

Council
Monday 19th November 2007

**Report of the Leader of the Council,
Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and Improvement**

A clear vision for Northampton

Chief Executive

David Kennedy starts in post on Monday 12th November 2007. We welcome David and wish him every success in his new role. John Edwards relinquishes the position of Interim Chief Executive on 12th November 2007. Over a period of just eight months, John has significantly tightened the accountabilities and responsibilities of managers and communicated 'good practice' to all staff. He has brought stability to the authority and provided the framework for strengthened business planning and the continuing service performance improvement. He has improved relations with our key partners, particularly the Government Monitoring Board, GO-EM and DCLG. I believe John has put in place secure foundations for Northampton Borough Council to rapidly improve its performance and rating. Northampton Borough Council owes a very significant debt of gratitude to John Edwards. John will, however, not be leaving us immediately. He will assist the Council in its preparation for the next Audit Commission Progress Assessment.

An open and efficient council

Audit Commission Progress Assessment

The Audit Commission have decided that our Progress Assessment inspection will take place on 25th to 27th February 2008 rather than this month as originally indicated. This is encouraging in that it indicates that they do not feel that NBC is currently at risk of failing and does, obviously, provide additional time for improvements to be embedded before the next inspection. However, we must be under no illusion, the Audit Commission will want to see substantial progress and will, undoubtedly, apply a harder test to reflect the additional time available.

Government Monitoring Board

The Government Monitoring Board met on 4 October 2007. This was a positive meeting and there was general agreement that NBC was now making good progress in its improvement. This was confirmed when the date of the next meeting was delayed until 17 January 2008.

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

The WNDC have invited the Administration to appoint an Observer to the WNDC Board. We will be taking up this position.

Tony Woods
November 2007