gateway to the town and the Enterprise Zone. Other partners, including Network Rail and Northamptonshire County Council, will meet the remainder of the development costs
- Approved plans for a new Innovation Centre which will provide premises for up to 50 small and start-up businesses
- Secured £7m investment for highway and infrastructure improvements from the SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership) Growing Places Fund to unlock the potential of a number of sites across the Enterprise Zone
- Plans announced by the University of Northampton to build a new single-site campus in the Enterprise Zone to capitalise on the links with research and innovation in technology. Construction work has begun on new halls of residence at St John's, making Northampton a true University town. A capital receipt of £1.362 million was generated following successful agreement for use of the Council's land
- A £25 million extension of the bottling plant at Carlsberg in the Enterprise Zone, was completed.
- Local Development Orders have been put in place to simplify the planning process saving businesses, looking to relocate or expand within the Enterprise Zone, time and money
- Large areas of land are being prepared for development through joint working by Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and Homes and Communities Agency and other key partners
- Free parking was provided during the Olympic Torch event and the Christmas Lights switch-on to encourage more people into the town centre in addition to other free/reduced parking offers.
- A High Street review has been commissioned looking at parking, the town's appearance, the shopping experience and what factors influence people in deciding to return to shop in Northampton. The report will help to guide the future development of the town centre
- A study is looking at the infrastructure requirements of the town and how new developments can help has also been commissioned. It will look at what planning powers can be used to fund new or improved infrastructure in Northampton. The report will help the planners and the Council's Planning Committee
- Northampton's historic market awarded a 'Real Deal' certificate in recognition of its commitment to safe and fair trading that protects shoppers from fake goods
- Planning Permission was secured for the Bus Interchange and the Council has appointed a contractor. Demolition commenced before Christmas 2012, with a new Bus Interchange expected to be completed and operational by March 2014.
- An outline business case for Project Angel which will see an area south of the town centre converted into prime office space was agreed at Northamptonshire County

Council Cabinet in October 2012. Northampton Borough Council supported County Council officers working on the project.

- Northampton Borough Council has signed up to “Challenge 2016” which aims to create and find jobs for 2,016 of the county’s young people.
- Planning permission secured for a new Arts cinema in the heart of the town centre. It is being constructed in 2013
- Northamptonshire won the accolade of being “The Most Enterprising Place” in the country for helping to generate economic prosperity across the county
- Northampton market traders offered reduced rents until 2014 to help them through the difficult economic times
- A new Christmas Quarter introduced as part of the seasonal celebrations in Northampton so that businesses, charities and community groups have the chance to trade in the town centre.

What we did in 2011/12:

- Successfully gained Enterprise Zone (EZ) status in the Waterside area of the Town. This will help to attract inward investment, new business and create new jobs for Northampton. EZ status provides Northampton with national recognition and allows us to market ourselves on the bigger stage
- The content of the Central Area Action Plan for Town Centre development has been reviewed. Agreement was reached in Spring 2011 to progress submission to examination with adoption later in 2012/13
- Successfully negotiated the return of full development control planning powers back to Northampton Borough Council from West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and provided extra resource to ensure an excellent service
- The review of the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy and the representations received has been undertaken. Housing growth targets have been revised downwards to take into account locally derived housing needs and a realistic, pragmatic approach to delivery based on infrastructure capacity. The approved submission version of the Joint Core Strategy will now be submitted to examination in autumn 2012
- Introduced reduced cost car parking when visiting the Town Centre to make it more convenient for local people to make short trips into the Town centre. £1.7m has been invested in improving the Grosvenor/ Greyfriars and Mayorhold car parks. Free Town Centre parking on weekends before Christmas, bank holidays and free Sunday parking for all premier car parks have been introduced. We will continue to review of parking charges focusing on reducing factors deterring people from visiting the Town
- Conducted a review of the operation and future direction of the Market Square and established an independently chaired body to review the governance and direction of the Market Square so that it meets the needs of the whole Town
- Established a Business Improvement District (BID) working to create a vibrant and thriving town centre, focusing on promoting the town centre to shoppers

and visitors, improving signage and in the longer term, improving the night time offer

- Restructure of Regeneration & Development together with Asset Management to provide comprehensive, high quality management of the Council's

assets and in support of delivery of its key regeneration priorities

- Secured £1.87m capital receipts and reduced property cost liabilities
- Exceeded investment property income target by £200k

Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods

Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- A clean Town with neighbourhoods that are tidy and well maintained
- A place where people want to visit and enjoy our parks and open spaces
- A place where visitors and residents from all communities feel safe, secure and protected with low levels of crime
- Less waste and increased recycling through education and waste reduction schemes

How we will do this.....

- Improve the appearance and cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and open space land across the Town by proactively removing fly-tipping, graffiti and litter and use enforcement, working towards a zero tolerance approach
- Improve standards and facilities within our parks to contribute to the achievement of green Flag status and 'Britain in Bloom' success. We will do this by working in partnership with local groups and Friends Associations, establishing local management committees for our premier parks, the development of local 'park plans', improving public conveniences and ensuring our trees are well maintained. We will also work in partnership with community groups to provide community events in our parks all year round and deliver high quality holiday sports and play programmes for young people
- Review and rationalise the land currently used for allotments seeking new sites, disposal of sites, investment in existing sites and provision in future developments through a review of the Allotment Strategy
- Deliver the Community Safety Strategy action plan to improve safety across the Town, in particular:
 - Work in partnership to deliver a programme of projects throughout the year to tackle local priority issues; alcohol related violent crime, anti-social behaviour and serious acquisitive crime
 - Review the Council's approach to licensing to ensure that it supports the Council's aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and making the Town centre safer
- Improve the mechanisms available for local people to report incidents of Hate Crime and support individuals to feel confident that the Council will act appropriately on the information provided

- Actively work with Northamptonshire Probation Trust and local communities to utilise the Community Payback Scheme
- Reduce waste and increase recycling and focus on fly posting and fly tipping removal and enforcement.

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- Supported Northampton Community Safety Partnership's "Operation Guardian" event which focused on vehicle crime. Local people's views gathered will be used to inform the future priorities of the partnership
- Panel set up to look at crime statistics in our town and where crime is highest in Northampton. The information will be used to assist the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Supported the London 2012 Olympics by holding a family fun day and Startrack Athletics event to encourage people to take part in sport
- Promoted and supported "Bands in the Park" events to raise awareness of and encourage use of the local parks
- Introduced the "Night Watch" initiative to identify and improve areas with high numbers of people on the street in the Town Centre late at night
- Completed an independent review looking at the quality of service provided through the Enterprise Managed Service contract. An action plan has been put in place to address issues found
- Northampton gained the Silver award for the City category in the 2012 RHS Britain in Bloom competition
- Northampton has won a Silver Gilt award in the 2012 East Midlands in Bloom competition
- A special event "A Park for All Ages", involving Friends of Abington Park, was held to help shape the future of the Hall, Church, and Park
- Over 100 children from four Northampton schools graduated as junior community wardens in a formal ceremony at the Guildhall.
- A new voluntary agreement has been drawn up between the Professional Fund Raisers Association (PFRA) and the Borough Council so the authority can deal more effectively with face-to-face fundraisers (Chuggers) who intimidate the town's shoppers and visitors
- Additional Park Rangers and Neighbourhood Wardens recruited to further improve the appearance of the Town, and its Parks and Open Spaces
- Enforcement action has been taken against incidents of fly tipping and littering. Between April and October 2012 a total of 52 Fixed Penalty Notices have been served for littering, so far four prosecutions for fly and 12 formal cautions have been for fly tipping incidents

- Local park plans for Abington Park, Delapre Park and the Racecourse have been completed. Similar plans will be developed for more parks by the new park rangers
- Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers have worked together with Community Payback on a number of projects to secure environmental improvements across the town. This includes projects in Abington Park, Spencer and Lings.

What we did in 2011/12:

- Entered into an innovative environmental services contract in partnership with the private sector and Daventry District Council, that will improve the level of cleanliness and maintenance of the Town, as well as saving council taxpayers money
- Significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill and made a step change in our recycling performance
- Established Northampton Borough Council as a recycling exemplar by implementing an extensive recycle service which provides for the fortnightly collection of green waste and the weekly collection of paper, card and glass
- Further enhanced the weekly recycle collection service with the addition of kitchen food waste and textiles collections
- Helped Northampton to become greener Town by reinstating fortnightly green waste collections and introducing weekly kitchen food waste collections to increase recycling and reduce the waste going into landfill
- Carried out targeted campaigns to address increasing incidents of fly posting across the town
- Recruited three Park Rangers in 2011-12 to work with local communities, the Police and other agencies to ensure our parks are enjoyable spaces for all
- Worked with Partners to make Northampton safer by delivering a programme of projects throughout the year to address crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of crime
- Adopted a byelaw for Good Rule and Government to tackle low level issues of anti-social behaviour such as people urinating in the street and skateboarders skating in prohibited areas. Council Public Protection Officers, Police officers and Police Community Support Officers have now been authorised to enforce these byelaws and to date, 35 warning letters have been issued
- Won the 'Gold' award for the East Midlands 'Britain in Bloom' working with community groups, partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District to improve the appearance of the Town
- Introduced fully accredited Neighbourhood Wardens and reviewed our approach on how we discuss and deliver services within our neighbourhoods.

Priority 3 - Celebrating our heritage and culture

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Increased tourism
- Promotion, protection and improvement of our heritage and other attractions
- Delapre Abbey restored and it's future secured
- Delivery of events to celebrate and enjoy the Town's heritage and culture
- Celebration of national events in 2012 through a varied cultural programme

How we will do this.....

- Work to promote tourism to increase the economic prosperity of the Town through the delivery of a varied programme of events
- Continue to support and promote Delapre Abbey and Delapre Park as part of wider heritage strategy and develop the funding bid for Stage 2, to be submitted for consideration by the Heritage Lottery Fund by October 2013
- Reinstate the historic walkways of the Town in emerging town centre regeneration plans
- Seek innovative ways to bringing the Town's cultural museum offer to a wider audience with a broader exhibition programme and to raise the regional profile
- Continue to seek funding opportunities to improve the offer at Abington Museum
- Work constructively with the management of the Royal & Derngate theatres to safeguard the work they undertake and enhance their vital contribution to wider cultural life of Northampton
- Provide continued support to the Arts Collective in their new home
- Hold an annual 3 day music festival at Delapre Park
- Work together across the Council to improve the way we promote museums and events
- Work with others to make the most of the way we promote each other in partnership to consolidate the promotional efforts of all agencies and to achieve the best results for Northampton

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- A shoe and boot contemporary artwork, "SOLD", was exhibited at the Museum. It was part of the countywide GLOBAL FOOTPRINT project that celebrated Northamptonshire's defining creative economy – its boot and shoe trade.
- A wide range of events and exhibitions have been held in the town, including:
 - Olympic Torch relay event held throughout the Town
 - Jubilee picnic held at Delapre Abbey
 - Olympians from Northampton exhibition
 - Were your ancestors a load of cobblers? which took place during the 2012 Heritage Open Days events and is also part of a countywide initiative to help people explore their family's heritage.
- 28 large sculptures were on display for the Go Safari event at a variety of town centre venues, including Abington Street, All Saints Piazza, the Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Market Walk Shopping Centre and Becket's Park

- Godiva Awakes event, part of cultural Olympiad, was held during July. The 10m high puppet was powered into Northampton by a team of more than 100 cyclists and then fitted with boots custom made by Horace Batten. Developed the “Love Northampton” website to showcase Northampton events and attractions
- Sale of the statue of Sekhemka agreed by Cabinet and the proceeds will be used to fund the museum service and key heritage projects.
- St Crispin’s Fair was back on the streets of Northampton from 28 to 30 October for the first time since 2004 and attracted more than 40,000 visitors
- Traders, charities and community groups have been being offered the chance to take part in the seasonal celebrations by taking part in the new Christmas Quarter
- A special Frost Fair took place on 2 December to celebrate the opening of the Christmas Quarter
- Freedom of the Borough was awarded to the 9th/12th Royal Lancers Regiment in a ceremony at the Guildhall on Saturday 3 November, to recognize the Lancers important links with Northampton and their vital work overseas and to the Sea Cadets on 23 March in appreciation of the outstanding services working with young people, representing Northampton and bringing prestige to the town through their many successes in winning honours.
- Links with shoe companies have been increased resulting in a greater range of temporary exhibitions and an increased profile for the collection with audiences, institutions and industry
- A significant increase in the number and variety of events, including music and drama, has enabled the museum to reach new audiences
- Successfully bid for £47,000 funding from Arts Council England for the development of the Museum’s nationally designated shoe collection
- Major exhibition by renowned shoe company Jeffery-West opened at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery in November profiling the town to an international audience.
- Promoted the Cultural Quarter by supporting
 - The Northampton Museum and Art gallery
 - NN (the newly located Northampton Arts Collective)
 - The award winning Royal and Derngate Theatres
 - 78 Derngate (the restored Mackintosh designed house)

What we did in 2011/12:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Successfully bid for £250,000 Stage 1 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Delapre Abbey, re-established the Delapre Trust and allocated funding to support the project ○ Secured £60k of external funding, and invested a further £280k to upgrade the | <p>Central Northampton Museum and gallery facilities as part of an on-going improvement project to provide a quality facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed restoration of water gardens at Delapre Abbey and commenced a programme of structural repairs and minor restorations |
|--|--|

- Designated a Boot and Shoe Conservation Area and Billing Road Conservation Area to protect the Town's buildings and heritage environment
- Worked together with Northamptonshire County Council to provide new premises for the Northampton Arts Collective and entered into a three year funding agreement to provide on-going support
- Continued to work towards achieving national status for the Shoe Collection to improve Northampton's museum offer
- Reinvigorated the museum service through the launch of an exciting new brand and an extensive physical refurbishment to provide improved customer access, a better visitor experience and a higher quality cultural offer.

Priority 4 – Making every £ go further

Provide Value for Money to protect local services

The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Public money used to maximum benefit
- Cost savings achieved through the use of shared services, outsourcing opportunities and reduction in the use of consultants
- Delivery of value for money services in terms of service delivery and use of energy
- A continued freeze on Council Tax (where possible) and the delivery of a local Council Tax Support Scheme
- A modern diverse workforce

How we will do this.....

- Continue to review Council services to identify the most efficient and effective methods of delivery and identify shared services and outsourcing opportunities to make savings and further improve services
- Continue to reduce the use of consultants to ensure that skills of existing staff are maximised and resources are targeted towards areas most in need
- Further reduce the Council's carbon footprint and energy costs by identifying and implementing energy saving initiatives and purchasing energy wisely. We will also continue to promote sustainable energy initiatives across the wider community
- Continue to freeze Council Tax if possible, alongside creating a local Council Tax Scheme and lobby central Government to get the best for the Council in terms of funding.

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- Northampton Borough Council has agreed to join the LGSS (Local Government Shared Service) as part of a major change programme to improve efficiency and save money
- Council tax remained frozen for the 2012/13 tax year
- A Business Improvement Team has been established by recruiting in-house Project Managers and Business Analysts. The team manage all corporate projects reducing the need for consultants

- An Eco Marshall Scheme introduced to help look at ways the council can further reduce waste and save energy. The Marshalls will also encourage colleagues to reduce energy use in the workplace and act as council champions on green matters
- A new ICT strategy introduced to support the Council's ambition to provide the best possible public services
- In October 2012 legal services became a shared service between Northampton Borough Council and East Northamptonshire District Council
- Energy efficiency works in Council buildings included installing low energy lighting in two of our car parks

What we did in 2011/12:

- Frozen Councillor allowances for four years
- Delivered a number of shared services including; an innovative joint environmental services contract in partnership with Enterprise Managed Services LTD and Daventry District Council, delivering year on year savings for the 7 years of the contract, saving local taxpayers' money. Implemented a pilot to prepare for a full shared service with East Northamptonshire Council and delivered a chargeable Fraud Service for Daventry District Council
- Introduced a new Social Enterprise by transferring our sports, play and leisure facilities into a Trust, which saves local taxpayers' money and improves the quality and variety of services on offer
- Reduced the number of senior managers and introduced a Consultants Register
- Frozen the rate of Council Tax
- Reduced costs by selling one of our most energy inefficient buildings and remodelled remaining buildings to accommodate our staff. We minimised our energy usage and reduced our carbon footprint by investment in new technology and made improvements to our buildings through draft proofing, loft insulation and other initiatives
- Achieved a ranking of 354 out of more than 1,300 organisations in the UK for the work done to successfully cut our carbon emissions.

YOU

How your Council will support and empower you and your community

In order to have a successful vibrant town, Northampton needs to have the right number and types of homes, across both the private and public sectors, which address the needs of local people. The quality of these homes is also an important factor in determining how people feel about where they live, their sense of pride in their neighbourhoods and the Town overall.

The delivery of new homes has fallen in Northampton over the last few years. With Housing Demand on the Housing Register increasing rapidly, it is vital that we facilitate and co-ordinate the delivery of new affordable homes for our customers. The Housing Strategy team are currently working with RSL partners, the Homes & Communities Agency and Institutional Investors to get new homes built in Northampton.

Being able to stay in your home, when you want to, is also important to personal wellbeing and the Council will support people with advice and guidance to make the right choices for them and support vulnerable people to be able to live independently, when they want to.

Homelessness is increasing due to economic climate. We need to manage the increasing demand, prevent homelessness, where ever possible and support people in housing crisis by working in partnership with other key agencies. The Council is also proactively working to anticipate the impact of emerging central government Social Housing Reform on local people.

The Council recognises the important work undertaken by voluntary and community groups across Northampton and how this work supports the Government's aspirations to build a Big Society, where people can play an active role in their neighbourhoods and communities. We will continue to work with voluntary and community groups to build capacity and encourage wider community management of our Community Centres. We will also continue to develop our approach to neighbourhood management to ensure we provide support to frontline councillors in their community leadership role.

We provide services to ensure that the community has access to a variety of leisure and sport facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and a sense of wellbeing. The Council will continue to improve such facilities and opportunities, by supporting the Northampton Leisure Trust and improving facilities and opportunities to be physically active, across the Town.

Delivering high quality, cost effective services in a way that local people want them is a key focus for the Council. We are committed to delivering excellent customer service, treating our customers fairly and listening to them to develop and improve services and put things right when our standards have not been met.

Our key priorities are:

- ◇ **Priority 5 - Better homes for the future**
Helping you to have a home
- ◇ **Priority 6 - Creating empowered communities**
- ◇ **Priority 7- Promoting health and well-being**
- ◇ **Priority 8 - Responding to your needs**

Priority 5 - Better homes for the future

Helping you to have a home

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- People provided with timely advice and information to enable them to make informed choices
- Local housing needs provided for
- The Decent Homes standard met
- Vulnerable people supported with their housing needs
- Future developments informed by the views of all local people

How we will do this.....

- Respond to the emerging Social Housing Reform agenda by reviewing housing policies and writing and implementing the Tenancy Strategy and a Housing Allocations Scheme.
- Understand the impact of Welfare Reform plans on housing provision regarding universal credit payments and new housing occupation rules and review policies to reflect necessary changes
- Consider changes to legislation and look at stock options and how we might best manage the Council's stock in the future in consultation with our tenants.
- Deliver a Decent Homes programme to improve more Council tenanted properties
- Undertake a review of sheltered housing and identify a solution to the changes to sheltered housing
- Develop an Independent Living & Ageing Well Strategy for Older People
- Continue to work with partners to reduce causes of homelessness and support the Homeless Forum, Oasis House and other organisations tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Town
- Secure an on-going supply of new homes through planning policy to meet local housing needs

- Introduce a register of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) inspected within Northampton
- Continue to support the work of the Countywide Traveller Unit
- Consult on any changes that may affect local residents' homes or communities on any future developments

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- The Housing Options Review is well underway. It was set up to identify the most tenant focussed option for the future management and ownership of the Council's 12,000 homes. A new Stock Condition Survey, highlighting what the costs will be for maintaining homes for the next thirty years and a Tenants' Survey, asking for views on tenants' priorities for the future of the service, have been completed. Tenants and housing service employees have been working together to support the review and help develop new service standards and standards for improving homes.
- Northampton Borough Council has secured almost £500,000 to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping after successfully bidding for government funding
- Oasis House, a facility which has revolutionised support and accommodation services for homeless people in Northampton has been opened.
- Northampton Borough Council will receive £49 million of government funding over five years to improve housing stock. The Borough Council has been allocated £14.7 million in 2013/14 and £30million the 2014/15. Added to the £4.5million already received, this means more than £49 million will be invested in the Borough's homes by 2015.
- The council has been awarded £1.9m government funding to help return 105 empty homes back into use between 2012 and 2015
- Submitted a funding second bid to the Department of Health's Warmer Homes Healthy People. If successful advises services to households in fuel poverty can be extended
- Greenfield Avenue Garage site to be disposed to a Registered Social Landlord partner to develop 6 affordable family sized homes
- Working with private institutional investors to look at different ways the new supply of affordable and private rented accommodation can be delivered in the Borough
- Revised the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to help understand the housing needs for Gypsy & Traveller communities. This will help which will help the joint strategy
- Delivered 69 new affordable homes by October against a target of 150 for the year
- Approved plans to develop a Local Lettings Agency to help increase and improve standards in the private rented sector

- Submitted a bid to the Renewable Heat Premium Payment fund initiative to replace heating systems in 19 of the Council's hard to heat homes in Collingtree that do not have gas
- The Council was mentioned in the government's Homelessness Strategy launched in August 2012 for providing best practice services for homeless people
- Council was selected by the Department for Communities and Local Government, Department of Health and Homeless Link to be one of five innovation areas on homelessness to tackle mental health related issues
- The cleaning services will be extended to include all communal blocks across the Borough
- Work begun to proactively deal with the local issues created because of national welfare reforms

What we did in 2011/12:

- Achieved ISO9001 quality standard for our Housing Solutions Service in October 2011 and awarded the Customer Excellence Award.
- Selected as one of only seven authorities to receive funding to run a social mobility pilot project, supporting people to move out of social housing into private rented accommodation where their circumstances allow, and to assist those living in health institutions to live independently and move into social housing
- Commenced development of a Tenancy Strategy to respond to Social Housing Reform agenda.
- Commenced a review of Council housing policy on allocations, under occupations and who can go on the housing register. This includes supporting members of the Armed Forces (via our local connection criteria)
- Obtained £300,000 of government funding to run a 'No Second Night Out' pilot project to eliminate rough Sleeping in the Town. We were the 2nd Council outside of London to have launched this initiative.
- 101 affordable homes developed in the Borough
- Attracted over £2m from E-on to help deliver the Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) to our council tenants living in the most deprived areas in Northampton
- Disposed of Robinson House site to Orbit Homes to help deliver 17 new affordable family sized homes
- Received an award for our local authority new build scheme at Brookside Meadows, as the most sustainable small development in the Country
- Awarded £83k to bring 5 empty homes back into use with HCA grant funding
- Developed the Northampton Energy Savings Scheme (NESS) with funding of £70k from Department of Health through the Warmer Homes Healthy People funding stream. This helped over 200 customers with advice and energy saving measures
- Implemented a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme enabling people to move

- within the social housing market between Daventry and Northampton
- Successfully bid for government money to improve the quality of Council homes
- Commenced a review of Sheltered Housing and Call Care in order to identify a solution to the changes to sheltered housing wardens
- Received a 'Good Communications Award' in 2011 for our web site and Young Voices work to reduce youth homelessness
- Completed a business plan for the reform of the Housing Revenue Account to enable us to self-finance and manage our Council homes
- Implemented de-pooling of rent and service charges following consultation with Council tenants

Priority 6 - Creating empowered communities

The outcomes we want to achieve:

- Empowered local communities with a greater capacity to become involved in community life
- Increased capacity of our partners in the voluntary sector to better support communities
- Community managed community centres

How we will do this.....

- Encourage individuals, communities and groups to get involved and contribute to activities within their local neighbourhoods in order to promote integration and cohesion within communities and foster a sense of pride across the Town
- Work with others to support and develop the capacity of the voluntary sector for the benefit of NBC and local people
- Support localism plans for neighbourhood planning to increase community involvement in the planning process
- Adopt an open door policy to allow our parish Councils, resident associations, community groups and other organisations to take over the management and running of community centres still within the council's full or partial control, where they have the capacity to do so.

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- Developed and implemented an iPhone app which allows people to report issues, view information about the Council and services
- Empowered communities in Blackthorn, Spring Boroughs, Wootton and East Hunsbury by helping them become more involved in neighbourhood plans. Working with other communities to improve ways local people can get involved.

- Community Governance Review to consider new Parish Councils, and proposed boundary changes to existing Parishes taking place which includes detailed consultation and an advisory poll
- Approved the transfer of the management of the Parklands and Blackthorn community centres
- Introduced a Tenants Panel to enable council tenants to shape service delivery and monitor performance
- Community Covenant set up to create understanding and a partnership with the local Armed Forces community

What we did in 2011/12:

- Transferred the running of fifteen out of twenty one Community Centres over to local community and voluntary organisations to run
- Developed an approach to neighbourhood working that supports Councillors in their leadership role to better understand local priorities and deliver against them
- Introduced a Councillor Community Fund
- Work with partners to support people to take up volunteering through the implementation of a County-wide recruitment portal
- Established a borough wide 'Friends' network to share best practice amongst our parks and open spaces volunteers
- Obtained 'Front Runner' status from the Government for Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

Priority 7 - Promoting health and well-being

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Work with the new local 'Health & Well-being' Board to improve the health of local people
- Promote the health and well-being of residents through continued support of leisure and sporting opportunities in local clubs and the Leisure Trust
- Improved public health

How we will do this.....

- Respond to the emerging Health & Wellbeing Board strategy
- Work with the new Clinical Commissioning consortia and develop locality plans to influence spend to deliver local priorities
- Actively support our sports clubs
- Support the Leisure Trust to deliver healthy living and Children and Young People outcomes and widen participation in leisure activities across all sections of the community
- Work with businesses and individuals to promote responsible drinking

- Work to influence our partners to improve air quality and meet Government minimum targets
- Implement the Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Work with external energy providers to implement the Community Energy Savings Programme to improve energy efficiency standards and reduce fuel bills in some of the Borough's most vulnerable communities

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- A new leisure centre, funded by Duston Parish Council and managed by the Leisure Trust, opened on the old British Timken site during September 2012.
- The new Skate Park on Midsummers Meadow was officially opened on Saturday 21 July and over 800 skaters came to try out the park for the first time
- Hosted the 2012 Northampton Sports Awards on 11 October in the Great Hall at The Guildhall. The evening, which celebrated the winners of thirteen individual awards, was sponsored by local and national companies and was attended by around 180 people. The winners of each category will represent Northampton in the County Awards later in the year
- Secured a £65,000 DEFRA grant to help improvement of air quality within the Borough. A low emissions strategy will be developed and the use alternative fuels will be explored.
- New sports equipment featured in Northampton Museum and Art Gallery's 'Going for Gold' Olympic summer exhibition was donated to the pupils of Cedar Road Primary School. The equipment was bought for the exhibition by councillor Anna King with money from her Councillor Community Fund.
- Worked in partnership with other local councils to launch a new website which provides useful information and advice to help householders reduce their energy bills. (Northampton Warm Homes Initiative)

What we did in 2011/12:

- Entered into an innovative social enterprise by transferring our sports, play and leisure services into a Trust in order to improve services and access to facilities locally, at a price that people can afford as well as protecting services for the future
- Installed gym equipment in some of our parks and open spaces that is suitable for all ages and abilities to enjoy a free workout outdoors
- Delivered the 'Mend' project on behalf of the NHS, through the Northampton Leisure Trust. MEND is a healthy lifestyle programme designed for children 7-13 yrs and 2-4 yrs who are above a healthy weight. Parents and carers join their children in each session to learn about how to choose healthier foods, portion sizes and how to spend more time about play and being active

- Launched a Junior Direct Debit gym membership scheme as an initiative to ease cash flow issues for parents and also to grow the business, retain customers and generate higher levels of income for the new Northampton Leisure Trust
- Organised the UK's first dedicated family friendly 3km night run in Northampton as part of last year's Cultural Olympiad Igniting Ambition Festival, in the lead up to London 2012
- Worked with a number of partners to deliver a Disability Sports Open Day at Danes Camp Leisure Centre in February 2012 celebrating 200 days to the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games.

Priority 8 - Responding to your needs

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Appropriate support provided to those in most need
- All services are fair, accessible and responsive to individual needs
- Residents and customers feel informed and engaged in service quality and design

How we will do this.....

- Further develop the Gateway Service to support those in most need
- Implement the Council's Equality Strategy, "Our Approach to Equalities" and continue to work towards achieving 'Excellent' within the Equality Framework for local government
- Expansion of the range of partners providing services in the One Stop Shop and focus on channel shift through the self-service area
- Provide consistency of customer service and "one point of contact" for customers by migrating the remaining service areas into the telephone contact centre and one stop shop
- Continue to create effective dialogue with people so that they can feel involved in the decision making process and ensure developing policy and service delivery takes into account different needs
- Support individuals affected by Social Welfare and Housing Reforms through effective communications of the changes and impacts upon them.

How we have progressed in 2012/13:

- Approved a 3 year Equality Strategy and work continues to become an excellent authority. Projects in 2012 included an update of the DisabledGo access guide, Stonewall Workplace Index accreditation and continued engagement with the Council's community forums
- The Council's Youth Forum won a National Diversity Award for their hard work to stamp out hate crime
- An event to support the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) took place in May 2012

- Successfully completed our re – accreditation of the Customer Excellence standard for Local Government.
- A broad range of consultative approaches and activities have been developed including a consultation framework and Residents Panel.

What we did in 2011/12:

- Increased the range of partner services available in the One Stop Shop to include a Pharmacist service, Access to Employment service and charities providing support to vulnerable young mothers and Children leaving care
- Implemented the shared contact centre telephony and workforce management systems with Northamptonshire County Council enabling overflow of calls during peak periods
- Re-launched a jointly managed residents panel with Northamptonshire County Council supporting both organisations to consult and listen to the views of local people
- Achieved the ‘Louder Than Words’ accreditation for ensuring that our website and letters relating to our Housing Solutions service are accessible to deaf people and the Albert Kennedy Trust accreditation for ensuring that our Housing Solutions working practices are not homophobic
- Introduced a single 0300 telephone number to get through to all of the borough council's services, making it easier to remember and cheaper to call for many of our customers
- Hosted a disability multi sports club at Danes Camp Leisure Centre through the Northampton Leisure Trust to improve access to sport
- Developed and refurbished a shared One Stop Shop service with Northamptonshire County Council, Police, Fire and voluntary sector partners to improve customer access to services
- Introduced an appointment system, which includes emergency appointments for those in urgent need
- Achieved re-accreditation of the Cabinet Office ‘Customer Service Excellence Award’ for the services within the Finance and Support Directorate and our Housing Solutions Service.