



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – NORTHAMPTON POST UNITARY

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review: Northampton Post Unitary

The purpose of the Review is

- To look at Northampton, (being mindful of the potential Unitary Authority), giving particular consideration to how civic pride and ceremonies can be preserved

CORE QUESTIONS:

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

1. Please can you provide details of civic pride, events and ceremonies that currently or previously took place in Northampton for the Scrutiny Panel's consideration for inclusion of its formal list

Northampton is the established venue for **The High Sheriff of Northamptonshire's Courts Service**, a high profile ceremonial occasion which can be traced back centuries.

This annual church service at All Saints' Church, Northampton is a significant civic occasion which, among other things:-

- Recognises and celebrates publicly the vital work of all those involved in the administration of Justice (including the enforcement of law and order) in the County.
- Offers an opportunity for the High Sheriff (on behalf of the Sovereign) and those representing the communities of the Borough and the County to express their gratitude for this work.
- Provides an occasion when those involved in the administration of Justice) can reflect on and recommit themselves to their purpose, with the support of the communities they represent.
- Offers a unique occasion for all the agencies involved in the administration of justice to connect and converse (network) with each other and with those who represent the communities of the Borough and County.

- Enables the Borough and the County to provide hospitality to distinguished visitors (including senior Judges and High Sheriffs of other counties) and present Northampton and Northamptonshire's credentials in a highly favourable way.
- Represents the historical convention of a church service provided for a visiting High Court Judge, which would herald the opening of the Assizes.
- Supports (through gifting) a relevant charity or charities operating in the County

The event will be commonly attended by, amongst others:

- High Court/Court of Appeal/Supreme Court Judges
- Locally sitting Judges: Circuit and District Judges
- Magistrates
- HM Coroner
- The Chief Constable
- Members of the Bar
- Solicitors
- Other legal professionals
- Senior clergy (all denominations), including the Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese, Bishops and the Dean of Peterborough Cathedral

Guests include:

- o HM Lord-Lieutenant,
- o The Mayor and Councillors of the Borough
- o Deputy Lieutenants of the County and visiting High Sheriffs of other counties
- o Representatives of County, District and other local authorities of the County
- o Representatives of other agencies within the Justice system (eg Probation Service, Victim Support etc)
- o Representatives of other agencies in the county (eg Chief Fire Officer)

2. How are Northampton's civic events and ceremonies marketed?

The event is principally by invitation (not marketed)

3 Please provide suggestions how you feel the pride and history of the Borough and the Guildhall can be preserved and enhanced as part of any new Unitary Authority.

The 'suite' of heritage buildings comprising the Guildhall, the Judges Lodgings, the Sessions House and All Saints' Church, their configuration and their relationship to each other provides a unique and unrivalled context for hosting the historically significant Courts Service. Their preservation has significant value for both pride and history of the Borough and County.

- 4 **Question to internal witnesses:** What is role of Northampton Borough Council in civic events and ceremonies within the borough?
- 5 **Question to external witnesses:** What is the role of partners in civic events and ceremonies within the borough?

The High Sheriff's Courts Service is held with the kind permission of the Mayor of Northampton (it is included as a Borough event for public liability insurance purposes) and the Borough has conventionally offered facilities at the Guildhall for the Reception which has traditionally followed the Service. For its part, the County Council has conventionally offered the facilities of the Judges Lodgings/Sessions House and has supported the occasion with the requisite Road Closure. All Saints Church provides the venue for the Service and the Northampton & County Club on George Row is commonly the venue for an invitation dinner which follows the Reception at the Guildhall. Northamptonshire Police assists with managing the road closure for the Processions (from Guildhall to Lodgings to Church and back).

- 6 In your opinion, how can all assets, including Museums and their contents, in the borough be preserved and secured?
- 7 Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to civic pride in Northampton

The High Sheriff (variously with the assistance of the Under Sheriff) arranges other events in Northampton during a Shrieval year (from April to March). These will include:

- The High Sheriff Declaration ceremony (usually held in Open Court at the Combined Courts Centre, Lady's Lane)
- Hospitality events arranged by the High Sheriff for those involved in the civic and charity life of the county (invitation receptions and dinners)
- Lectures arranged in conjunction with the University of Northampton (by invitation)