

**Council**  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2007**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration**

***Improve our town centre***

**Grosvenor/Greyfriars**

This is the key priority for the regeneration team. We are continuing to work closely with Legal & General with a view to signing a heads of terms agreement with them for the redevelopment of the Grosvenor centre and Bus station area. The challenging timescales have been agreed with Legal and General, while significant progress has been made with the development of a detailed financial model, it has not been possible to achieve all target dates.

As a direct result of this, Northampton Borough Council has strengthened its consultant team by the appointment of a new commercial agent. The revised target for completion of Heads of Terms is late August.

As a significant landowner, the council has to be sure that the best use is being made of its assets for the benefit of the whole town. We want to see an innovative development that brings additional high quality retail to the town centre that complements and enhances what we already have. We also need to ensure that bus facilities to replace the bus station are accessible and attractive, and that adequate temporary facilities are provided during development.

**St Johns Cultural Quarter**

Consultants have now been appointed to draw up a master plan for the area south of the Royal and Derngate, incorporating the former Blueberry Diner site, St Johns car park and the lower part of Guildhall Rd. We want to see development and investment in this area to complement the theatres.

**Market Square**

The regeneration of the Market Square is a key priority for the new administration. We want to work with all users of the market square to come up with a plan that will create a flexible space that can be used day and night for trading, entertainment, and relaxation. This involves not just looking at the layout of the stalls, but the surfacing, the lighting and planting to create an attractive environment that will draw more people into the town.

## *Parks, Leisure & Cultural Heritage*

### **Delapre Conservation Area**

The cabinet has confirmed the creation of a conservation area for part of Delapre Park around the abbey. Following a strong public wish for the conservation area to include a wider area, council staff will be preparing a management plan and appraisal for consultation within a year

### ***Consider the planet in everything we do / Safe, clean neighbourhoods for people to live in / build homes people can afford to live in***

### **Joint Core strategy- Issues and Options**

An Issues and Options paper for the Joint Core strategy for West Northamptonshire (Northampton Borough, Daventry and South Northants District Councils) is being published for consultation. It asks some challenging questions about the growth of our area over the next 20 years. I hope councillors will respond, and encourage as many other people to respond to the consultation as possible.

### **Development Control**

Our planning staff should be congratulated for delivering a significant improvement in the time taken to process planning applications, addressing a key weakness identified by the audit commission. While there are a large number of vacancies in the department, we will continue to use Urban Vision to maintain the standard of service but look forward to recruiting new planning officers as soon as possible.

Richard Church  
10<sup>th</sup> July 2007