Please find enclosed the agenda and supporting papers for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 15 November 2010  
Time: 6:00 pm  
Place: Jeffery Room, Guildhall

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, telephone 01604 837408, email ttiff@northampton.gov.uk who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please visit the website www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Members of the Committee

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PRESENT: Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair), Councillor John Yates (Deputy Chair), Councillors Iftikhar Ahmed Choudary (Ifty), Tony Clarke, Penelope Flavell, David Garlick, Irene Markham, Lee Mason, Richard Matthews, Dennis Meredith, Kevin Reeve and Tony Woods, – (substitute for Councillor Brendan Glynane)

Councillor Sally Beardsworth - Portfolio Holder (Housing)
Councillor Trini Crake – Portfolio Holder (Environment)
Councillor Brian Markham – Portfolio Holder (Performance and Support)
Councillor David Perkins – Portfolio Holder (Finance)
Councillor Paul Varnsverry Portfolio Holder (Communities)
Julie Seddon – Director of Environment and Culture,
David Bailey – Director of Planning & Regeneration, (Item 6)
Isabell Procter – Director of Finance,
Lesley Wearing – Director of Housing.

Dave Green – Regulatory Service Manager,
Simon Dougall – Asset Manager, (Item 6)

Tracy Tiff – Scrutiny Officer
Jackie Grady – Meetings Officer

1. APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brendan Glynane, Jane Hollis and Pam Varnsverry.

2. MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 19th July 2010 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES
There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)
5. PROPOSALS FOR CLIFTONVILLE HOUSE

Isabell Procter, Director of Finance, and Councillor David Perkins, Portfolio Holder (Finance), provided the Committee with an update on the sale of Cliftonville House.

Isabell Procter apprised that the sale was progressing well and the exchange date was expected to be end of October 2010, with all staff relocated out of Cliftonville House by the end of March 2011.

The Committee heard that the third floor renovations at the Guildhall were going smoothly. A new IP Telephony system would be installed, and plans for renovations to the other floors were being progressed. There would be new ways of working such as reducing filing, paper usage etc. The renovations to the basement have started. All staff have been encouraged to go through old paperwork and dispose of any documents that are no longer required.

An E-Enablement Team has been set up to look at issues such as IP telephony, printers and printing and storage issues.

Councillor David Perkins added that the office move would have a major impact on the culture of the organisation.

The Committee asked questions, made comments and heard the following:-

- The IP Telephony system is linked through the pc and server, the telephone number follows the user
- A trial run is to be put in place for home-working. Staff would be able to log in at home. This will help areas to progress and give greater flexibility to workers as well as freeing up desk space at the Guildhall
- A Car Parking Working Group has been set up and would report its findings. The Group is led by Catherine Wilson, Head of HR.
- In response to a query regarding the price of the sale and any conditions attached, the Committee heard that the sale price reported to Cabinet has not changed. It is an unconditional transfer., The report to Cabinet set out the nature of the conditions, and finer details would be dealt with by Legal Services.

In response to a query regarding refurbishment, the Committee heard that the key improvement was in respect of ventilation and the replacement of lighting as well as redecoration, new toilets and kitchen facilities. It was stated that all staff had been consulted on these issues.

The Committee also requested further information to be presented at a future meeting on the following:-

- The cost of the refurbishment
- What provision has been put in place for car park users who will have to pay to park their cars whilst at work if they are getting free parking at Cliftonville now?
- Car parking issues
• Covenant details

This Committee would like to be kept informed, look at the Exchange documents and the budgeted estimates.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be invited to visit the Third Floor of the Guildhall when the refurbishment has been completed.

AGREED: That further details on the sale of Cliftonville House be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

6. PROPERTY DISPOSAL STRATEGY

David Bailey, Director of Planning and Simon Dougall, Corporate Asset Manager, provided the Committee with an update on the Property Disposal Strategy -

- Cabinet adopted a new Corporate Asset Management Strategy covering the period 2010 – 2013 which identified key objectives
- The Corporate Asset Board (CAB) comprises the Portfolio holders for Finance, Planning & Regeneration as well as the Directors of Planning & Regeneration, Finance & Support & Housing and the Corporate Asset Manager. The CAB can only make recommendations to the Cabinet
- Between November 2009 and May 2010 a comprehensive review of the Council’s non-operational property assets was undertaken. A report was presented to Cabinet on 28th July 2010 summarising the outcome of this process
- Following proper consideration by the Corporate Asset Board (CAB), the first disposals ‘tranche’ as part of this structured programme was also presented to Cabinet on 28th July 2010. Cabinet approved the disposal of the five properties identified in that report
- Following further consideration in July 2010 by CAB of other properties, identified as potential disposals as part of the SBR review process, a second report was brought to Cabinet on 15th September 2010. Cabinet approved the disposal of four properties but decided not to approve the disposal of a fifth property
- The CAB met in early September 2010, consistent with its bi-monthly schedule, and considered a further set of properties for potential disposal. Those properties, recommended for approval by the CAB, will be brought to the Cabinet meeting on 13th October 2010
- Further reports are intended to be brought to Cabinet, where it is considered that the property does not meet the criteria for retention identified within the Corporate Asset Management Strategy. The Corporate Asset Management Strategy requires that all corporate property owned by the Council must be objectively judged to fit within one or more of the following five categories. If it does not, then prima facie, the presumption is that it should be disposed of at the most opportune time to maximise value for the Council (taking into account holding costs).

- Operational property
- Investment property
- Property to support regeneration initiatives
- Property to support housing initiatives
- Property to support well being in Northampton
With regard to ‘Tenanted Non-Residential Property (TNRP) the Council holds property for non-operational purposes with the intention of generating rental income.

Officers from a range of relevant areas considered the non-operational property holdings of the Council as part of the SBR process, taking account of this categorisation.

CAB in May 2010 received a report on the (a) Non-operational & Non-income producing property and (b) the Investment property of the Council. It was agreed that CAB should, as a standing item, receive recommendations from officers regarding properties that were considered not to meet the rationale set out for retention.

CAB has subsequently considered in some detail individual groups of properties that have been identified by officers as potentially suitable for disposal. In all cases where property disposals are proposed in reports brought to Cabinet (or to Portfolio holder for delegated decision – where the value does not exceed £50,000), Borough Council ward Members are consulted in writing (either by letter or email) prior to the relevant report being finalised and published. Any concerns expressed by a Ward Councillor are properly considered and the officers respond to specific issues raised. Objections will be reported to CAB.

Nine properties have already been approved for sale at the Cabinet meetings held in July and September 2010 as part of the ongoing property disposal programme. They have a potential collective value of £1million, which, once received, can be re-invested through the Capital Programme.

In answer to a query regarding arrangements for ‘swaps’ of properties, Simon Dougall advised that the Council has been working with Northamptonshire County Council regarding the disposal of land at Abington and Booth Rise. The Council has also had discussions with HCA regarding land at Crow Lane.

It was noted that there is no legal requirement for consultation to take place with the general public. The land by Exeter Place should have gone to consultation as this might have resulted in a scheme where the Council could proceed with Public support.

The Committee put questions to Simon Dougall, made comments and heard the following:

The Committee referred to a recent report that had been presented to Cabinet commenting that if public consultation had taken place, individuals with local knowledge and information might have provided such detail. It was added that an area of Open Space has gone through CAB and a notice is to be placed on the land. The Public has been fully aware of the process.

- The Council is obliged to secure the best value for any disposal property.

- The disposal of the land at Exeter Place was first put to the Cabinet on 20th July 2010 and was brought to the attention of Councillors on the 3rd August 2010. The rationale for decision making is a good net investment return relative to capital value, compared with that of other investment classes (e.g.
stocks and shares, holding money on deposit) and judged against a corporately agreed acceptable level of return.

- In response to a query regarding investment and over what period, the Committee heard that the target rate is 5.5% per year, the targeted level for holding investment property.

- The Committee realises that there is no legal requirement to consult on recommended property disposals, but feels that there is a moral obligation to do so and for certain recommended property disposals it may be beneficial for consultation to take place.
- The Committee had particular concerns over the timings (summer period) that some ward Councillors had been issued with notification of recommended property disposals; it is felt that these concerns could be strengthened when some wards become single Councillor wards. It is therefore suggested that a notice of all properties that are recommended for disposal be issued to all Councillors, Members of Northamptonshire County Council and Parish Councils; similarly to that of the list of Planning Applications that is currently circulated.
- The Committee also commented that best value does not always mean a ‘cash asset’ but is often in relation to a community asset and asks that consideration to supporting Community Groups that express an interest in taking over a property is given.

It was suggested that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Leader and Portfolio Holder (Finance) conveying the Committee’s concerns and suggestions as detailed above.

**AGREED:** That the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Leader and Portfolio Holder (Finance) conveying the Committee’s concerns and suggestions as detailed above

7. **BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Committee investigated the Performance Monitoring Report (July 2010) making comment and observations.

The Committee expressed its concerns regarding NES10a – Percentage of recreation land that is assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below standard and NES10b – Percentage of recreation land that is assessed as having deposits of detritus that fall below standard. Julie Seddon, Director of Environment and Culture, advised that the Council performs better on collecting litter than detritus and needs to be extra vigilant at certain times of the year. A leaf collecting machine is operational on the parks but not surrounding streets. The Committee commented that leaves are a major problem as they can become dangerous and slippery. It was reported that this is the first autumn that the Council has had the new leaf collection machine,
The Committee expressed its concerns regarding measure H16 – Average housing re-let times (M) and it was requested that further information on this measure be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on 15th November 2010 at 6pm.

**AGREED:** That further details on Indicator H16 Average housing re-let times (M) be presented at the next meeting.

(A) PERFORMANCE INDICATOR LI105(ELP1 5) - PERCENTAGE OF FLYTIPS REMOVED WITHIN TWO WORKING DAYS

At its meeting held on June 7th 2010, the Committee had requested further information on Performance Indicator LI105 (ELP1 5) – Percentage of flytips removed within two working days. A briefing note was circulated for the Committee’s information.

Most fly tipping is collected within two working days unless adverse weather conditions prevent this.

The Committee then put questions to Councillor Brian Markham (Portfolio Holder – Performance and Support) and Julie Seddon - Director of Environment and Culture, heard the following and made comment.

A fly tip is classified as the illegal dumping of waste on land that does not have a licence to receive it. The Neighbourhood and Environmental Services (NES) fly tip crews remove fly tips both proactively and via reports from the public (recorded by the Customer Contact Centre on the CRM). The public can report fly tips via the call centre and the website. A number of teams are involved in the reporting and removal of fly tipping across the town.

The Indicator reports the percentage of fly tipping removed within two working days percentage.

The Committee commented that it felt that the problem appeared to be relating to housing land where Neighbourhood Environment Services had not been responsible in the past to collect fly tipping. However, new working methods are being introduced.

However, partnership working is in place with the Police and NBC’s Neighbourhood Wardens. Enforcement action is taken where applicable.

The Committee suggested that there was a need for a local performance indicator to be introduced that took into account housing land.

Councillor Brian Markham advised that a report is being produced on measure NES 09. It was suggested that representatives from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, work with the Portfolio Holder (Performance and Support) and provide scrutiny input to the report on Fly tipping.

**AGREED:** That the Chair writes to the Portfolio Holder (Performance and Support) requesting that Councillors Lee Mason, Tony Clarke, Richard Matthews and John Yates work with him to provide scrutiny input to the report on Fly tipping NES 09.
8. CABINET RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) SHELTERED HOUSING AND HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

Councillor Sally Beardsworth, Portfolio Holder (Housing) addressed the Committee thanking the Task and Finish Group for its high quality report.

It was noted that all the recommendations included within the Overview and Scrutiny report would be considered in the report on the future of sheltered housing and options for older people due to come to Cabinet in September 2010:-

- Increasing the flexibility and choice within the service and the need to work effectively in partnership with key agencies
- To ensure that services represent excellent value for money, are competitive and deliver positive outcomes to promote independent living, a flexible structure of visits to sheltered housing tenants should be introduced according to individual needs. Such changes to be in line with the Supporting People grant conditions to safeguard this important funding stream
- The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to commence dialogue with private sector housing providers to encourage the co-ordination and widespread installation of the Lifeline system
- The Task and Finish Group accepts that the floating support system generally works but highlights the need for flexibility of provision and to minimise the frequency of staff changes to ensure stability and continuity of service provision
- The use of digital technology should be maximised to support the delivery of services, such as Telehealth
- Dialogue takes place between the Portfolio Holder (Housing), relevant key officers, ward Councillors, tenants and other concerned Agencies to investigate how the community rooms can be used to their full potential
- The Head of Housing Needs and Support be authorised to set up a meeting with Northamptonshire County Council, all relevant Agencies and organisations to promote a joined up approach to the delivery of services for older people, with a particular focus on the role of Voluntary Groups and the importance of community activities to counteract social isolation
- A general review of the Garage Tenancy Agreement to take place to include the possible adaption of garages for the storage of mobility scooters
- That the Head of Housing Needs and Support completes the review of sheltered housing properties and produces a plan that outlines which properties will no longer be designated as sheltered, identifying opportunities for new build which meets lifetime homes standards. The Task and Finish Group’s observations about heating systems at some sheltered housing units to be taken into consideration during this review
- A full consultation programme, in accordance with the Council’s Consultation Toolkit, with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants, is developed regarding any proposed changes
• Improved communication methods with existing and potential sheltered housing tenants is maintained. In particular to work with dissatisfied residents to understand their issues and respond to their concerns
• The location of the Call Care service to be reviewed due to the poor quality of accommodation currently used and the service is relocated
• A Policy for the storing of mobility scooters at sheltered housing accommodation is introduced
• Ward Councillors to be issued with details of the location of sheltered housing and details of the Sheltered Housing Co-ordinators for each ward.
• The issue of security doors and access is reviewed in blocks of flats designated as sheltered housing
• That the Head of Landlord Services is requested to address specific issues at Melbourne House as identified in the main body of the report. The first floor door entry systems at Melbourne, Abbey and Devonshire be redesigned or appropriately adjusted to alleviate the current problems encountered by tenants
• A full Equality Impact Assessment is produced for future changes to Sheltered Housing

It was noted that since the production of the Task and Finish Group report, the future of Supporting People is uncertain due to the budget announcements by the new Government. The Head of Housing Needs and Support will need to enter into discussion with the County Council on the implications for the Sheltered Housing Service and report to Cabinet on the outcome of those discussions and the proposals for the way forward. Councillor Sally Beardsworth advised that a Steering Group is to be set up to look at what the criteria should be. The contract would have to be approved and the successful organisation appointed.

AGREED: that Cabinet’s response to the Overview and Scrutiny report – Sheltered Housing for Older People be noted.

(B) COMMUNITY CENTRES

Councillor Paul Varnsverry, Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement) addressed the Committee reporting on Cabinet’s response as follows:-

• Cabinet resolved at its meeting on the 28th September 2010 to direct those conducting the current review of the future of Northampton’s community centres to have due regard to Overview and Scrutiny’s recommendations as it develops policy and practice for Northampton’s community Centres.
• He further advised that the Policy is currently being reviewed and updated although there is still some work to be carried out.
• At most community centres there is a lack of storage space and the roof space is not suitable. When and if designing new buildings storage and roof space needs to be looked at.

The Committee was reminded of the sixteen recommendations contained with the Overview and Scrutiny Community Centres Task and Finish Group report:-
All leases for self managed Community Centres are reviewed to ensure that they meet consistent standards; based on a common core document. Leases be on a term of at least 25 years.

In assessing the business cases, Management Committees must be able to demonstrate they are maintaining a local focus and provide evidence to support it can manage a number of Community Centres fitting the set criteria.

Northampton Borough Council provides information, such as building surveys, details of running costs to Self Managed Community Centres to aid business planning.

Management Committees are charged with ensuring that Community Centres are kept in a good state of repair. Northampton Borough Council provides an allocated sum of money to the Management Committees for general maintenance and repair of the Community Centres. Northampton Borough Council remains the budget holder for major repairs.

Suitable Community Groups are given the opportunity to submit an application for the management of a Community Centre(s). Existing Management Committees are given first refusal for Community Centre(s) that they currently manage.

Where appropriate, Community Groups taking on the management role of the Community Centres, the Council or other partners provide a grant towards running costs, with the proviso that the Groups work in partnership with the Council to achieve community outcomes.

Northampton Borough Council works with Community Groups that take on the management of a Community Centre regarding the employment of a Centre Co-ordinator and/or Centre Manager.

The Council works with Management Committees to ensure that the Community Centres meet the needs of the Community.

A Policy, containing particular components such as an Equality Impact Assessment, Health and Safety issues, Terms of Access, booking and contact details to be clearly visible from the outside of the building, details of the condition in which the Community Centre should be left when the hirer has concluded its session, be introduced and issued to all Community Centres. The Policy is renewed on an annual basis.

Monitoring of the management of Community Centres is introduced, using management tools.

Cabinet considers, within appropriate resources, a method of promoting and marketing Community Centres.

The Task and Finish Group supports the development of a Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Centre Co-ordinators are responsible for a particular Community Centre/clusters of Community Centres to encourage ownership.

Community Centres are available for hire seven days a week.

A review of the fees and charges for Northampton Borough Council managed Community Centres is undertaken.

New builds for Community Centres achieve the same standard, or better, of the design of the floor space, accessibility and layout of Parklands and Pastures Community Centres.

AGREED: That Cabinet’s response to the Overview and Scrutiny report – Community Centres be noted.
(C) COST OF CONSULTANTS

Councillor Tony Clarke, Chair, Cost of Consultants Task and Finish Group, referred to the recommendations to the Task and Finish Group’s report as follows:

- A procedure based on the document “Transforming the procurement of temporary, agency and interim staff: your toolkit for success” is produced and used by each Service Area when engaging temporary, Agency and Interim staff.
- Cabinet considers the engagement of students from University of Northampton and Northampton College as well as apprenticeships and future job fund opportunities with generic skills, for the filling of temporary vacancies that are currently filled by Agency Staff. A central base of between one and four postgraduate students could be created.
- Consideration is given to the introduction of a floating workforce that could be pooled by all departments.
- Build into the Consultant engagement process an independent review after a set time period by the Head of HR to ensure the engagement is still appropriate.
- The Policy regarding the employment of Agency Staff be expanded and reviewed including:
  - Setting a maximum percentage target for each directorate of agency staff
  - Confirm the definitions within the policy based on the definitions as set out in the report

The Committee was advised that all accepted recommendations should be implemented by the end of October 2010.

It was noted that Cabinet had rejected the recommendation:

- “Introduction of a floating workforce that could be pooled by all departments.

Cabinet had advised that it had rejected this recommendation as it would require the Authority to employ over establishment and given the current size and scale of the workforce it was not expected that this would deliver the economies of scale to finance the over establishment. However it would be appropriate that when Heads of Service review their structures for the 2011/12 budget that they consider multi skilling opportunities across the service areas.

AGREED: That Cabinet’s response to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Cost of Consultants Task and Finish Group be noted.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011

The Committee noted the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

10. SCRUTINY PANELS

(A) SCRUTINY PANEL E - COMMISSIONING FOR THE THIRD SECTOR
Councillor David Garlick, Chair, Scrutiny Panel E, advised that since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Panel had held two meetings and had a further one scheduled for 11th October 2010.

The Scrutiny Panel had embarked upon its evidence gathering and devised a list of expert witnesses that would be invited to attend future meetings to provide evidence to inform the Review.

In discussing the scope of the Review, it was realised there was a need to change the title of the Scrutiny Panel to reflect the purpose. “To investigate the development of a Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector”. The Scrutiny Panel therefore recommended that the title be changed to read: “Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector”.

At the meeting held on 4th August 2010, the Scrutiny Panel discussed the need for further co-opted Members and invited Victoria Miles, Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Community Foundation, to be co-opted to the Review. In addition, Dominic McClean, Chief Executive, NVC, advised that he would contact the NVCS Forum for two further representatives to be co-opted Members to this Review.

AGREED: (1) That the title of the Review be updated to read: “Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector.”

(2) That the addition of three further co-opted Members to this Review be approved

(3) That the Progress report from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel E be noted

(B) SCRUTINY PANEL H - NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ALCOHOL STRATEGY

In the absence of the Chair of Scrutiny Panel H, Councillor Brendan Glynane, Councillor Richard Matthews provided an update to the Committee. He stated that expert advisers would be asked to attend future meetings to provide reassurance that the Northampton Action Plan could be delivered.

The Scrutiny Panel had received feedback from the Alcohol Harm Reduction Seminar that took place during July 2010.

The meeting scheduled for 4th October 2010 would hear from a number of expert advisers and receive briefing notes containing the results of desktop research.

He also reminded the meeting that the Committee had agreed, at its meeting in July, to include an additional meeting to the schedule of meetings for Scrutiny Panel H, as there was a need for further evidence gathering.

AGREED: that the update be noted.

(C) SCRUTINY PANEL R&P - ABSENCE MANAGEMENT
In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Jane Hollis, Councillor Ifty Choudhary provided an update to the Committee.

He advised that the Scrutiny Panel had investigated a synopsis of the Council’s various Policies in relation to Absence Management including Absence Management Policy, Flexible Working Policies, Dependency Leave and Emergency Leave Policies, Sickness Absence Trends, Accident at Work Data and Absence Management Training.

The Panel is devising a list of core questions to be put to the key experts at its next meeting on 20th October 2010.

It was noted that Councillor Matthew Golby had requested to step down from this Scrutiny Panel due to conflicting diary commitments.

AGREED: (1) That the progress report be noted.

(2) That Councillor Matthew Golby’s request to step down from the membership of this Scrutiny Panel be approved.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY APPRECIATIVE INQUIRIES

(A) BILLING WASTE WATER APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The Committee heard that the Billing Waste Water Appreciative Inquiry had undertaken a final site visit its work concluded. The new Monsal plant on site was completed on time but there had been a number of issues that had now largely been resolved.

The Billing Waste Water Appreciative Inquiry had recommended that it was satisfied with the measures that Anglian Water Limited had implemented to eradicate odour problems, but there is a need to ensure that the Plant continues to work to this standard and in producing enhanced cake, reduces the storage times. If this has not been implemented within three months, the Appreciative Inquiry makes a further visit to Billing Waste Water Works.

AGREED: (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That there is a need to ensure that the Plant continues to work to the standard and in producing enhanced cake, reduces the storage time. If this has not been implemented within three months, the Appreciative Inquiry makes a further visit to Billing Waste Water Works.

(B) LEISURE STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW

Councillor Lee Mason, member of the Leisure Services SBR Appreciative Inquiry, advised that a meeting with users of the service had been held at Danes Camp on the 16th September 2010 and had proved very useful and informative. The attendees generally supported the proposal for the service to be run by a Charitable Trust but had conveyed concerns in regard to costs and what would happen to staff members. Councillor Mason confirmed that the Appreciative Inquiry had a further meeting scheduled and it was envisaged that it would produce its findings and conclusions to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In response to Councillor Tony Clarke’s comment that he had asked for a member of the Independent Group to join the membership of this
Group but had been informed that a lot of evidence gathering had taken place and it would not be timely for the membership to be increased at that stage. Councillor Christopher Malpas confirmed that he had delegated membership of Appreciative Inquiries to the Lead Councillor and suggested that there is a need for a specific Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry Protocol to be produced. A draft Protocol would be drawn up and presented at the next meeting.

AGREED: (1) That the update be noted.
(2) That an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry Protocol be drafted and presented to the next meeting of this Committee for approval.

(C) PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY: PROCUREMENT (MARKET TESTING) OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

In the absence of Councillor Jamie Lane, Lead Councillor for this Appreciative Inquiry, Councillor David Garlick, member of the Appreciative Inquiry advised that the process was at the competitive dialogue stage. The Committee heard that the role of this Appreciative Inquiry was to challenge the process to ensure that it was robust.

Councillor Christopher Malpas, Chair, advised the Committee that Councillor Tony Clarke had joined the membership of the Pre-decision Scrutiny: Procurement (Market Testing) of Environmental Services Appreciative Inquiry.

AGREED: (1) That the update be noted.
(2) That it be noted that Councillor Tony Clarke has joined the membership of the Pre-decision Scrutiny: Procurement (Market Testing) of Environmental Services Appreciative Inquiry.

(D) REPORTING AND MONITORING WORKING GROUP

The Chair advised that Councillor Tim Hadland chaired this Group and he suggested that he contact Councillor Hadland to request that a meeting of the Group is set up, at the appropriate time, so that it can receive the relevant information regarding the next budget round. He further highlighted that it is important that a meeting of this Group is scheduled in anticipation of the budget proposals of 2011/12.

AGREED: That the Chair contacts Councillor Tim Hadland and requests that a meeting of the Group is set up, at the appropriate time, so that it can receive the relevant information regarding the next budget round.

(E) PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Councillor David Garlick, Lead Councillor for the Private Sector Housing Appreciative Inquiry, advised that the Appreciative Inquiry Group had reconvened and concluded its work. The Committee heard that:-

- The focus of the discussions had been around Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and how this area would be addressed within the Strategy. Information was requested
in relation to the number of people on the DFG waiting list and how long they had been waiting.

- Discussions had taken place with regard to Empty homes and how this was going to be tackled within the Strategy.

- Issues relating to the need to work with other organisations when dealing with vulnerable households should be part of the delivery of the Strategy to ensure an holistic approach to the customer.

- There is a need to address the non-decency of Houses in Multiple Occupation from the further development of the strategy.

3.1 It was highlighted that the comments and observations of this Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry have been taken into consideration regarding the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy.

AGREED: (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That the Private Sector Housing Appreciative Inquiry reconvenes at the appropriate time, e.g. six months after the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Strategy, to assess how the Disabled Facilities Grant has been actioned within the Strategy.

(F) COUNCIL OWNED GARAGES APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The Committee was reminded that at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 (Housing and Environment) held on 2nd July 2009 the Committee received a comprehensive report on Council owned garages. An Appreciative Inquiry, comprising Councillor Dennis Meredith (Lead Councillor), Councillors Mel de Cruz, John Yates and Matthew Golby was set up.

The Appreciative Inquiry undertook a short, sharp Review which comprised site visits, scrutinising the assessments of the garages and received details of whether garages were occupied, vacant or had a waiting list.

A report was submitted to cabinet at its meeting on 9th June 2010, as an appendix to the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2010/11 – 2015/16. It highlighted that the comments and observations of the Appreciative Inquiry were taken into consideration in production of this report.

It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny could add further value into the Review of Council owned garages that is currently underway and it was therefore proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry reconvenes and provides Scrutiny input into the Garages Review.

AGREED: (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry, comprising Councillor Dennis Meredith (Lead Councillor);
Councillors Ifty Choudary and John Yates reconvene to provide Scrutiny input into the Garages Review.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry reports its findings to the next meeting of this Committee on 15th November 2010.

12. REPORT BACK FROM NBC’S REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTYWIDE SCRUTINY BOARD

Councillor John Yates, one of Northampton Borough Council’s representatives to the Northants Countywide Scrutiny Board advised the Board had programmed onto its work programme a Review of gritting on the highway but a report was due to be presented to Northamptonshire County Council’s (NCC) Cabinet on this issue. It had therefore been agreed to postpone the next meeting of the Northants Countywide Scrutiny Board until NCC’s Cabinet had considered the report.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

13. REPORT BACK FROM NBC’S REPRESENTATIVE TO NCC’S HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration of this item was withdrawn.

At this point Councillor Garlick, Northampton Borough Council’s representative to Northamptonshire County Council’s Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee advised the Committee of the Health White Paper Consultation and suggested that Councillors should submit a response to the consultation which ends on 30th September 2010.

14. FORWARD PLAN

Isabell Procter, Director of Finance, addressed the Committee advising on the item ‘Developing a shared customer contact service in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council’ to deliver a customer contact services. She advised that the purpose of the report was for there to be a virtual shared service – use of technology to share and handle calls and enquiries.

In discussing the Forward Plan the Committee asked that further details of the properties referred to as Tranche 3 in the item Property Disposal Programme – 2010/2011 – Various properties – Tranche 3 be provided.

The Council suggested that a request be forwarded to the relevant Director for the Committee to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the item extension of caretakers and cleaning in flats to consider the provision of a cleaning service, funded by Service Charging, at its next meeting.

The Committee further suggested that a request be put in to the relevant Director for it to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the item Robinson House at its next meeting.

AGREED: (1) That the Chair put in a request to the relevant Director for the Committee to undertaken pre-decision scrutiny on the item extension of caretakers and
cleaning in flats to consider the provision of a cleaning service, funded by Service Charging, at its next meeting.

(2) That the Chair put in a request to the relevant Director for the Committee to undertaken pre-decision scrutiny on the item Robinson House at its next meeting.

(3) That the Chair asks the relevant Director to provide further details of the properties referred to as Tranche 3 in the item Property Disposal Programme – 2010/2011 – Various properties – Tranche 3.

15. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 9:30 pm.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 November 2010

Briefing Note – Robinson House Procurement Process

1 Background

1.1 Robinson House is a three-storey block of bed-sit flats, which has been empty since September 2008. The block was initially a site earmarked for the Places of Change project, however it was decided that the location would not suit the aims and objectives of this scheme.

1.2 In September 2009, Cabinet approved the recommendation to carry out a ‘Design & Finance’ competition to look at ways Robinson House could be brought back into use. At the time, the Housing Market was at an all time low in terms of new build homes and interest in development opportunities. A combination of un-suitable schemes and the economic environment have contributed to the block remaining vacant until now.

1.3 At the beginning of 2010, the Housing Strategy team started the process of developing the procurement process for a new RSL Framework to cover Management standards and Development opportunities within Northampton. Cabinet approved the set up of a new RSL Framework in July 2010. Because of the downturn in the housing market and the lack of demand from the private sector market, a decision was made to put Robinson House through the new RSL Framework approach to look at ways Robinson House could be brought back into use working in partnership with our RSL partners.

2 Procurement Process

2.1 In partnership with Brookside Residents Association, a Development Brief Specification has been produced and this was distributed to RSL partners’ week commencing the 4th October 2010 as part of the RSL Framework approach. The RSL partners that were sent a tender pack following initial expressions of interest were:

- East Midlands Housing Association
- Derwent Living
2.2 The RSL partners had until the 29th October to return their tender submissions. All RSL’s submitted a tender apart from Metropolitan Housing Partnership; so 8 tenders will be evaluated by the 5th November. A panel consisting of Officers, Brookside Resident Association representatives and elected members, will then evaluate the tenders.

3 Consultation

3.1 Since the cabinet decision in September 2009 to carry out a ‘Design and Finance’ competition ward councillors and the portfolio holder for Housing have been kept informed of the progress of Robinson House. It was also felt from an early stage that residents should also get the opportunity to influence what happens to the site. As part of the procurement process of Robinson House, a selection of representatives from the Brookside Residents Association have been working with officers to develop the brief specification for the RSL Framework approach, and have also received training on the evaluation of tender forms.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Interviews are scheduled to take place week commencing the 15th November. Following the interviews the panel will decide on the successful RSL partner to deliver the development of the Robinson House site

4.2 A paper will then be developed for the 15th December cabinet meeting to recommend disposal of the site to the successful RSL.
Northampton Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15th November 2010

Performance Monitoring Report (August 2010)

For information

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform Overview and Scrutiny of the Council’s progress against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1 Performance data is collected across a range of locally developed indicators and National Indicators (NIs). Most indicators are collected monthly, with others collected either quarterly or annually. The reporting of NIs, together with a small number of locally determined indicators forms the basis of our performance monitoring process.

3.2 Performance data is available by the 20th of the following month; this allows for data to be transferred onto our database and quality assured to ensure that data quality standards are met. This report summarises monthly performance data for August 2010.
4. Issues – Overall Performance

4.1 Overall progress against the Corporate Plan priorities

The delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities is on track during August with four out of five showing green or blue status and one amber.

Corporate Priority 1 ‘Safer, greener and cleaner communities’ is amber. The main issues impacting on this performance are recycling and composting rates and the amount of residual household waste being collected.

In August, 22% of indicators have ‘red’ status and have not achieved target and 27% with blue status. Section 4.2 highlights the exceptions.

4.2 Exceptions to report

This section of the report brings to the attention of Overview and Scrutiny those measures that are under (△) or over (○) performing and improving or deteriorating by corporate priority. The exceptions below are based on the significance of the indicator against the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the impact on our customers.
CP1 – Safer, greener, cleaner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance status</th>
<th>Actual (YTD)</th>
<th>Target (YTD)</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Page ref. for further detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES01 – Number of missed refuse collections per month from 734,350 collections</td>
<td>►</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI192 – Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CP2 - Housing, health and well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance status</th>
<th>Actual (YTD)</th>
<th>Target (YTD)</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Page ref. for further detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CL03 – Market Square footfall</td>
<td>▽</td>
<td>2,344,405</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL04 - Total visits to Leisure Centres</td>
<td>▽</td>
<td>367,777</td>
<td>353,000</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI 6 - Average housing re-let times (M)</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>29.65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H18 – Homeless households for whom advice casework resolved their situation</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI156 - Number of households living in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL17 - Total number of swimmers aged 16 and under</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>40,186</td>
<td>45,800</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CP3 - A Confident, ambitious and successful Northampton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance status</th>
<th>Actual (YTD)</th>
<th>Target (YTD)</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Page ref. for further detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI 157b - % of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks</td>
<td>▽</td>
<td>91.95%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Regeneration</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI157c - % of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks</td>
<td>▽</td>
<td>94.46%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Regeneration</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL03 – Market Square footfall</td>
<td>▽</td>
<td>2,344,405</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CP5 - An efficient well-managed organisation that puts customers at the heart of what we do**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance status</th>
<th>Actual (YTD)</th>
<th>Target (YTD)</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Page ref. for further detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS7 - % enquiries resolved at first point of contact</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>95.19%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Performance &amp; Support</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI181 – Time taken to process housing benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI 8 - % of void rent lost</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB05 - % of debt outstanding, not in recovery and overdue</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>9.08%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI157b-c</td>
<td></td>
<td>(As above under CP3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Planning &amp; Regeneration</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI 6 - Average time taken to re-let authority homes</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>29.65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*BV12 – Average number of days lost to sickness absence (rolling 12 month figure)</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Performance &amp; Support</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*RB04 - Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the year, which have been received</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>50.25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See 4.3

### 4.3 Data Quality

The Council has processes in place to ensure that the data and information it provides to support management decision-making is as reliable as possible. The Council has a strategy to improve data quality and service areas are working to achieve the objectives within it. This is closely linked to the Council’s risk assessment processes and is monitored each month as part of the Council’s Performance Management Framework.

### 4.4 Current Key Risks and Issues;

- In response to concerns raised regarding the reporting of NES09 ‘The removal of fly-tips within two working days’, the reporting methodology is being investigated. Until investigation work is complete, the reporting of this measure will be temporarily suspended.

- Due to a system upgrade at the end of August, a temporary figure for ‘RB04 Percentage of non-domestic rates due’ has been reported. On the day of the upgrade (31 August), payments received were not processed and are currently not included in the reported figure. They therefore be processed and included in September figure. The collection rate would, however, have been on target if the payments had been included in the August figure.
• Sickness absence (BV12) information was provided by FirstCare for the first time this month. The data provided relates to employee headcount, rather than full time equivalent (FTE), as per the measure definition. FTE information has been requested and revised data will be provided next month.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Performance Report for August 2010.

5.2 A full list of all of the performance measures monitoring our corporate plan progress is available from our website under ‘Council performance’ and ‘The current performance of our services’.

Dale Robertson, Head of Performance & Change - Ext 7110
2nd November 2010
Corporate Priority Performance

Page 2 Corporate Plan performance summary

Page 3 CP1 Safer, Greener and cleaner communities
Page 5 CP2 Improved homes, health and well-being
Page 7 CP3 A confident, ambitious and successful Northampton
Page 9 CP4 Strong partnerships and engaged communities
Page 10 CP5 An efficient, well managed organisation that puts our customers at the heart of what we do
### Corporate Plan - Performance Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Corporate Plan performance</th>
<th>Year to date performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NBC Corporate Plan 2010-11</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Corporate Plan performance by priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Priority</th>
<th>Year to date Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP1 Safer, greener and cleaner communities</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP2 Improved homes, health and wellbeing</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP3 A confident, ambitious and successful Northampton</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4 Strong partnerships and engaged communities</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP5 An efficient, well managed organisation that puts customers at the heart of what we do</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NBC Corporate Plan Performance Summary

The delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities is on track during August with four out of five showing green or blue status and one amber.

Corporate Priority 2 ‘Improved homes, health and well-being’ is amber. The main issues impacting on this performance are current re-let times, the number of households in temporary accommodation and households for whom casework resolved their situation. For further detail refer to CP2.

In response to concerns raised regarding the reporting of NES09 ‘The removal of fly-tips within two working days’, the reporting methodology is being investigated. Until investigation work is complete, the reporting of this measure will be temporarily suspended.

The following pages of this report provide an overview of each priority performance and progress during May and the customer experience of service delivery.

Part 2 brings to Cabinet attention those measures that are under (red) or over (blue) performing by corporate priority and highlights direction of travel trends.

A full list of all of the performance measures monitoring our corporate plan progress is available from our website under ‘Council performance’ and ‘The current performance of our services’. 
Safer, greener and cleaner communities
- Performance Summary

CP1 Safer, Greener and Cleaner Communities Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Priority</th>
<th>YTD Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP1 Safer, greener and cleaner communities</td>
<td>🌟</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key
- Blue: Exceptional or over performance
- Green: On or exceeding target
- Orange: Within agreed tolerances
- Red: Outside agreed target tolerance
- Yellow: No data available

Overall crime continues to perform well despite a slight increase since last month. There has been a reduction in the number of violent crime offences reported, the lowest since April 2010.

The Council’s electricity and gas usage has reduced each month this year compared to the previous year. The Council’s Carbon Management programme works to reduce energy usage through a combination of approaches including the ‘Save It Campaign’ and a number of SALIX funded projects. Recent improvements include fitting insulation pipes in the boiler rooms at various sites, upgrading to more efficient lighting and the fitting of time clocks to ensure energy is only used when required.

The number of missed bin collections was the lowest reported figure since January 2010. Better monitoring of crews and call centre reports has helped indentify genuine missed collections during the day. All missed bin collections have been put right within 24 hours this year.

Recycling and composting rates have been lower than expected for the last two months. The tonnage of green waste collected has been lower due to the weather and less mixed glass was collected from the kerbside in August compared to July, both impacting upon recycling tonnages. Due to the collection calendar, July has seven glass collection days compared to five in August. Higher rates were also collected in July compared to August due to the World Cup.
### Safer, greener and cleaner communities

#### Exceptions

Please note that if column headers appear with no measures listed below, it means that there are no exceptions to report this month.

#### CP1 RED monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>May 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Aug 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Current YTD Profiled Target</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>DOT v's same time last yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (M)(c)</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>📇</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>📉</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>📊</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>📱</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Collections of garden waste this month have again been lower than expected due to the summer with periods of dry and wet weather. Dry recycling is achieving its profiled target.

#### CP1 BLUE monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>May 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Aug 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Current YTD Profiled Target</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>DOT v's same time last yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES01 (former LI784, ELPI6) No. missed refuse collections per month, from 734,350 collections (M)(c)</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>📇</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>📉</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>📊</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>📱</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Better monitoring of crews and call centre reports of missed collections during collection hours are helping to address those bins genuinely missed during the day.

#### CP1 DOT monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>May 10</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
<th>Aug 10</th>
<th>May 10 to Jun 10 DoT</th>
<th>Jun 10 to Jul 10 DoT</th>
<th>Jul 10 to Aug 10 DoT</th>
<th>Current YTD Profiled Target</th>
<th>Overall Performance to Date</th>
<th>YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (M)(c)</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>🦂</td>
<td>🦂</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>🔴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Collections of garden waste this month have again been lower than expected due to the summer with periods of dry and wet weather. Dry recycling is achieving its profiled target.
Housing, Health and wellbeing
- Performance Summary

CP2 Improved homes, health and wellbeing Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Priority</th>
<th>YTD Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP2 Improved homes, health and wellbeing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CP2 Housing, Health and Wellbeing Performance Summary

The effects of the economic downturn are starting to show in this area and the Council is working to ensure we can meet the necessary housing needs.

The number of homeless households prevented from becoming homeless due to casework advice has been lower than anticipated. Housing Solutions ability to help has been affected by the number of homelessness customers approaching the service too late in the stage of their housing / economic crisis and therefore the situation cannot be resolved in time. Services provided by housing will be publicised on buses in Northampton in October to help raise greater awareness. All customers presenting themselves as homeless are seen on the same day. The availability of Council homes also influences the number of households that can be helped and an improvement in re-let times will contribute to improving homeless prevention.

In August, council housing re-let times improved to an average of 25 days, an improvement for the second consecutive month. The overall year to date average remains high at 29.65 days. Although this is moving closer to the annual target (23 days) improvement is still necessary. A detailed action plan has been developed to ensure the processes around re-letting council homes are as efficient as possible, including consideration to property maintenance and repairs. Re-let times and an increase in the number of homelessness cases are also impacting on the number of households living in temporary accommodation and the time spent there.

Overall Market Square footfall figures for the year to date are higher than expected with 2.3 million visitors since April. August footfall figures were impacted upon by the adverse weather, but there has been an 8,963 increase compared to August 2009. Despite the adverse weather conditions in the last two weeks of August, figures remain positive and have been helped by the following successful events: Antiques Market, Northampton Dog Show, Greener, Cleaner, Healthier and Safer, Has Northampton Got Talent and two 'Free Gig Fridays'.

The withdrawal of free swimming for the over 60's, a two week break in swimming lessons and poor weather during the summer holidays have all affected the number of leisure centre visits this month. However, since April we have attracted almost 15,000 more visitors than expected and we are on course to achieve the annual target (800,000 visits).

There were over 16,600 in person visits to the museum in August with many visitors following the 'Lion trail'. Improvements in web presence have also been made, resulting in the number of visitors increasing for the fourth consecutive month.
### Housing, Health and wellbeing

#### - Exceptions

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
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<th>YTD</th>
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<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>DOT v’s same time last yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HI 18 Homeless households for whom advice casework resolved their situation (M)(c)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Performance continues to be affected by the number of homelessness customers approaching the service too late in the stage of their housing/economic crisis and homelessness cannot be prevented. Housing Services will be publicised on buses in Northampton in October. The availability of Council homes also influences the number of households that can be helped. An improvement to relet times will contribute to improving homeless prevention.

| NI156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation (M)(c) | 17 | ▲ | 28 | ▲ | 37 | ▲ | 35 | ▲ | 9 | 9 | ? |

**a) Performance update and actions**

More households than anticipated have approached the Council for assistance due to the impact of the recession and the number of mortgage repossessions.

| HI 6 Average time taken to relet local authority homes (M)(c) | 27.64 | ▲ | 31.34 | ▲ | 30.83 | ▲ | 29.65 | ▲ | 23.00 | 23.00 | ? |

**a) Performance update and actions**

Performance for August has improved following the implementation of an action plan with a number of challenging targets to achieve the annual target of 23 days.

| CL17 Total number of swimmers aged 16 and under (M) | 15,350 | ▲ | 23,241 | ▲ | 32,743 | ▲ | 40,186 | ▲ | 45,800 | 78,000 | ? |

**a) Performance update and actions**

Free swimming for this age group was only available with the purchase of a £6.50 Leisure Card for August and from September it will then be a Pound per swim. This together with poor weather over the summer holidays, and the negative national publicity around the withdrawal of Free Swimming has reduced numbers attending from this age group by 50% on last August. The reduction of numbers for this age group has also, as expected, started to effect secondary spend. On a positive note: Juniors trading up to a Leisure Card is slightly above where we would have expected and swims from the 17 to 59 year old groups is up 19%. Swims visits for the under 16s age group will continue to be down for the rest of the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CP2 RED monthly measures</th>
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<tr>
<td>Measure ID &amp; Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL03 Market Square footfall (M)</td>
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</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Overall Market Square footfall figures for the year to date are higher than expected with 2.3 million visitors since April. August footfall figures were impacted upon by the adverse weather, but there has been an 8,963 increase compared to August 2009. Despite the adverse weather conditions in the last two weeks of August, figures remain positive and have been helped by the following successful events: Antiques Market, Northampton Dog Show, Greener, Cleaner, Healthier and Safer, Has Northampton Got Talent and two 'Free Gig Fridays'.

| CL04 Total visits to Leisure Centres (M) | 144,588 | ◆ | 217,194 | ◆ | 294,657 | ◆ | 367,777 | ◆ | 353,000 | 800,000 | ? |

**a) Performance update and actions**

Total Leisure Visits effected by: - The total withdrawal of Free Swimming for over 60s - Less numbers joining free swim scheme as ended on 31 Aug - Poor weather over the summer holidays affected Swims - New two week break built into the swimming lessons programme over the summer holidays.

### Key

- Exceptional or over performance
- On or exceeding target
- Within agreed tolerances
- Good to be low: Better
- Good to be low: Worse
- Good to be High: Better
- Good to be High: Worse
- No change
- No data or target available
- No data available
- No target available

The page shows YTD red, YTD blue plus measures with a deteriorating direction of travel over the last 2 consecutive periods. In the DOT report the last 3 periods are shown, along with the last 4 period values (used to calculate the direction of travel alerts).
A confident, ambitious and successful Northampton
- Performance Summary

Planning applications submitted by residents and local businesses have consistently been processed within the target times, which includes 91% minor and 94% other applications within 8 weeks. No major applications were received this month.

Progress continues on a number of key improvement projects for the town:
- Grosvenor/Greyfriars development
- St Johns Cultural Quarter
- Ransome Road Development
- Becketts Park Marina

The first stage of the Becketts Park Marina project, building of the pontoons for mooring, has been completed on time. The regeneration project includes the building of an 82-berth marina and associated facilities. The second phase for the facilities building, which includes a Waterways Management Office, is due to commence at the end of October. The official opening is planned for May 2011.

Northampton won Gold in this year's East Midlands in Bloom competition - the second gold award for the borough in two years. An awards ceremony was held at the Guildhall on September 15, when Northampton was awarded a Gold standard in the 'City' category. Northampton is also taking part in the national Britain in Bloom competition. Judges visited the town in August and will give their verdict at a national ceremony to take place in Birmingham on September 29.

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery was the winner of the Judges Special Award 2010 at the Renaissance Heritage Awards. The Awards, supported by Renaissance East Midlands and Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd, are in their fourth year, recognising excellence in museums and heritage across the county.

The Council held a "Let your new Business Take Flight" seminar at the Guildhall on 21 September in conjunction with Barclays Bank. The event provided advice and support to anyone starting up a new business or who has recently started one.
## A confident, ambitious and successful Northampton

### - Exceptions

Please note that if column headers appear with no measures listed below, it means that there are no exceptions to report this month.

### Key

<table>
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<td>👆</td>
<td>⬇️</td>
<td>⬆️</td>
<td>⬇️</td>
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<tr>
<td>🔍</td>
<td>✡️</td>
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### CP3 RED monthly measures

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<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
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<th>Aug 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Current YTD Profiled Target</th>
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<th>DOT v's same time last yr</th>
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</table>

### CP3 RED monthly projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>DOT v's same time last month</th>
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</table>

### CP3 BLUE monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>May 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Aug 10</th>
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</table>

### CP3 DOT monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
<th>May 10</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
<th>Jul 10</th>
<th>Aug 10</th>
<th>May 10 to Jun 10 DoT</th>
<th>Jun 10 to Jul 10 DoT</th>
<th>Jul 10 to Aug 10 DoT</th>
<th>Current YTD Profiled Target</th>
<th>Overall Performance to Date</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### a) Performance update and actions

**Overall Market Square footfall figures for the year to date are higher than expected with 2.3 million visitors since April. August footfall figures were impacted upon by the adverse weather, but there has been an 8,963 increase compared to August 2009. Despite the adverse weather conditions in the last two weeks of August, figures remain positive and have been helped by the following successful events: Antiques Market, Northampton Dog Show, Greener, Cleaner, Healthier and Safer, Has Northampton Got Talent and two ’Free Gig Fridays’.**

- **NI157b Percentage of ”minor” planning apps determined within 8 weeks (M)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>87.18%</th>
<th>90.00%</th>
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  - **a) Performance update and actions**

    We received 12 applications in August and 11 were determined in 8 weeks.

- **NI157c Percentage of ”other” planning apps determined within 8 weeks (M)**

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<th>93.60%</th>
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  - **a) Performance update and actions**

    We received 52 'other' applications in August, of which 50 were determined within 8 weeks.

**Exceptions**

Please note that if column headers appear with no measures listed below, it means that there are no exceptions to report this month.
Strong Partnerships and engaged communities
- Performance Summary

Key
- Exceptional or over performance
- On or exceeding target
- Within agreed tolerances
- Outside agreed target tolerance
- No data available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CP4 Strong partnerships and engaged communities Overview</th>
<th>YTD Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Priority</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4 Strong partnerships and engaged communities</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CP4 Partnerships and Community Engagement Performance Summary

Two public consultations are currently taking place;
- Bridge Street Closure (Stage 3) - survey of wider public views on the closure arrangements on Friday and Saturday evenings
- Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy - seeking the views on issues related to the housing needs and priorities of members of black and minority ethnic communities in Northampton over the next 3 years

Further information on current consultations can be viewed on the Council's website - visit the home page and click on 'Have your say'.

The Council's market square events team, the Grosvenor Centre and the Chronicle and Echo joined forces to find the county's most talented act. In August there were auditions in the Grosvenor Centre with acts of all shapes and sizes performing for the crowds.

Two Free Gig Friday events were held on the Market Square. The line up featured two local bands: Cousin Avi and AeroSoul.
An efficient, well managed organisation that puts customers at the heart of what we do

Performance Summary

Despite the slowness of the economy, housing rent, council tax and business rate collections are progressing steadily.

August was the first rent-free period of the year, with £150,000 more council housing rent collected than was due. This has helped reduce the amount of rent arrears (excluding garages) and the amount of rent arrears as a percentage of annual debit is the lowest recorded this year (3.21%).

Improved council housing re-let times have contributed to the improvement in the percentage of void rent loss. By re-letting council homes quicker we are able to maximise the amount of rent collectable. The number of tenants paying by direct debit has also increased each month making it easier to collect the rent due.

The percentage of council tax collected has improved, although it is slightly below the profiled target for August. Court action has increased collection rates, which are better than the same time last year. Outstanding debt continues to reduce with the percentage outstanding, not in recovery and overdue, 10% less than the profiled target for August.

Customers making new housing or council tax benefit claims are experiencing the quickest processing times since February 2010 at 10.37 days. New claims are currently being processed seven days quicker than the national average. Processing times continue to improve despite a significant increase in the number of applications being made - reaching 21,000 - due to the economy.

Northamptonshire Area Procurement Service continues to identify savings that will be reported in future months to achieve the year-end target of £420,000.

The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services paid within 30 days was below the target of 97% at 95% in August due to staff leave over the summer period. The average number of working days lost by council employees due to sickness absence is currently 10.92 days. It is anticipated that the introduction of the Nurse-Led service from 1 August 2010 will further reduce sickness absence.

86% of customers in August were satisfied with their contact experience, down by 4.5% compared to last month. The implementation of the queue management system initially caused some dissatisfaction and action has been taken to address the issues raised by customers. All customer enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact for the second consecutive month. More than 95% of contact centre calls have been answered for the third consecutive month, despite the high volume of calls received and it being the summer leave period. 96% of visitors to the One Stop Shop waited for less than 20 minutes. The introduction of the new queue management system (Q-Flow) and the continued review of processes have helped achieve the best performance this year.
### CPS RED monthly measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
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<th>YTD</th>
<th>Jun 10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RB04 (prev BV010) Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the year, which have been received (M)(c)</td>
<td>21.89 %</td>
<td>⭐️</td>
<td>31.64 %</td>
<td>⭐️</td>
<td>41.13 %</td>
<td>⭐️</td>
<td>50.25 %</td>
<td>⭐️</td>
<td>51.00 %</td>
<td>98.50 %</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Due to a system upgrade at the end of August, a temporary figure for RB04 has been reported. On the day of the upgrade (31 August), payments received were not processed. Therefore these payments are currently not included in the reported figure, but will be processed and included in September figure. The collection rate would however have been on target if the payments had been included in the August figure. Despite the slowness of the economy the collection rate is progressing steadily and we are confident at year end the figure will be on, or in excess of, the target.

| BV012_12r Ave. no. of days/shifts lost to sickness for rolling 12 month period (M)(c) | 11.38 | ⬤ | 11.10 | ⬤ | 10.79 | ⬤ | 10.92 | ⬤ | 10.00 | 10.00 | ⬤ |

**a) Performance update and actions**

Sickness information was provided by FirstCare for the first time this month and the data provided relates to employee headcount rather than full time equivalent (FTE) as per the measure definition. FTE information has been requested and revised data will be provided next month.

| HI 6 Average time taken to re-let local authority homes (M)(c) | 27.64 | ⬤ | 31.34 | ⬤ | 30.83 | ⬤ | 29.65 | ⬤ | 23.00 | 23.00 | ⬤ |

**a) Performance update and actions**

Performance for August has improved following the implementation of an action plan with a number of challenging targets to achieve the annual target of 23 days.

### CPS RED monthly projects

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### CPS BLUE monthly measures

<table>
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<th>Measure ID &amp; Name</th>
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</table>

**a) Performance update and actions**

Of those surveyed 100% had their enquiry resolved at the first point of contact. The data is currently based on a low sample size and measurement methodology of the indicator is to be reviewed.
## CPS BLUE monthly measures

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<tr>
<td>HI 8 Percentage void rent loss (M)</td>
<td>1.32 %</td>
<td>1.56 %</td>
<td>1.69 %</td>
<td>1.66 %</td>
<td>2.00 %</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>a) Performance update and actions</strong></td>
<td>The improvement is due to a wide range of housing options being provided to customers to resolve their immediate housing crisis and accessing good quality accommodation in the private rented sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RB05 Total % of debt outstanding, not in recovery and overdue (M)</td>
<td>? ?</td>
<td>12.93 %</td>
<td>9.82 %</td>
<td>9.08 %</td>
<td>19.00 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>a) Performance update and actions</strong></td>
<td>Council Tax - Decrease in unmanaged debt due to referral of debt to tracing agents and a focus on cases that have been with bailiffs for over 13 weeks. Overall outstanding balance has also reduced, although write-offs have not been completed for August with work to rectify this due to be completed in September. Business Rates - Debt reduction now back on track. Former Tenant Arrears (FTA) - Overall debt reduced slightly, even though current debt being included. A further reduction in debt awaiting action, however work is being undertaken by team manually. Large amount of write-offs in pipe-line, which will reduce the outstanding balance next month. Housing Benefit Overpayments - Unmanaged debt and overall debt is reducing. Other sundry debt - Overall debt and debt awaiting action has increased as the focus has been on FTA. The team will now re-balance efforts to address these debt types.</td>
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<td>94.46 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>NI181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and Change events (M)(c)</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>a) Performance update and actions</strong></td>
<td>Performance has further improved and remains on target. The most recent comparisons show that despite the massive increase in claims for benefits - reaching 21,000 - performance is still better than the national average. Indeed, in the more demanding case of new claims, the team has been dealing with them a whole 7 days better than the national average.</td>
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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 November 2010

Voids performance – update for Overview and Scrutiny 15/11/10

Background

The service achieved considerable improvements in performance during 2009/10. Last year, the number of days on average that a property remained empty was 24, which compares well with upper quartile performance nationally.

Issues

In the current year, we have struggled to maintain this high level of performance and this is due to a number of contributory factors including:

- Changes in personnel within the voids team requiring some time to get up to speed with all the requirements of the service.
- Budget pressures (less work outsourced and less budget available overall).
- The poor condition of some void properties when returned to housing by the former tenant.
- The introduction of the voids ‘lettable standard’ leading to more offer refusals in the short term.
- Out of date contact details for successful bidders on the choice based lettings system leading to delays.

Performance

The average time to re-let a void property so far this year is 27 days. However, performance is improving month on month so that during September the average was 24 days. The annual target of 23 days will be challenging to achieve and will require a very strong performance over the second half of the year.
Action Plan

A robust action plan has been produced to address performance and achieve the target of 23 days (see attached). Some headlines from this are indicated below:

- Weekly operational meetings attended by team leaders
- Monthly review/challenge by Heads of Service
- New procedures introduced to address a number of blockages including management transfers, storage of goods, and unusually high level of refusals.
- Procedure for identifying fast track voids (nil days)
- Pre-inspections during the void period introduced.

Fran Rodgers
Head of Strategic Housing
Ext 7595
### Ensuring Information Quality and effective re-letting of Council homes

**September 2010 onwards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator ref. / Area</th>
<th>Date identified</th>
<th>Issues / Risk identified</th>
<th>How was it identified? / Detail</th>
<th>Corrective actions planned</th>
<th>By who?</th>
<th>By when?</th>
<th>Update / Complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1** Property Maintenance | Oct-10 | 10% error rate identified when sampling and testing properties in major works | Audit | -End to End process review  
-Ensure correct data is being entered  
-Ensure information extracted from IBS matches paper files  
-Establish future sampling and testing procedure | Adam Goodacre / Debbie Jobson | 12-Nov-2010 | AG to meet with June Loveday and DJ 05.11.10 to ensure IBS reports are accurate |
| **2** Property Maintenance | Sep-10 | Backdating information in IBS, which is changing previous months values | Information extracted from IBS changes depending on when the report is run. Some backdating will remain due to ‘Major works’ allocation (?) | -End to End process review will highlight the reason and frequency of the backdating  
-Ensure agreed policy in place for backdating information  
-Establish process for recording and authorising any amendments made (inc. in procedure manual)  
-Communicate value of ensuring information is updated as soon as it is available | Adam Goodacre / Lee Burdett | 12-Nov-2010 | AG meeting with Lee Burdett (02.11.10) to discuss necessity for backdating information and to discuss future process |
| **3** Generic / Corporate | Sep-10 | Updated procedure notes and definitions required for 2010-11 | Annual Review 
HI 6: HouseMark are using different definitions for stock retained and National club groups which includes days before and after major works. CORE definition (and old BV 212) is different | -Agree definition we are to use  
- Produce definitions for all HI’s relating to re-letting council homes  
- Ensure IBS extracts are aligned to exact definition  
- Produce and test full procedure notes for all HI’s relating to re-letting council homes | AG / June Loveday / Debbie Jobson / Ian Swift (15th October 2010 and then reviewed following process review) | 5th Nov. 2010 | Definitions agreed. AG meeting with DJ and June Loveday 5th Nov. to discuss IBS report parameters |
| **4** Voids administration | Sep-10 | Unable to report on HI 7a, b and c and therefore unable to identify where delay in process is occurring | No definition and therefore IBS unable to produce figures and unable to report corporately | -Review process of capturing information and ensure it can be reported  
-Validate data to ensure reliability  
- Produce and test full procedure note | Adam Goodacre / Lee Burdett / Ian Swift | 12-Nov-2010 | Principles agreed with IS, NM and DJ. Process of capturing data to be investigated and whether IBS can produce figures |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator ref. / Area</th>
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<th>Issues / Risk identified</th>
<th>How was it identified? / Detail</th>
<th>Corrective actions planned</th>
<th>By who?</th>
<th>By when?</th>
<th>Update / Complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 Repairs            | Sep-10          | Unable to report HI 11 (% of repairs completed right first time) and therefore unable to sufficiently manage efficiency of repairs service | No procedure for collection in place and therefore IBS unable to produce figures and unable to report corporately | -Review process of capturing information and ensure it can be reported  
-Validate data to ensure reliability  
-Produce and test full procedure note | Adam Goodacre / Dave Wilkins / Matt Fulcher | 12-Nov-2010 | AG met with DW and MF. Figures available in IBS although validation has identified some issues. AG to progress with MF |
| 6 IBS                | Oct-10          | Lets appearing in 'void analysis report' that shouldn't be included e.g. use and occupation | Let appearing in 'void analysis report' | -Review of IBS report parameters | Adam Goodacre | 12-Nov-2010 | Meeting arranged for 05.11.10 to obtain report parameters |
| 7 Voids administration | Apr-10          | Procedure Manual for reletting Council Homes and updating IBS (inc. Repairs module) to be completed, rolled out and communicated | Inconsistent processes identified through meetings and performance monitoring | -Procedure manual to be produced and tested (inc. reporting procedures and authorisations)  
-Communicate to all relevant staff and train accordingly  
-Establish validation process to ensure compliance | Fran Rodgers | Update by 17-Dec-2010 | IS to confirm LW supports this approach. AG to coordinate manual on FR behalf. |
| 8 Data handling      | Apr-10          | Succession of tenancies incorrectly reported as new tenancies | Sampling and testing of case files | -Procedures to be reviewed to ensure correct allocation  
-Establish validation process to ensure compliance | Debbie Jobson / Adam Goodacre | 19-Nov-2010 | |
| 9 Property Maintenance | Apr-10         | Unreliable estimated completion dates | Consultants report and void meetings | -Estimate completion dates for all properties to be assigned with reasons specified for the time required  
-Ensure dates are added to property adverts  
-Establish validation process to ensure accuracy of estimate completion dates and ability to identify reasons for delay  
-IBS report to be built to report number / % of properties missing completion date (also use HI 7a although this excludes major works) | Lee Burdett | 5-Nov-2010 | Note: Balance needed between challenging estimates and achievable estimates |
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10                   | All            | Delay in passing of keys. Keys left on officers desk and keys unaccounted for.            | Consultants report and void meetings                                | - Void controller to spend time at Westbridge  
- Establish a process to ensure a maximum of 1 day is allowed for the collection and exchange of keys  
- Establish a process for monitoring receipt of keys and current location  
- Establish a sampling and testing procedure to ensure compliance   | D. Berwick / Peter Haytack                                   | 19-Nov-2010 | Office move has assisted this and is monitored daily. Discussions taken place with Customer Services Team Leader. Has this now been resolved? |
| 11                   | Housing Management | Aug-09   | No Choice Based Lettings checklist and database not updated with missing information when it has been received | Consultants report and void meetings                                | - Review and reinstate CBL checklist  
- Ensure inclusion in procedure manual   | Debbie Jobson                             | Update  
19-Nov-2010 |                                            |
| 12                   | Housing Management | Aug-10   | Not all properties have a photo available for the advert | Consultants report and void meetings                                      | - Implement procedure for obtaining suitable photo of all properties  
- Prepare schedule for obtaining missing photos for current available properties  
- Investigate use of IBS to store photos  
- Ensure database of photos is kept up in a standardised format   | Lee Burdet / D. Berwick                               | Update  
19-Nov-2010 |                                            |
| 13                   | Repairs        | Apr-10   | Inconsistent approach to agreed time scales for external repairs contracts | Consultants report and void meetings                                      | - Review existing and new contracts and ensure performance monitoring is included  
- Establish process for monitoring contract requirements and penalties for non-compliance   | Christine Ansell                        | 1-Nov-2010 |                                            |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Property Maintenance</td>
<td>Jun-10</td>
<td>Inconsistent application of the 'void standard'</td>
<td>Void properties being returned due to opinion that it does not meet void standard</td>
<td>-Clarify 'void standard' -Advise staff accordingly and remind of consequence of non-compliance -Establish process for monitoring compliance</td>
<td>Christine Ansell</td>
<td>Update 19-Nov-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>IBS</td>
<td>Apr-10</td>
<td>IBS not updated when key officers are on leave</td>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>-Ensure secondary person identified and trained on updating IBS -Ensure roles and responsibilities are included in the procedure manual</td>
<td>Christine Ansell</td>
<td>Update 19-Nov-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>IBS</td>
<td>Apr-10</td>
<td>Data quality of IBS during annual upgrades and module roll out</td>
<td>Migrating repairs database (uniclass) onto IBS</td>
<td>-Identify project manager for upgrades -Ensure contingency plan is adopted to enable continued reporting -Ensure testing procedure in place following upgrade to ensure reliability of data</td>
<td>Christine Ansell</td>
<td>Update 19-Nov-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Sep-10</td>
<td>Transfer visits no longer routinely completed. Offers left, is full inspection being completed</td>
<td>Void meetings</td>
<td>-Workflow to be created for HO's when application is assessed for visit -Agree standard for offers left and update procedure -Banding letter to be amended to advise offers will not be let if property does not meet required standard -Training on inspections -Ensure photographs are obtained -Establish process for management transfers</td>
<td>Nicky McKenzie</td>
<td>19-Nov-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Generic / Corporate</td>
<td>Sep-10</td>
<td>Not all staff aware of the importance of their involvement in the voids process</td>
<td>Lack of ownership</td>
<td>-Team leaders and DJ to complete joint training at all team meetings -Action plan to be discussed in more detail</td>
<td>Team Leaders / DJ</td>
<td>19-Nov-2010</td>
<td>In progress (how will we monitor success?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator ref. / Area</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 20 Property Maintenance | Sep-10 | The notice period is not being used for pre-void inspection | Process review | -Ensure pre-void inspection is included in reletting procedure manual (inc. Welcome Pack delivery)  
-Scanner to be provided to allow inspection report to be left at property (HO to collect at visit)  
-Workflow to be created for Housing Assistants to contact tenant for progress update (2 wks into notice period)  
-Establish process for monitoring compliance | L. Burdett DJ for workflow | 19-Nov-2010 | Darren provided details to Systems to arrange workflow.  
(Is this not already a workflow item?)  
June Loveday confirmed scanner now working.  
Welcome plan not yet in operation |
| 21 Voids administration | Sep-10 | Lack of storage space for goods left in properties | -Produce removal of goods policy  
-Ensure compliance with legal obligations | D.Berwick / Peter Haytack | 19-Nov-2010 | Policy completed. Forward to DMT and Portfolio Holder for sign off |
| 22 All | Sep-10 | Large number of vacant properties (HI 5) | Performance monitoring | -Promote mutual exchanges through Choice Officers project  
-Ensure reasons for terminations are recorded and analysed  
-Take appropriate action including support to tenants and improving property | Nicky McKenzie | 19-Nov-2010 | Work on Mutual Exchanges is underway.  
Requested report from systems team to capture reasons frequency and reasons for terminations |
| 23 All | Sep-10 | Delays and inefficiencies in accompanied viewings | -Ensure accurate estimated completion dates are assigned at pre-void inspection  
-HO's to ensure contact details are available  
-Review viewings policy and consider wider availability (e.g. Sat mornings, Multiple viewings)  
-Establish policy for properties that have been refused on multiple occasions | L. Burdett | 19-Nov-2010 | New system to be rolled out for contact details to flash up |
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</tr>
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</table>
| 24                  | All            | Sep-10                   | Too many properties exceeding target times | Performance monitoring | -Establish performance monitoring 'checkpoints' in procedure manual  
-Consider use of flags to notify 5 day and 10 day stage for remedial action to begin | L. Burdett | 19-Nov-2010 | Lee now working with homeless team to fast-track voids for those in temporary accommodation. Tenants can move in and work can be completed around them. IBS reports still being completed. |
| 25                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 26                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 27                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 28                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 29                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 30                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
| 31                  |                |                          |                                 |                           |         |         |                   |
Briefing Note – Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry

1  Background

1.1  The review into Council Owned Garages commenced with a report received by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 2nd July 2009. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed that an Appreciative Inquiry be set up to look at Council Owned Garages, and for Officers to assess all garages and rank sites as good, medium and poor. At the meeting on 18th May 2010, Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 (Housing and Environment) received a report accompanied by the Garage Gazetteer, which categorised garage sites as Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good and Very Good. From this Gazetteer, officers identified a number of sites for disposal and development potential.

1.2  Following on from the production of the Garage Gazetteer, the Estate Renewal service area have co-ordinated a further review of the Garage Sites along with the Housing Strategy and Corporate Asset Management service teams. The process of this review is explained below.

2  Evaluation Process

2.1  Taking the Garage Gazetteer forward, the estate renewal service area have categorised Garage Sites as follows:

- Alternative Use (These are sites in development areas such as PFI, CAAP, Woodside Way and sites for disposal to private market such as West Oval Site)
- Development (These are sites which are suggested for residential development)
- Investment (These are sites that require investment due to high demand, no development potential and / or good financial income)
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

2.2 The garage sites categorised as above, can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.3 A series of assumptions have been used by officers in reaching the decisions to categorise sites into Alternative Use, Development and Investment. The assumptions are contained within Appendix 2.

3 Next Steps

3.1 Officers will now conduct additional work on the potential development sites and approach planning and develop a full consultation plan.

3.2 Officers will now undertake additional cost exercise information on the Investment Sites.

3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry will hold a further meeting in January 2011 to receive costing details and the results of the consultation exercise and will provide further Scrutiny input into the Review of Council Owned Garages.

3.4 It is envisaged that the Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry will report its findings to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 January 2011. It is highlighted that the Appreciative Inquiry’s comments and observations will be taken into consideration in the final report on the Review of Council Owned Garages.

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, and Gary Parsons, Housing Strategy & Policy Development Manager, on behalf of Councillor Dennis Meredith, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Council Owned Garages Appreciative Inquiry

3 November 2010

www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny
Call 01604 837408
E-mail: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk
Garage Review Assumptions

No planning, highways or viability investigations have been undertaken

No site visits have been undertaken

Area calculations are based on Cartology plans

All sites are free from contamination

‘Development’ categorised sites may need to be packaged together to attract RSL interest

‘Investment’ categorised sites would be fully let if repairs were undertaken

‘Alternative Use’ sites may include options such as sale to a private developer or demolition for hard standing parking etc. The options will require further assessments but are not required by Housing or Housing Strategy.

Sites within the PFI are not included in the Garage Review

It is assumed that at some sites garages can be decanted into other (local) garage sites to allow for development
### Summary of Developable Sites

#### High

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Gazetteer</th>
<th>Agreed Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwood Road</td>
<td>CLEARED SITE</td>
<td>Alternative Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondfield Avenue</td>
<td>VERY POOR (33% vacant - 6 of 18)</td>
<td>Alternative Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holdenhby Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE (28% vacant - 5 of 18)</td>
<td>Alternative Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longland Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE (13% vacant - 2 of 16)</td>
<td>Alternative Use (PFI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Bath Street</td>
<td>POOR (67% vacant - 29 of 43)</td>
<td>Alternative Use (Spring Boroughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodside Way</td>
<td>CHALLENGE FUNDING SITE</td>
<td>Challenge Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenson Street</td>
<td>AVERAGE (28% vacant - 7 of 25)</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derwent Drive</td>
<td>AVERAGE (70% vacant - 37 of 53)</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limehurst Close</td>
<td>AVERAGE (58% vacant - 15 of 26)</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE (44% vacant - 11 of 25)</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea Crescent</td>
<td>CLEARED SITE</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Street (Stockley)</td>
<td>GOOD (11% vacant - 4 of 38)</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eton Street</td>
<td>GOOD (Fully Let)</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Street</td>
<td>GOOD (Fully Let)</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Althorp Road</td>
<td>GOOD (14% vacant - 3 of 21)</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Road</td>
<td>GOOD (29% vacant - 9 of 31)</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Medium/High

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gazetteer</th>
<th>Agreed Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Oval</td>
<td>VERY GOOD (88% vacant - 35 of 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holmecross Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE (22% vacant - 2 of 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Road</td>
<td>VERY GOOD (23% vacant - 6 of 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Close Road</td>
<td>POOR (46% vacant - 11 of 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardigan Close</td>
<td>AVERAGE (28% vacant - 5 of 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Lane</td>
<td>POOR (37% vacant - 10 of 27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitham Way</td>
<td>AVERAGE (29% vacant - 6 of 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldway</td>
<td>GOOD (10% vacant - 1 of 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambush Street</td>
<td>AVERAGE (38% vacant - 3 of 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Street</td>
<td>AVERAGE (17% vacant - 2 of 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connaught Street</td>
<td>POOR (25% vacant - 3 of 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Avenue</td>
<td>AVERAGE (66% vacant - 27 of 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook Lane</td>
<td>GOOD (60% vacant - 6 of 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welland Way</td>
<td>AVERAGE (43% vacant - 12 of 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>GOOD (Very Good - Fully Let)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gazetteer</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prentice Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE (47% vacant - 8 of 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Meadow Court</td>
<td>GOOD (Fully Let)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Holme Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE (24% vacant - 4 of 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedgwick Court</td>
<td>GOOD (17% vacant - 1 of 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swale Drive</td>
<td>AVERAGE (56% vacant - 9 of 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longueville Court</td>
<td>GOOD (16% vacant - 4 of 25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE (67% vacant - 4 of 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baukwell Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE (50% vacant - 2 of 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colwyn Road</td>
<td>GOOD (Fully Let)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parva Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE (89% vacant - 8 of 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Street</td>
<td>GOOD (Fully Let)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Davids Road</td>
<td>GOOD (19% vacant - 3 of 16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Low/Medium

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gazetteer</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Subject to tenant invest.*  
*GO to investigate*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourne Crescent</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Alternative use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmbrook Court</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Meadow Court</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midfield Court</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholls Court</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard Close</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Alternative use 1 &amp; 2 - Investment in remaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullerburn Court</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pell Court</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briton Gardens</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyside Court</td>
<td>VERY POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friars Avenue</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medway Drive</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Road</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallbeck Close</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Oval</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Investment and Alternative Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rilwood Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment and Alternative Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchill Avenue</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>Investment and development of site 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryleys Court</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Investment and two sites for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meadow</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment/Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medway Drive</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Road</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard Close</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullerburn Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pell Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briton Gardens</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyside Court</td>
<td>VERY POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friars Avenue</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medway Drive</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Road</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallbeck Close</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Meadow</td>
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**Low**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour View Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booth Meadow Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Holme Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Holme Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Alternative Use - PFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Quarry Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambourne Close</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Development (potentially)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmead Avenue</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grange Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keswick Drive</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidencastle</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyme Court</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Althorp Street</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakesley Close</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Avenue South</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmondon Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinton Close</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Croft</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whilton Road</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St James Park Road</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Court</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>Link with other garage sites. Investment and use for decant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston Court</td>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey House, Abbey St</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverack Close</td>
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<td>Investment</td>
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**No Development Potential**

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birchfield Road East</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epworth House (3 Park Ave North)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter Place</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fillingdale Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazeldene Road</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Name</td>
<td>11% (5 of 44)</td>
<td>0% (total of 2 garages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Street</td>
<td>50% (3 of 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne House, Abbey Street</td>
<td>0% (total of 5 garages)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moat Place</td>
<td>17% (3 of 18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overslade Close</td>
<td>1 garage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redruth Close</td>
<td>10% (1 of 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simons Walk</td>
<td>50% (2 of 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwood Hill</td>
<td>30% (1 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Barnabas House - Lower Harding Street</td>
<td>22% (4 of 18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St James Road</td>
<td>71% (5 of 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns House, St Andrews Street</td>
<td>8% (1 of 13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Marks House, St Andrews Street</td>
<td>6% (1 of 18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Stephens House, Grafton Street</td>
<td>20% (5 of 25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Briars</td>
<td>54% (13 of 24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ringway</td>
<td>32% (11 of 34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorn Hill</td>
<td>0% (totally of 6 garages)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windrush Road</td>
<td>0% (only 1 garage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookhall Road</td>
<td>36% (13 of 34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold Avenue</td>
<td>42% (5 of 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh House, Limehurst</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifford Court</td>
<td>75% (3 of 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunters Close</td>
<td>25% (5 of 20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsland Avenue</td>
<td>25% (2 of 8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paget House, Woodside Way</td>
<td>100% (only 1 garage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendle Road</td>
<td>38% (6 of 16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennyson Close</td>
<td>60% (6 of 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintern Avenue</td>
<td>10% (1 of 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor House, Limehurst Square</td>
<td>100% (total of 2 garages)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 November 2010

Briefing Note – Northampton’s Neighbourhood Management model

1 Background

1.1 The Northampton Neighbourhood Management model aims to address needs and aspirations at a local level (neighbourhood, estate, ward etc) through partnerships between agencies and with residents.

1.2 The piloting of Neighbourhood Management in Northampton commenced in 2006 and focused on the six areas of greatest deprivation at that time within the Borough, the approach was driven in each by a Neighbourhood Management Board, consisting of elected Councillors, public sector bodies, the Police, local voluntary sector organisations, community organisations and, occasionally, local businesses. Through a dedicated Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, each Board developed and sought to implement an action plan for its area based on consultation with local people and front-line service providers.

1.3 The current model of Area Working was introduced in April 2010. Building on the success of the Neighbourhood Management Boards, it sought to make the benefits of Neighbourhood Management approach available to communities across the entire Borough and to align activities with the strategic priorities of Northampton.

2 The Current model

2.1 The town is divided into four Areas, co-terminous with Police operational sectors. Each Area has a dedicated Partnership Co-ordinator.

2.2 At the core of the model is a programme of Ward Public meetings, held twice a year in each of the town’s 23 Wards. Recognising that residents are more likely to identify with a particular estate rather than a Council Ward, these meetings are held at different venues around the Ward. The meeting will typically be chaired by a Ward Councillor and
attended by staff from a range of front-line services, including the Police. Ward information is shared with the attendees and priorities for future action are discussed and agreed in an open and transparent way. Progress is then reported on the ward action plan, which is available on the council’s web site (See. //www.northampton.gov.uk, Neighbourhood management-How are we handling your local priorities?) or in hard copy and at the following meeting.

2.3 Ward Public Meetings are supplemented by a variety of other forms of consultation. These include door-to-door surveys, public events, consultation events and, currently at an early stage of development, internet based consultations using the Council’s website and Facebook and in the Street Briefings run by the Police often immediately prior to a Ward Public Meeting.

2.4 Issues raised can be addressed at one of three levels. Some, usually very local issues, can be handled immediately by getting two or three people speaking to each other about an issue to develop a multi-agency response. Others are pursued as Police Locally Identified Priorities (LIPs) or similar and typically will involve a 3 – 6 month focus on a specific problem or actions can be co-ordinated through an Area Operational Team, bringing together operational level managers such as NBC Team Leaders and Police Sergeants. Actions that require a more complex, long term multi-disciplinary response or are difficult to progress, will be resolved and organised by the Area Officer Board and included in a longer term Area Action Plan.

2.6 The Area Partnership Co-ordinators are the only dedicated staff available and the only budgets at their disposal are those raised externally for specific projects. There is a high level of support from a number of partners in the form of people time only. Attendance at Ward Public Meetings has range from about 25 down to low single figures, which is of concern in certain areas.

3 Interim Conclusions

3.1 Neighbourhood management service is currently undertaking a 6-month review of how the “new” arrangements have been working.

3.2 The engagement of local residents is central to Neighbourhood Management. This engagement can be brought about through a variety of means and can take many forms, including engagement in projects as well as involvement in decision-making processes. The depth of public engagement it secures is a measure of the strength of a Neighbourhood Management programme.

3.3 Some of the key questions for the review are therefore to do with how best to secure this public engagement. E.g. would a significant
injection of time into wider publicity for Ward Public meetings increase attendance at Ward Public Meetings? What is the best balance between the various calls upon a Co-ordinator’s time relating to addressing identified priorities, project co-ordination and the various methods of engaging the community?

3.4 This Panel’s consideration of the Area Working model is therefore timely and of enormous value to the ongoing review.

4 Recommendation

4.1 The Panel is recommended to consider ways in which the available resources can best be used to maximise community engagement in Northampton’s Neighbourhood Management model.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Panel E has held one meeting and has a further one scheduled for 4th November 2010.

UPDATE

2.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel has embarked upon its evidence gathering has received information from expert witnesses:

- Garry Pyne, Head of Shared County Procurement Services
- Councillor Paul Varnsverry – Portfolio Holder (Community Engagement), Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Councillor David Perkins – Portfolio Holder (Finance), NBC
- Sandra Bell, Chair, Northampton Voluntary and Community Sector Forum
- Dominic McClean, Chief Executive – NVC
- Claudette Wray-Chambers, Commissioning Manager, NCC
- Thomas Hall, Head of Policy and Community Engagement, NBC
- Anjona Roy, NREC
- Victoria Miles, Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Community Foundation
- John Dawson, NAVCA
- Olive Robinson – Afro Caribbean Elders’ Society (ACES)
- Lesley-Ann Hamilton, NHS Northamptonshire
- Francis Fernandes – Borough Solicitor – NBC, questions regarding legalities and governance arrangements for a framework

2.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel will look to agree its definition of commissioning that it will include within its final report, and receive the results of desktop research detailing examples of best practice elsewhere at its
meeting on 4 November 2010.

2.1.3 The Chair of Scrutiny Panel E will provide a further update to the next meeting of this Committee.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the progress report from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel E be noted.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor David Garlick, Chair, Scrutiny Panel E

Date: 12 October 2010
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee, the Scrutiny Panel has held a further meeting and has its next meeting set for 11 November 2010.

2 UPDATE

2.1.1 At the meeting on 4th October 2010, the Scrutiny Panel received information from expert advisors who provided assurance of how they felt that the Northampton Action Plan could be delivered: -

- Northants Police (Licensing)
- Licensing NBC
- PubWatch

2.1.2 Further expert advisors are scheduled to attend the meeting on 11 November 2010:

- CAN
- DAAT
- Northants PCT
- Accident and Emergency
- ServiceSix
- Northampton School Forum

2.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel has received details of the desktop research exercise that provided information in relation to best practice external to Northampton and details of best practice guidance material.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the progress report from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel H be noted.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Brendan Glynane, Chair, Scrutiny Panel H

Date: 7 October 2010
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15th November 2010

BRIEFING NOTE:

SCRUTINY PANEL R&P – ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee, the Scrutiny Panel has held two further meetings.

2 UPDATE

2.1 The Scrutiny Panel has now completed its evidence gathering and has received a synopsis of the Council’s various Policies in relation to Absence Management, such as: -

- Absence Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policies
- Dependency Leave and Emergency Leave Policy
- Sickness Absence Trends
- Accident at Work Data
- Absence Management Training

2.2 It received witness evidence from the Head of Neighbourhood Environment, the Head of Leisure and Culture and the Trade Unions, together with comparator Policies from another organisation and details of best practice external to the Council.

2.3 The Scrutiny Panel has one further meeting scheduled at which it will consider and finalise the Chair’s report. The report will then be submitted to the meeting of this Committee on 20th December 2010 for approval.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the progress report from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel R&P be noted.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Jane Hollis, Chair, Scrutiny Panel R&P

Date: 21st October 2010
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 November 2010

Update from the Overview and Scrutiny Training Champion

1 Background

1.1 Councillor Richard Matthews was elected the Overview and Scrutiny Training Champion for the period 2010/2011.

1.2 Training is vital for Scrutiny to continue to be effective and the Overview and Scrutiny Training Champion provides a valued role having a necessary input into the training requirements of Overview and Scrutiny.

2 Information

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny four year rolling training programme is in year four. A copy of this document is attached as a reminder to the Committee.

2.2 At its meeting on 25 January 2010, Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed Councillor Call for Action, and the debate focussed on required training for Overview and Scrutiny Councillors on the scrutiny of crime and disorder. The Committee requested that this take place as soon as possible.

2.3 There had been a delay in consideration of this request, as the Councillor Development Group had not convened for sometime. However, the Group met during the summer 2010 and approved the inclusion of this important development session to the Member Development Programme.

2.4 The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) offers training on all aspects of Overview and Scrutiny and boasts that these are of very competitive rates. The CfPS is a highly regarded organisation with Local Government Scrutineers.

2.5 The Research and Information Manager, of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, wrote the guidance on Councillor Call for Action, which is used
by all Councils. It was agreed that he would be very useful to facilitate this required training. It has been confirmed that he will deliver the training session on 9th December 2010, which will be held in the Jeffery Room, Guildhall between the hours of 5.30pm and 8pm.

2.6 The development session has been opened up to Scrutiny Chairs, Councillors and Scrutiny Managers/Officers of neighbouring authorities at a small fee of £25 per delegate. To date thirteen representatives from neighbouring authorities have confirmed their attendance.

2.7 This event has also been publicised through the East Midlands Scrutiny Network.

2.8 This style of event enables both Members and officers from different organisations to network and share good practice.

2.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Newsletter (Autumn 2010 edition) gives details of this training session and within his welcome, Councillor Christopher Malpas, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, urges Scrutiny Councillors to attend this important session.

5 Recommendation

5.1 That the update be noted.

5.2 That Overview and Scrutiny Councillors be encouraged to attend the Member Development Session – Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder on 9th December 2010.
## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Overview & Scrutiny Four-Year Rolling Plan

2011 – 2015

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Training Intervention Proposed</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>O&amp;S Internal Officer to train.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Julia Alright (trainer) to train.</td>
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<td>All to attend that would like. Must include Chair and Vice Chair.</td>
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<td>CfPS Conference: Chair and one other to attend</td>
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15th November 2010
Briefing Note – Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit and additional Protocols

1 Background

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit was approved in March 2007.

1.2 A new Overview and Scrutiny structure was implemented in May 2010 and there is, therefore, the need to update the Guidance material to reflect the current structure. This document has been updated, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A.

1.3 At one of the scheduled meetings the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds with the Scrutiny Officer, and at a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the need for further Overview and Scrutiny Protocols was recognised.

2 Current Overview and Scrutiny Protocols

2.1 Current, published Overview and Scrutiny Protocols and guidance notes comprise: -

- Call-In Protocol
- Overview and Scrutiny Councillor’s Conduct Protocol
- Employees’ Guide to Overview and Scrutiny
- Meeting Guidance
- Public Address at Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Witness Protocol and Guidance Notes
- Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Protocol
Northampton Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny

- Attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings by Executive Members and Council Officers Protocol
- Meeting Guidance
- Reporting Process
- Officer Support Protocol
- Overview and Scrutiny Media Protocol
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny Protocol
- Reporting Process
- Overview and Scrutiny Protocol
- Scrutiny Panel Protocol
- Working with Officers Protocol

2.2 The Protocols have been amended to reflect the current Overview and Scrutiny structure and are attached within the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit.

Additional Overview and Scrutiny Protocol

2.3 An Overview and Scrutiny Site Visit Protocol has been drafted and is attached at Appendix B for the Committee’s consideration.

2.4 A formal Councillor Call for Action Protocol has also been drafted, which is attached at Appendix C for the Committee’s consideration.

2.5 The need for an Appreciative Inquiry Protocol was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15th September 2010, a copy of which is attached at Appendix D for the Committee’s consideration.

3 Best Practice

3.1 As a reminder, the Council’s Call-In procedure has been noted by the Centre of Public Scrutiny (CfPS) as an example of best practice and details were given in one of its newsletters (March 2007).
Northampton Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny

3.2 The Council’s Witness Protocol and Guidance Notes have also been noted as an example of best practice and other Local Authorities have requested copies of the document.

4 Consultation

4.1 Legal Services

4.1.1 The Borough Solicitor and his Team in Legal Services have been consulted on the current and additional, draft Overview and Scrutiny Protocols.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that: -

5.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit, updated September 2010, as attached at Appendix A, be approved and published on the Overview and Scrutiny Page on the Council’s WebPage and within the library of Reviews and Guidance Notes of the Centre for Public Scrutiny’s WebPage.

5.1.2 The additional Overview and Scrutiny Protocols be approved and included within the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit, (updated September 2010), as attached at Appendices B, C and D.
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Appendices

A  Topic Suggestion forms

B  Review Scope Template

C  Overview and Scrutiny Protocols
   o  Attendance at Scrutiny Meetings
   o  Appreciative Inquiry Protocol
   o  Call-In Protocol
   o  Councillor Call for Action Protocol
   o  Meeting Guidance
   o  Inclusion of non-Executive Councillors in the Overview and Scrutiny Process
   o  Overview and Scrutiny Media Protocol
   o  Officer Support Protocol
   o  Overview and Scrutiny Councillor’s Code of Conduct Protocol
   o  Pre-decision Scrutiny Protocol
   o  Public Address at Overview and Scrutiny Committee
   o  Reporting Process
   o  Scrutiny Panel Protocol
   o  Site Visit Protocol
   o  Work Programme Protocol
   o  Witness Protocol and Guidance Notes

D  Employee Guide to Overview and Scrutiny

E  Glossary of Terms
1 Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny handbook. It includes brief summary sections and a manual that details the Overview and Scrutiny protocols and procedures. It also sets out the rights and obligations of Councillors and employees and explains the role and procedures of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Panels. The Toolkit informs external organisations and individuals of the process and expectations if invited to contribute to an Overview and Scrutiny review and to assist the Committee or a Scrutiny Panel in this process.

We aim to make Scrutiny challenging and constructive and also be an inclusive process.

The Toolkit aims to give clear guidance on the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny function as well as provide practical advice to all those who take part in the Overview and Scrutiny process:

- Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Panels
- Co-opted members
- Cabinet members
- Council Employees
- Witnesses in Overview and Scrutiny inquiries
- Members of the public

Up to May 2010 the Council had three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, in addition to a Scrutiny Management Committee. The Committees mirrored the Executive portfolios and were identified as O&S1 (Partnerships, Regeneration; Community Safety and Engagement) O&S2 (Housing and Environment) and O&S3 (Improvement, Performance and Finance).

During the summer 2009, Scrutiny Councillors looked at the Overview and Scrutiny structure in accordance with its dedicated resources and held two workshops to discuss the issue. A new Overview and Scrutiny structure was approved by full Council at its meeting in May 2010 and comprises:

One Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three themed Scrutiny Panels, which will carry out, time-limited Reviews. The Scrutiny Panels now hold their meetings in public.

Councillor Christopher Malpas
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Our Mission Statement

“Overview and scrutiny at Northampton aims to enhance the quality of life of all who live and work in the Borough by ensuring services are delivered effectively and supporting improvement in the Council’s services, policies and performance. Scrutiny aims to be objective, evidence-based, transparent and constructive, and to reflect the interests and concerns of local communities.”
2 Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny

2.1 What is Overview and Scrutiny?

This part of the Toolkit explains what Overview and Scrutiny is, its powers and work.

*Overview and Scrutiny is potentially the most exciting and powerful element of the entire local government modernisation process. It places Members at the heart of the way in which Councils respond to the demands of modernisation. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny is the mechanism by which Councils can achieve community leadership, good governance and by which Councillors can become powerful and influential politicians.*

*Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002*

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the arrangements for governance in local councils and is also an important mechanism for driving forward performance in services. The four key roles are:

- Holding the Executive to account
- Policy development and review
- Best Value Reviews
- External Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny provides the opportunity for non-Executive Councillors (Councillors that are not on Cabinet) to examine various functions of the Council, to question how key decisions have been made and to champion issues of local concern to residents.

Overview and Scrutiny is charged with finding ways of ensuring the issues that matter to the public are the focus of their attention, and with finding new ways of getting citizens involved in the things that affect them.
Overview and Scrutiny has considerable powers:

- Holding decision makers to account
- Challenging and improving performance
- Supporting the achievement of value for money
- Challenging the ways things are done
- Influencing decision makers with evidence based recommendations
- Bringing the evidence and views of stakeholders, users and citizens

2.2 The work of Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny is Councillor led. As well as Councillors leading on the review of topics where they research issues and develop recommendations, they are also involved in setting work programmes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, bringing forward topics and issues, identifying who they want to hear from to inform their work and what they want to know and how they want it presented to them.

Topics for Overview and Scrutiny are identified from a variety of sources. These can include:

- The Council’s priorities and challenges
- Topics suggested for review by Cabinet
- Matters referred from full Council
- Topics put forward by Overview and Scrutiny Councillors
- Topics suggested by the public
- The Forward Plan for Cabinet

The Overview and Scrutiny process enables non-Executive Councillors (who are not on the Cabinet) to influence decisions that are taken by Cabinet and to ensure that the views and needs of local people are taken into account.
2.3 The Political Management of the Council

Northampton Borough Council provides many services for the citizens of Northampton, these include:

- Housing
- Refuse Collection
- Planning
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Leisure Facilities
- Street Cleansing
- Litter

There are 47 elected Councillors at Northampton Borough Council, who act as Community Leaders and representatives for the people who live in their wards. They also pursue a variety of roles within the Council, which range from designing strategies and policies and making decisions to making recommendations for change.

Full Council (47 Councillors) chaired by the Mayor, sets the annual budget and the Council’s overall policies. It also has responsibility for amendments to the Council’s Constitution (or book of rules and procedures) and is responsible for appointing the Leader, the Cabinet, and the Committees of the Council.

Members of the public can attend and address the Council and listen to the debates that take place.
2.4 How does Overview and Scrutiny operate at Northampton?

This part of the Toolkit details how the Overview and Scrutiny operates at Northampton.

There is one Overview and Scrutiny Committee that sets up time limited Scrutiny Panels to carry out important reviews, which will make focussed valuable recommendations to Cabinet.

2.4.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of Councillors representing each Political Group. The Committee sets up time limited Scrutiny Panels to carry out strategic and operational reviews.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has no decision-making powers but makes recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or full Council. Its work means that it:

- Contributes to policy development and helps develop major plans and strategies for Northampton
- Holds the Cabinet to account for its decisions
- Examines matters of wider public interest
- Conducts reviews of public bodies that are external to the Council
- Reviews services of the Council
- Ensures the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council
- Carries out joint work with partners during the same review process

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has fifteen members and is directly responsible for:

- Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny work plans
- Appointing three Scrutiny Panels
- Allocation of resources
- The involvement of other people in Overview and Scrutiny Process
- Co-ordinating work plans
- Approving Overview and Scrutiny Protocols and guidance notes
- Making reports and/or recommendations to Council and/or Cabinet
- Considering any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants
- Exercising the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet or a Committee of the Cabinet or by individual Members of the Cabinet
• Appointing Northampton Borough Council’s representatives on any joint authority, countywide or regional scrutiny body with relevant functions and consider regular progress reports on its work
• Co-ordination of the publicity and promotion of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to partners, the public and internal stakeholders
• Co-ordination of the production of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report
• Acting as the relevant ‘Crime and Disorder Committee’ for the purposes of Section 19(1) of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and any other relevant rules and regulations
• Dealing with any relevant Councillor Call for Action made in relation to any Local Government matter pursuant to the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (and associated rules and regulations) in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action Protocol and in relation to petitions submitted to the Council pursuant to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and in accordance with the Northampton Borough Council’s Scheme to Respond to Petitions
• Allocating areas of responsibility in cases of doubt
• Training and development
• Support needs

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and press (unless confidential matters are being discussed) and are held approximately every six weeks. Meetings are usually held at the Guildhall, but there are times when meetings are held elsewhere according to the issue being investigated. All of these meetings are advertised in advance and papers for the meetings are available on the Council’s website.

The actual investigations are carried out by a series of Scrutiny Panels. The Chairperson of the Scrutiny Panel reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on their progress at each meeting and with their final report prior to forwarding it to Cabinet/Council.

2.4.2 Scrutiny Panels

Overview and Scrutiny’s Task and Finish Groups became Scrutiny Panels in May 2010 and the main difference is that the Scrutiny Panels will be holding their meetings in public. Public addresses and public attendance is very much welcomed at these meetings, as it is for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Scrutiny Panels are responsible for setting the objectives of the Review, scoping the work to be carried out, gathering evidence in a variety of ways, evaluating the evidence and making recommendations for change to the
Cabinet or full Council. Recommendations can be accepted or rejected by Cabinet. Cabinet informs the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of its decisions. Those recommendations that are accepted are monitored for implementation by Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.

Scrutiny Panels operate within a specified time frame, they comprise a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Councillor and one non-Cabinet Councillor and are chaired by the Overview and Scrutiny Councillor.

Individuals with a particular knowledge of the subject can be involved by becoming a co-opted member to one of the Scrutiny Panels for the life of that Review. They can also be invited to give evidence at a Scrutiny Panel meeting. This enables Councillors to make well-informed recommendations but also gives individuals and organisations from outside the Council a way of having their voice heard and influencing the delivery of Council services.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Panels can take place in various settings depending on the evidence being heard.

2.4.3 Call-In of Cabinet decisions

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or two Councillors can Call-in a decision of the Cabinet/Portfolio Holder.

The call-in procedure only applies to decisions regarding Executive functions. It does not apply to decisions made by the two regulatory Committees - Planning and Licensing or to the Standards Committee.

Nor does it apply to:

- Decisions that have already been implemented or previously called-in
- Decisions agreed to be exempted from call-in under urgency procedures.

A called-in decision is examined at either a special Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting or the next available scheduled meeting. The Chair consults with the Committee to formulate a line of enquiry. The Cabinet and relevant employees are advised of the situation.

Once the meeting is scheduled, it is advertised within five clear working days. Members of the public with a special interest may be invited to present evidence. Once all evidence has been taken, it is evaluated and written recommendations are made to Cabinet.
The Cabinet must consider Overview and Scrutiny recommendations and provide a formal response. Cabinet can accept or reject any or all of the recommendations. If the recommendations are accepted then Cabinet explains how and when they will be actioned. If the recommendations are rejected, Cabinet informs Overview and Scrutiny of its reasons for doing so. Please refer to Appendix E for the Call-In Protocol.

2.4.4 How Overview and Scrutiny work is monitored

Scrutiny Panel Review recommendations are considered and approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then referred to Cabinet and/or full Council for a response.

Cabinet is invited to provide an Executive Response and decision for each Overview and Scrutiny recommendation.

The Executive Response can either:

- Accept the recommendation
- Amend the recommendation – providing the alternative decision and reasons for this decision
- Reject the recommendation – giving reasons for the rejection

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the impact of its work and that of the Scrutiny Panels by reviewing the implementation of the recommendations. The Portfolio Holder is asked to attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting approximately six months after the Review Report recommendations have been accepted by Cabinet and provide a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations.

Scrutiny Panel Reports are available on the Council’s web site www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny.

2.4.5 What Overview and Scrutiny Does Not Do

Overview and Scrutiny does not get involved in minor matters or individual concerns which are not of wider community significance. These need to be pursued through the appropriate service unit, ward Councillors or with the Portfolio Holder responsible for the matter in question. Overview and Scrutiny does not deal with individual complaints, these are addressed through the Council’s complaints procedure.
3 Overview and Scrutiny Roles

This part of the Toolkit details the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

3.1 Overview and Scrutiny – Open and Inclusive

It is vital that the Overview and Scrutiny process should be open and inclusive – working for and with the community and partners to achieve common goals. Councillors should be prepared to receive raw information from users and the community. This means that in order to carry out the Overview and Scrutiny role effectively, Councillors will need well developed questioning and analytical skills.

3.2 Councillors

Councillors either individually or collectively will already possess a lot of the personal skills required but the new focus will be in bringing these together in a way that ensures confidence in the outcomes and recommendations at the end of the Overview and Scrutiny process. A key factor will be to ensure that the findings and recommendations are supported by evidence. This provides transparency to the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Councillors serving on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Scrutiny Panel will receive a considerable amount of paperwork to read and will attend quite a few activities in relation to a specific review. Councillors will decide what to investigate, how the Review will be undertaken, who will be invited to appear to give evidence to assist with each Review and the questions to be asked. Having heard all the evidence the Scrutiny Panel will consider its conclusions and make recommendations within a report for presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then forward the report to Cabinet and/or full Council for consideration.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Councillor will involve some or all of the following activities:

- Agreeing a manageable work programme with the members of the Committee
- Receiving and examining information regarding service areas
- Participating constructively in the activities of the Committee under the guidance of the Chair
- Taking an active role in Scrutiny Panel Reviews which could include research, site visits, questioning contributors and developing recommendations
- Holding Cabinet members and senior employees to account
3.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have additional responsibilities to that of members of the Committees. The Chair needs to be fairly assertive to ensure meetings meet their objectives. The Chair controls the meeting by allowing others to get their point over, maintain a balanced discussion, stick to the agenda and discourage deviation and delay. The Chair will need to be firm but fair, open and frank, and clearly and confidently make points. During a meeting the Chair needs to encourage the participation of all Councillors.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for drawing up the agenda for each meeting in advance with the support of the Scrutiny Officer.

The Chair and Vice Chair need a variety of skills that require continual development such as:

- Communication
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Analytical Skills
- Listening Skills
- Interpretation, clarification and summarising skills

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels have additional responsibilities to ensure that a Review reaches its desired outcome. The Chair should ensure that members of the Panel are working towards the desired outcome of the Review rather than digressing. In order to achieve this the Chair needs to be assertive in keeping the discussion to agenda items only. When drawing the meeting to a close it is essential for the Chair to make clear all decisions that have been taken by the Panel, clarify what information is required for the next meeting, make clear the time and date of the next meeting, and clarify the agenda items to be considered at the next meeting.

3.4 Portfolio Holder

The relevant Portfolio Holder may be called on to provide input into Scrutiny Panel Reviews by providing information on the issue being scrutinised within their portfolio, or to explain their reasons for making a specific decision which has been `called-in.’ The Portfolio Holder will only be able to participate in a review at the invitation of the Chair, otherwise they will be classed as observers only. The Chair should send out a formal
request to the Portfolio Holder outlining the reasons why attendance is required. The Portfolio Holder should be notified in advance if they are required to provide any supporting documentation.

The Portfolio Holder will also be asked to attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting approximately six months after the Review Report Recommendations have been accepted by Cabinet to provide a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations.

Overview and Scrutiny Protocols are included in the Appendices section of this Toolkit.

3.5 Witnesses

Overview and Scrutiny Reviews may call a range of individuals to give evidence and answer questions. This may include other Councillors, service users, community stakeholders, service providers, policy makers and managers and people who have some knowledge or expertise of the issue being scrutinised.

Witnesses will receive a formal invitation by the Chair and the following information will be provided by the Scrutiny Officer: -

- Scope of the Review
- Previous information and documents provided
- Question plan
- Clear guidance on what information they are expected to provide
- Time and date of the meeting

Witnesses appearing before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel should not be made to feel as if they are under interrogation. Nor should the process be confrontational. However, Councillors are expected to ask probing questions in order to get the information they require.

All Councillors involved in the Overview and Scrutiny process are required to adhere to the Overview and Scrutiny Councillors’ Code Of Conduct Protocol and Witness Protocol – See Appendices C.

3.6.1 Co-Opted Member to Scrutiny Panels

Members of the public, partner organisations, other Councils, the Voluntary Sector and recognised experts, can be co-opted on to a Scrutiny Panel for the life of the Panel, to investigate specific issues of importance. This can happen months in advance when the Scrutiny Work Programme is set for
planned work or more spontaneously when ad hoc Panels are set up during the year.

Scrutiny Panels are focused policy development and service/policy review groups. The work of the Panels is to recommend changes. Recommendations are normally reached by consensus, rarely is a vote required. In circumstances where a vote is required, only members who are Councillors are able to vote.

3.6.2 Co-Opted Member to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider applications from potential Co-Optees to sit on it for the Municipal year. It may also ask a particular group or organisation if it could nominate a representative to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.6.3 The roles and responsibilities of co-optees include:

- A willingness to attend all meetings set to complete a review
- Playing an active and full role in investigations e.g. observations/visits to other Councils
- Bringing a view that Councillors might not have to a Review
- Contributing constructively to discussions
- A willingness to share knowledge, experience and expertise
- Identifying issues for further consideration during the review
- Treating witnesses according to Council guidance
- Having a genuine interest in Local Government
- Gaining an understanding of the role and function of Scrutiny
- Recognising that certain information gained as a member of the Review may be confidential to the Council and should be treated as such

Short training/briefing sessions will be organised for all co-optees to explain the Scrutiny systems and processes in the Council. A separate guidance booklet for co-optees has been produced and is published on the Overview and Scrutiny page of the Council’s website. A copy can also be obtained from the Scrutiny Officer.

3.7 Public Participation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is keen to develop Scrutiny as an accessible and open process. Public participation is an important part of the Overview and Scrutiny process and members of the public may get involved in a number of ways:
• **Attending a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

• **Writing to the Scrutiny Panel.** Scrutiny Reviews consider written evidence and members of the public, community groups or other key stakeholders can write in to bring evidence to the attention of the Scrutiny Panel members. Written evidence may put forward a particular perspective on the issue being considered or may highlight statistical evidence to inform the Review.

• **Becoming a witness** Being called as a witness gives individuals a rare and valuable chance to make a real contribution to improving the quality of local services.

• **Expressing an interest to become a co-opted member.**

• **Suggesting topics for Scrutiny.** Forms and guidance for members of the public to submit suggestions for scrutiny topics are provided at Appendix A.

### 3.7.1 Addressing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels

The public will be able to speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel meeting if individuals are providing relevant information to an agenda item. It is important for the efficiency of the meeting that individuals wishing to make the same points are represented by one individual who can state that they are a representative. Public speaking is limited to three minutes.

Individuals other than the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel members should inform the Chair prior to the meeting of their wish to speak at the meeting. Whilst waiting to be called to speak, they should be seated in the public gallery. The Chair will decide the appropriate time to call the speaker to the table. Once the speaker has finished what they wish to say, they will be requested to leave the table.

Where the public wish to raise new issues for scrutinising this should be done in writing. Further guidance is detailed in the Protocol for Public Address at Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Scrutiny Panels as attached at Appendix C.

### 3.8 Employees of the Council

Each Scrutiny Panel Review has one Head of Service and/or senior employee dedicated to it for the life of the Review.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a Scrutiny Officer who manages the Review, carries out research, assists in compiling the Scrutiny Panel’s final and update reports, produces the E-Bulletin
newsletter, produces Policy briefings, drafts the Annual Report, assists in the production of the Annual Work Programme, and sets up relevant meetings, such as Scrutiny Panel meetings with the Portfolio Holders and meetings of the Chair and Vice Chair.

Other employees may be called on to provide expert input in their professional capacity, for example, in a written report or through a presentation. The information that employees give should, as far as possible, be confined to factual statements and explanations relating to policies and decisions as appropriate. Employees should avoid being drawn into discussions on the merits or alternative Policies where this is politically contentious. An employee guide to Overview and Scrutiny is included in the Appendices section of this Toolkit.

4 The Annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

This part of the Toolkit explains how the annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is put together and agreed.

Setting the annual Work Programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an important stage in the Overview and Scrutiny process, identifying key topics that will be considered in the coming year.

Some key principles for setting the work programme are:

- Topics must add value and support the corporate priorities
- Where appropriate involve partners, stakeholders and the public
- Allow some flexibility to enable topics to be included as they arise

Sources of information to identify key topics:

- Outcomes of public consultation
- Suggestions made by Councillors
- Forward Plan of Cabinet
- Corporate Performance Monitoring Reports
- Suggestions made by partners/stakeholders
- The Council’s Improvement Plan
- Directorate Service Plans
- Previous and planned Reviews – for example cross-cutting best value or management Reviews

Choosing topics

- Topics for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes can be considered as different types of work including Policy Review,
review of external organisations, performance review and call-in of decisions.

- Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed its work programmes it will be important for it to identify and agree the highest priority topics where they will add most value through its work.

- Due to the level of resources required to successfully undertake detailed Reviews it is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee only do a limited number in one year. This will also help to keep the work programme flexible.

- Cross-cutting topics where joint working with other Local Authorities or organisations will add value and need to be identified early on in the Overview and Scrutiny process to ensure that there is capacity in the work programme.

- It is important to identify lead employees to help plan resources and manage time.
5 Conducting an Overview and Scrutiny Review

This part of the Toolkit is designed to guide all those involved in Overview and Scrutiny through the procedure from beginning to end.

Each key section has been identified and explained from scoping the review to identifying relevant information, considering the timeframe, project plan, assessing the evidence, forming conclusions, drafting the report and monitoring recommendations.

5.1 Scoping a review

Scoping a review is essential to minimise the risks that might prevent a review reaching its desired outcome. There are six steps that should be followed:

- **Identifying the objectives and key issues**
  To ascertain what the Scrutiny Panel wants to achieve and what the main issues are that need to be addressed in order to achieve the objectives. Some of this work will have been carried out when the Overview and Scrutiny annual work programme was set.

- **Establishing the timeframe for the Review**
  The overall timeframe of the Review will be established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The scoping process needs to determine how the Review process will fit into the overall timeframe that has been decided.

- **Outlining stakeholders and evidence required**
  What evidence is required to achieve the outcomes and who needs to be called as a witness.

- **Suggested co-opted members to the Review**
  Consider expressions of interest to becoming a co-opted member to the Review.

- **Considering the lines of enquiry**
  Once the objectives and the key issues have been decided, lines of enquiry should be determined to help focus the review and enable a consistent approach to a topic across meetings.

- **Recognise potential risks**
  Potential risks to the success of the Review need to be identified from the start in order that they can be avoided later in the process.

A standard scoping proforma is used for all Scrutiny Panel reviews – See Appendix B.
5.2 Collecting the information and evidence

Key issues and objectives will have been identified in the scoping phase and a broad outline of the evidence required will have been suggested and included in the scope of the review. The next step is to identify the sources of the information required and the methods for collecting that information. Recommendations that the Scrutiny Panels formulate at the end of the Review must be evidence based and be seen to reference the information that has been provided.

Evidence can be gathered from a variety of sources including identified best practice, current Council Policy, proposed or recent Government legislation, previous or possible consultation, performance indicators, and any previous work or reviews that might be relevant.

5.3 Considering Witnesses

Witnesses have a key role to play in helping Scrutiny Panels fulfil their Review objectives. Care needs to be taken when inviting witnesses to appear. The term can be off putting to people. Informal initial approaches either face to face or by telephone may help to reassure people, especially those outside the Council. Throughout the hearing of the evidence stage, the Review objectives need to be constantly in mind and the information assessed against these. Witnesses may need pulling back on track.

5.4 Creating a question plan

Providing a question plan for witnesses to consider prior to attendance at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel meeting will make the most of their attendance at the meeting.

5.5 Assessing the evidence and making recommendations

The Review process can take several meetings and while Councillors involved should consider and scrutinise the subject throughout the Review, time should also be set-aside during the penultimate meeting to assess all the information that has been received to that point. When forming conclusions all the main points raised during the review should be considered to enable clear links to be shown between evidence and final recommendations. Employees will support Councillors in collating the evidence that has been provided and advising on the impact of the potential recommendations.

Recommendations are the purpose of the Review process and should lead to tangible improvements in service delivery or corporate direction. The desired outcome of the review, outlined in the scope, should be held at the forefront of Councillors’ minds when debating their final recommendations.
When making recommendations it is important to remember that it is not just the right answer that matters but also evidence of how this conclusion was reached.

Recommendations should: -

- Link to the evidence provided
- Be concise and easy to understand
- Link to the scope of the review
- Include methods for monitoring the recommendations

5.6 Reporting

Once the Scrutiny Panel has formed its final recommendations the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer will prepare a draft report. The draft report will then be considered at the final meeting of the Scrutiny Panel for comment and suggested amendments. All comments and suggested amendments should be considered by the Chair and any changes made accordingly.

After the report has been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee it will then report to either Cabinet or full Council as appropriate.

5.7 Monitoring

Monitoring arrangements need to be made to accompany any recommendations in order that progress can be measured. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will monitor progress and if progress is not satisfactory, further scrutiny can be undertaken.

The Portfolio Holder will also be asked to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approximately six months after the Review report recommendations have been accepted by Cabinet to provide a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations.

Follow up regarding the outcomes of the scrutiny process will be communicated in the form of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. The Annual report will be prepared in time for the end of the Municipal Year and presented to full Council. The Annual Report will include an account of all the Reviews that have been undertaken by Scrutiny Panels over the course of the year and a description of the main achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny process.
6 How to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny meetings are advertised on the Council's website and published in the Overview and Scrutiny newsletter. Information on forthcoming items for Overview and Scrutiny can be obtained on request from the Scrutiny Officer and are advertised on the Council's website.

Overview and Scrutiny web-pages can be accessed at www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

6.1 Contacts and Further Information

This final section provides some helpful contacts, websites and references where further information about Overview and Scrutiny can be found.

Contacts

Northampton Borough Council

General Enquiries

Tel: 01604 837010
Fax: 01604 838571
Email: onestopshop@northampton.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny

Tel: 01604 837408
Fax: 01604 838723
Email: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk

Website: www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

General Information

Check out the Council’s A to Z of Council services on the website.
### Links to Useful Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Public Scrutiny</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cfps.org.uk">www.cfps.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Promotes the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lga.gov.uk">www.lga.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The LGA represents the interests of local authorities across the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Improvement and Development</td>
<td><a href="http://www.local-gov.uk">www.local-gov.uk</a></td>
<td>Local Government Improvement and Development is an organisation dedicated to seeking improvement and sharing best practice in local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Information Unit</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lgiu.gov.uk">www.lgiu.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The LGIU provides an information, advice, training, and lobbying service for local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Public Service Excellent (APSE)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apse.org.uk">www.apse.org.uk</a></td>
<td>APSE is a non-profit making organisation with involvement from elected members, officers and trade unions. It promotes public services via networking, the sharing of information and best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit Commission</td>
<td><a href="http://www.audit.commission.gov.uk">www.audit.commission.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK online</td>
<td><a href="http://www.online.gov.uk">www.online.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The easy way to access government services on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Local Government Studies INLOGOV</td>
<td><a href="http://www.inlogov.bham.ac">www.inlogov.bham.ac</a></td>
<td>The core of INLOGOV’s work is around the policy and management agendas of Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands Councils Scrutiny Network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk">www.emcouncils.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Scrutiny Network provides Local Authorities with opportunities to exchange information and best practice around scrutiny, and identify key issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.infor4local.gov.uk">www.infor4local.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>A one stop shop portal for Local Authorities to get quick and easy access to information they need on the websites of central government departments, agencies and bodies</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Tracy Tiff on 01604 837408

Jesi angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym
Если английский не Ваш родной язык и Вам
нужна помощь с переводом этого документа,
то свяжитесь с Трайсу Тиф. Тел. 01604 837408

Haddii afka Ingrisigu aanu ahayn luuqad-daada
kowaad oo aad u baahan-tahay in lagaa caawiyiyo
turjumidda warqaddan fadlan kala xidhidh Tracy
Tiff tillifoonka 01604 837408

如果英語不是你的主要說用語言而需要幫助將這
份文件翻譯，請致電 01604 837408 向 Tracy Tiff
提出要求。

যদি ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এই দলিলটি অনুবাদে
আপনার সাহায্যের দরকার হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে ট্রেইসি টিফ এর
সাথে 01604 837408 এই টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

LARGE PRINT AND TAPE

If you would like this document as large print or as a tape recording please call 01604 837408
Appendices
Suggest an item for
Overview and Scrutiny to investigate?

Do you have any suggestions for issues for inclusion onto the Overview and Scrutiny future Work Programme? If so please complete the form opposite and return to:

Overview and Scrutiny
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Email: tiff@northampton.gov.uk

Just as Overview and Scrutiny has considerable influence when used in the right way, there are times when other procedures are more appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny cannot help in the following areas:

- Individual complaints about specific issues - these should be taken up through Northampton Borough Council's Customer Care Procedure.
- Proper accounting for money of the Council - this is the responsibility of the Audit Committee - for information, contact 01604 837356
- The conduct or behaviour of a councillor or officer - this is the responsibility of the Standards Committee - for information, contact 01604 837101.

It cannot be guaranteed that items raised in this way will actually be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

Suggested Issues for Overview and Scrutiny

Name: ..................................................

Email: ..................................................

Telephone: .............................................

Issues suggested for inclusion on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

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Appendix B

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Scrutiny Panel

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

2. Outcomes Required

3. Information Required

4. Format of Information

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

6. Co-Options to the Review

7. Equality Impact Screening Assessment
   - Scrutiny Officer to undertake an Equality Impact Screening Assessment shortly after the Scoping meeting

8. Evidence gathering Timetable

7. Responsible Officers
• Lead Officer
• Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

8. Resources and Budgets

10 Final report presented by:

11 Monitoring procedure:
Appendix C - Overview and Scrutiny Protocols
Attendance at Scrutiny Meetings by Executive Members and Council Officers Protocol

Executive Members and Council officers may be required to attend before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels to answer questions and will be given at least five working days’ notice in writing by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for attendance at a calendared meeting, together with an indication of the issues being raised and the likely line of questioning. Appropriate representatives may be sent. Where possible, Members are asked to pre-notify the Overview and Scrutiny Officer of any specific factual information required in advance of the meeting.
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Appreciative Inquiry Protocol

1 Guidelines for operation of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry

Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries need to operate on a relatively informal basis in the sense that they are a forum for adding scrutiny input into a Review or issue that is currently being worked on by Officers within the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries have no delegated powers.

Meetings will take place as often as needed until the task is complete. Timescales will vary dependent upon the issue being investigated. The Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry should aim to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

If applicable, visits can also be very useful in helping Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries to get to grips with issues and should be arranged for the Appreciative Inquiry, or individual representatives of the Appreciative Inquiry, as needed.

Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries will be less formal than meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels. Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry meetings are not held in public session.

Meetings of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry require an approach that allows all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry to participate fully, and incorporates questioning and discussion with Officers. Informal ways of working are to be encouraged.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry should operate within the agreed plan for the task and must not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the Appreciative Inquiry for any other purpose. Councillors should not do anything to pre-empt or undermine the outcome of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry’s recommendations.

The Lead Councillor for the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has a role to make sure that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are kept informed regarding progress of tasks through regular progress reports.
2 Membership

Membership of an Appreciative Inquiry will initially be drawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is usual for a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be designated Lead Councillor for an Appreciative Inquiry but on occasions, a non-Executive, who is not a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, may be nominated Lead Councillor of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry. Should it be felt that membership of the Appreciative Inquiry should be widened to include non-Executives (who are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee); the Chair will issue an email inviting non-Executives to take part.

The membership of each Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry will vary, between a minimum of two Members to a maximum of seven, according to the purpose for which it is established.

Non-Executives may join the membership of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry, until the Appreciative Inquiry has begun to receive evidence. After this point the membership of the Appreciative Inquiry should not be increased as all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry will be required to receive and hear all evidence in order to make an informed decision at the end of the process. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will delegate authority to the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry to determine the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry.

Political balance will not apply. Should more than seven Members want to take part, a decision would be taken by the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry to ensure that at least one Member of each political group was allocated to the Appreciative Inquiry.

There is no Substitute Scheme for Members unable to attend any meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries, due to the fact that all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry will be required to receive and hear all evidence in order to make an informed decision at the end of the process.

Any of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries may appoint non-voting co-opted Members. Co-opted members will have an opportunity to influence the Appreciative Inquiry’s lines of enquiry, but they will not be able to take part in any vote, if one takes place. The Scrutiny Officer will provide relevant training to Co-opted Members on the Overview and Scrutiny process.

3 Gathering information

Once the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has been set up, it will actively gather its evidence. Rather than minutes of the meeting, notes are usually taken to record evidence given at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries.

4 Reflect, learn and draw conclusions

When the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has gathered all the evidence it needs, it will assess it and reflect on what it has learned.

The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry recommendations must be an expression of the views of the Appreciative Inquiry rather than a report to the Appreciative
Inquiry written by Officers. The Scrutiny Officer will meet with the Lead Councillor for the Appreciative Inquiry and draft the report on their behalf.

The final report will be based on facts collected and give a full picture of the issues under scrutiny. It will reflect the range of views presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry. The report will contain conclusions (key findings) and clear recommendations. When the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has finished its report, the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry presents the work to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As part of this process, they will explain the work that has been done and ask the Committee to support its recommendations. The Committee could also comment on the report or ask for further work to be done.

On occasions, there will not be the need for an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry to produce a full report and its comments and views will be recorded in the report of the relevant Portfolio Holder that will be presented to Cabinet. This highlights that Overview and Scrutiny has made a valuable contribution to the issue and its comments taken on board.
Northampton Borough Council Call-in Guidance

Appendix A to this guidance sets out a call-in checklist, and Appendix B provides a protocol for the running of the call-in hearing. Provided at Appendix C is the call-in request form.

What is a call-in?

Where there is concern about a decision which has just been taken, there is a formal procedure to allow it to be “called-in” so members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can review it before the decision is implemented. It is a key way of holding the Cabinet to account. A called-in decision cannot be implemented until it has been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which can examine the issue and question the decision-taker on the actions taken.

Call-in is intended to be used only in exceptional circumstances, the procedure being seen as a last resort through which Councillors may demand scrutiny of a decision they believe to be contrary to the authority’s decision making principles.

Who can call in a decision?

Any Councillor who is not a member of the Cabinet can start the call-in procedure. Decisions can be called in by:

• The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

What can be called-in?

Call-in powers relate to executive (Cabinet) functions. Subject to the exceptions listed below, any decision made by the Cabinet or a key decision made by an officer with delegated authority from the Cabinet may be called-in.

What cannot be called-in?

The following categories of decision cannot be called-in:

• a decision which is not a key decision, and which has been taken by an officer
under delegated powers. A non-key decision taken by the Leader or a Portfolio Holder under delegated power 
• a decision which the decision-taker has certified as urgent (giving reasons) in accordance with the Council’s Rules of 
Procedure; 
• a decision relating to a matter which has already been the subject of a call-in during the previous six months; 
• any decision relating to a non-Cabinet function, whether taken by a Committee or an officer under delegated powers; 
• a decision by, or to be taken by, Council; or 
• a decision taken at stage 4 of the call-in procedure.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot scrutinise individual decisions made by, or on behalf of, the Regulatory Committees of the Council, for example, decisions relating to development control, licensing, registration, consents and other permissions.

Although they may be key decisions (and included in the Forward Plan), decisions taken by the Cabinet when preparing annual budgets or new policy proposals for submission to Council will not be subject to call-in. In these circumstances the Council is responsible for the final decision.

When can a decision be called-in?

It is important that the call-in process is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay; the main tool of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services through detailed reviews, rather than call-ins.

A decision can be called-in when Members:

• believe it may be contrary to the normal requirements for decision-making
• believe it may be contrary to the Council’s agreed policy framework and/or budget
• need further information from the decision-taker to explain why it was taken

Call-in checklist

The above rules and criteria can be brought together in the checklist of questions (or tests) which appears at Appendix A to this document. Members can use this checklist when they are considering a call-in.

How does Call-in work?

Every decision which is subject to potential call-in cannot be implemented until the end of the call-in period. The call-in period lasts for three working days after the minutes of Cabinet have been published.

The call-in procedure itself follows four stages.

STAGE 1

A valid call-in request must be submitted in accordance with the current rules in the Constitution. The request must say who is making the call-in and to which decision it relates. It must also give brief reasons why the decision is being called in. A pro-forma is available from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer (copy attached at Appendix C).

Requests may also be submitted by electronic mail or fax. If the call-in is to be submitted by e-mail, only one Member need submit the actual form. However, individual e-mails (or letters) in support of the request must also be submitted by the other Member specified on the form before the end of the call-in period.
STAGE 2

When the officers receive a valid call-in request with respect to a decision, then that decision may not be implemented until that decision has completed the call-in procedure. Once a request to call-in has been properly made then a meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be convened to deal with the matter unless it will be quicker to place the matter on the agenda of a scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members who have requested the call-in will have the right to address the Committee when it deals with the issue.

STAGE 3

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the called-in decision and decide to take one of the following courses of action (the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s decision should not be adjourned or delayed without an exceptional reason):

• to allow the decision to be implemented without further delay;
• to refer the decision back to the Cabinet (irrespective of who the original decision-taker was) together with the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet will then take the final decision, and that decision may not be called in.
• to request the Cabinet to allow further time for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the issue and make observations at a later date;
• to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer as to whether the decision is contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the policy framework or the budget and, if applicable, to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer/Chief Finance Officer.

STAGE 4

Reference back to Cabinet

Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides to refer the decision back, the Cabinet must reconsider the decision in the light of any observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested more time to consider an issue, the Cabinet must have regard to the urgency, and to the Budget and Policy Framework Rules, when deciding whether to implement the decision.

Reference to the Monitoring Officer/Chief Finance Officer

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer any called-in decision to the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer if it considers it to be contrary to the policy framework or budget. The officer(s) will then submit a report on the matter to the next meeting of the Cabinet. A copy of this report will be sent to all Members of the Council. No action may be taken in respect of the decision or its implementation pending that meeting.

If, in that report, the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer is of the opinion that a decision referred to him/her by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not a departure from the policy framework or budget, the decision may be implemented immediately. A report to this effect will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information. If, however, a referred matter is deemed to be a removal from the policy framework or the budget by the Monitoring Officer and/or the
Chief Finance Officer, the Cabinet has two options:

- It may choose to adjust its decision to bring it within the policy framework or budget, in which case it can then be implemented. In these circumstances, the Cabinet would submit a report to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee explaining its actions.

- If the Cabinet does not wish to adjust its original decision, it must prepare a report for the Council. This report must include the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. No action may be taken in respect of the decision or its implementation until the Council has met to consider the matter.

Reference to Council

Subject to the provisions above, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may require that any called-in matter which has been deemed to be (and remains) contrary to the policy framework or budget is referred to the full Council. The report to Council will set out the views of the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer. The Council may:

- decide that the decision is within the existing policy framework and/or budget (in which case it can be implemented); or
- amend the financial regulations or policy concerned to encompass the decision (in which case it can be implemented); or
- agree that the decision is contrary to the policy framework or budget and require the Cabinet to reconsider the matter in accordance with the advice of the officer(s).
## Call-in Checklist

1. Can the decision actually be called-in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>If the answer to any of questions 1(a)-(g) is “yes” then the decision CANNOT be called-in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Does it relate to a non-executive function?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Was it a non-key decision taken by an officer under delegated powers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Was it classified as an urgent decision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Has this issue been called-in in the last 6 months?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Does the decision relate to an existing call-in (ie decisions taken in relation to a reference back)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Does the decision relate to the formulation of a policy or budget matter which requires full Council approval?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Was it a decision taken by, or to be taken by, full Council?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Sub-questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was the decision in accordance with the Council’s policy framework?</td>
<td>a) What is the relevant policy or strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Is the decision contrary to that policy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) If yes, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Was the decision in accordance with the agreed budget or budget</td>
<td>a) Is there funding for the proposal in an agreed budget/capital programme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures?</td>
<td>b) If no, have the rules for virement and supplementary estimates been observed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Was the decision taken in accordance with the principles of good</td>
<td>a) Does the decision comply with the Council’s Constitution, ie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decision-making?</td>
<td>• Articles of Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scheme of Delegation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rules of Procedure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Codes and Protocols</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Was the decision reasonable within the common meaning of the word, ie</td>
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<td></td>
<td>rational, based on sound judgement?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Was the decision reasonable within the legal definition of “reasonableness”,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ie was everything relevant taken into account, and was everything irrelevant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>disregarded?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Was the decision proportionate, ie is the action proportionate to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>desired outcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Was the decision taken on the basis of due consultation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f) Was the decision taken on the basis of professional advice from officers?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g) Were Human Rights respected and/or will the decision give rise to any Human Rights implications, ie, without discrimination, the right of an individual to:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• liberty and security</td>
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<td>• the enjoyment of their property</td>
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<tr>
<td>• a fair trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>• respect for private and family life</td>
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<tr>
<td>• freedom of thought, conscience and religion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• freedom of expression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• freedom of assembly and association</td>
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<tr>
<td>• etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) When the decision was taken, was there a presumption in favour of openness?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Has the decision been well explained, ie do you need more information?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Was it clear what the reasons for the decision were?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Was it clear what the desired outcomes were?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Was it clear what alternative options (if any) were considered?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Was it clear why the alternative options were not chosen?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Do you need any more information/clarification?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Call-in Protocol

The following protocol is intended to formalise the conduct of call-in hearings and the preparation work carried out in the run-up to such a hearing. It should be noted, however, that the protocol may be varied by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet the requirements of any particular circumstances.

Prior to the Call-in

1. A decision-taker’s statement will be published with the agenda for the meeting.

2. A caller-in’s statement will be published with the agenda for the meeting, should the caller-in wish to provide such a statement.

3. The caller-in and decision-taker will be invited to the meeting, together with any other parties relevant to the decision-making process, for example Chairmen of other Committees or Panels, Portfolio Holders or officers.

4. Any other relevant internal or external witnesses will be invited to the meeting.

5. It will be endeavoured to give seven days’ notice of a request to attend the meeting to all witnesses. If a question plan is to be produced, it will be endeavoured to give seven days’ notice of the questions planned to witnesses.

6. Prior to the meeting any Member who may have a conflict of interest, for example Overview and Scrutiny Members who may be scrutinising a decision they were involved in taking, will be given relevant advice by the Monitoring Officer.

Members and Officers giving account

1. There will be an expectation by the Committee that a Councillor or officer (or his/her deputy) must attend unless they have reasonable grounds for refusal, such as ill health, holiday or prior personal or business commitments which are inescapable or which it would be contrary to Council procedure or practice to cancel or rearrange. Where, in exceptional circumstances, the Councillor or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Chief Executive shall, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and the Councillor/officer arrange for an alternative date for attendance. In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the Chairman and
Vice-Chairman substitutes may attend on behalf of the Councillor and officer who would otherwise be expected to attend.

2. The Committee shall defer consideration of a call-in on one occasion only if no signatory to the call-in attends the meeting to which it is submitted.

3. Subject to the rules in respect of confidential or exempt information, all questions will be put and answered in public.

4. Questioning must be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust consistent with the Codes of Conduct and in a manner that avoids negative or undermining, interrogation or open or implied criticism.

5. Questions must be directly relevant to the subject matter of the call-in.

Officer Support

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer will provide support to the Chairman and Vice Chair throughout the call-in process.

2. The Borough Solicitor or a member of his staff will provide legal advice to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman throughout any call-in process.

3. The Chief Officer of the appropriate directorate will arrange:

   (a) For the Executive whose decision has been called in to have support throughout the call-in process.

   (b) For the Councillors who have instigated the call-in to have support throughout the call-in process. Any officer providing such support shall act independently and impartially in advising those Councillors.

The Call-in meeting

1. The call-in will be the first item of business on the agenda, in order that witnesses are not kept waiting.

2. Whilst waiting to be called to speak, witnesses should be seated in the public gallery. Once the witness has finished what they wish to say, they will be requested to leave the table.

3. The Chair will introduce the meeting, outlining the reasons for call-in and explain the procedure.

4. The caller-in will be invited to make a presentation outlining his or her main reasons for calling in the decision. A question and answer session will follow. Should either of the Call In Authors be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considering the Call In Request, they
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

will be present in the capacity as Call In Author and not as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They should not sit on the Committee, take part in the debate or vote, as this could be seen as a conflict of interest. The Call In Author should therefore send a substitute to sit on the Committee for the Call In Hearing.

5. The decision-taker will be invited to make a presentation outlining his or her main reasons for making the decision. A question and answer session will follow.

6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will ask questions of the Leader and/or Portfolio Holder and invite them to make presentations outlining their reasons for any recommendations to Cabinet on the issue concerned.

7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then invite relevant employees to give evidence and respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s questions. The Officers will be asked to give their reasons for any recommendations or advice to Members. A question and answer session will follow.

8. Any other relevant internal or external witnesses will be invited to make a presentation to the Committee without interruption, following which there will be a question and answer session.

9 The Committee will discuss the written evidence and responses to questions and may ask further questions for clarification.

10. Witnesses will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.

11. The caller-in will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.

12 The Chairman will sum up the findings regarding the Cabinet decision. If there are still concerns, the Chairman will lead in the determination of the recommendations with reasons for consideration by Cabinet.

13 At the conclusion of the debate and following responses to all relevant matters raised, the Chairman will ask the Committee to vote to determine whether or not it upholds the decision of the Executive/decision maker.

14 The Chair and Vice Chair will produce a report of the Committee’s findings, with .

Outcome

If the Committee does not uphold the decision of the Executive/decision taker it can refer it back to the decision maker for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or further recommendations. It can refer the matter to full Council if considered not to be in accordance with the budget or Policy Framework.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

The action the Council takes if a call-in is referred to it is detailed in the Council's Constitution.

The decision is notified to all interested parties and included on the Council’s document management system.
Call in Request Form

Decision taken by Cabinet
Delegated decision by ………………………

Date of the decision ………………………

Item Number ………………………

Title of the agenda item/report…………………………………………

Reasons for Call in
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

Is the decision taken considered to be inside or outside of the policy or budget framework agreed by the Council?

(Delete as applicable) YES/NO
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Explanation if Yes (optional)

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
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Proposed alternative course of action (optional)

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Proposed Documentation and witnesses for the call in (optional)

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

Signed  Cllr…………………………..
Signed  Cllr……………………..
1. Introduction

1.1 “Councillor Call for Action” (CCfA) was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and came into force on 1 April 2009.

1.2 The Act enables any member of the Council to refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee any Local Government matter or any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward/division.¹

1.3 The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward or division, which the Councillor represents. A Councillor can refer a matter even if no citizen has asked him/her to consider it, and there is no requirement for Councillors in multi-member wards to agree – any of the ward Councillors can refer a matter.

2. Limitations

2.1 It must be noted that CCfA is not guaranteed to solve a given problem. CCfA can provide a method for discussing such problems and, through discussion, trying to overcome them.

3. Issues excluded from referral as a CCfA

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors) (Excluded Matters) (England) Order 2008 excludes the following matters from referral as a CCfA:

¹ For definitions of a local government matter and a local crime and disorder matter please see explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3.
• Individual complaints concerning personal grievances or commercial issues.

• Any matter relating to an individual or entity where there is already a statutory right to a review or appeal (other than the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman), for example:

  Planning and licensing applications and appeals
  Council Tax/Housing Benefits complaints and queries
  Issues currently under dispute in a court of law.

• Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of its sub-committees.²

3.2 A referral, as long as it is not an excluded matter, will ensure that the matter is included on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.

3.3 A referral made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is seen as being the end of the CCfA process (the last resort) and not the first step.

4. Steps to be taken prior to making a Councillor Call for Action referral

4.1 Prior to a Councillor referring a matter as a CCfA to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Councillor must have tried to resolve the issue/problem themselves using all mechanisms and resources available to them at ward level. Councillors should:

• If a local crime and disorder matter, raise the issue through the Community Safety Partnership to find a way to resolve the issue.

• Ensure that all relevant partner organisations have been informed of the issue and given enough time to resolve it, for example through formal letters written on behalf of constituents, discussion at public meetings, petitions, communication with local MPs and Councillors in other Councils etc.

• Ensure that all relevant internal potential routes to solution have been followed, for example informal discussions with officers and/or members, questions at committees, motions on the agenda at full Council etc.

• Ensure that this is not an issue that is currently being or should be pursued via the Council’s complaints procedure.

² For definitions of vexatious, discriminatory and not reasonable please see explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3.
Check whether or not any other form of local scrutiny is investigating the issue, for example, Northamptonshire Joint Scrutiny Committee or one of the Northamptonshire District Council’s Scrutiny Committees.

4.2 Attached at Appendix 2 is a flow chart detailing the above process.

5. **How to make a Councillor Call for Action referral**

5.1 If the issue/problem is still not resolved the Councillor can refer it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a “Councillor Call for Action”. To do this the Councillor should complete and submit to the Scrutiny Officer a CCfA Request Form outlining what the issue is and what steps have been taken towards a resolution. The request form, a copy is attached as Appendix 1, is available on the Council’s website (www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny), or from the Scrutiny Officer. The request form for a CCfA includes:

- The name of the Councillor and ward they represent
- Title of the CCfA and date of submission
- Why you think the issue should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- A brief précis of the main areas of concern
- What evidence has been collated in support of the CCfA
- Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA
- What you have done to try and resolve the issue prior to requesting a CCfA
- Whether the CCfA is currently the subject of legal action by any party (to your knowledge) or is being examined by a formal complaints process
- Whether there are any deadlines associated with the CCfA of which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be aware.

5.2 The Scrutiny Officer will receive the referral form, log it to track its progress, and, with the advice of the Borough Solicitor, will assess the issue to ensure that it is not a matter excluded from referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 The Scrutiny Officer will inform the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the item will be included on the next Committee agenda. The Councillor will be informed whether or not their referral has been successful.

5.4 A successful referral will ensure that the CCfA will be placed on the next agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the members of the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.
6. **Decision of the Committee whether to take the matter further**

6.1 In deciding whether or not to take the matter further the Committee will consider:

- Anything that the Councillor has done in relation to this matter; and
- Representations made by the Councillor as to why the Committee should take the matter up. (Councillors have the option of either presenting their CCfA form without supporting papers, or of preparing a report setting out their views. Any reports prepared by Councillors will be circulated with the agenda alongside the CCfA referral form).

6.2 The criteria the Committee will use to decide whether or not to take the matter further include:

- Is the Committee satisfied that all reasonable attempts have been made to resolve the issue by the ward Councillor? And do the responses received by the referring Councillor demonstrate that the matter is not being progressed?
- Has the Committee considered a similar issue recently – if yes have the circumstances or evidence changed?
- Is there a similar or related issue, which is the subject of a review on the current work programme? It may be more appropriate to link the new issue to an existing review, rather than hold a separate CCfA hearing. Relevant time pressures on resolving the CCfA should be taken into account.
- Have all relevant service areas or partner organisations been informed and been given enough time to resolve the issue? What response has the Councillor received?
- Is this a case that is being or should be pursued via the Council’s corporate complaints procedure?
- Is it relating to a “quasi-judicial” matter or decision such as planning or licensing?
- Is the issue part of an individual’s own personal agenda (an issue of genuine local concern should have an impact on the local community).
- Is this an issue currently being looked at by another form of local scrutiny, for example Northamptonshire Joint Scrutiny Forum or one of the Northants District Councils.
- As with all scrutiny, does the matter referred have the potential for scrutiny to produce recommendations, which could realistically be
implemented and lead to improvements for anyone living or working in the referring member’s ward?

6.3 In considering the CCfA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may invite the relevant Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service or external organisation to discuss the issue with the Committee and answer any questions.

6.4 If the Committee decides not to accept the CCfA referral it must inform the Councillor and provide reasons.

6.5 If the Committee decides to accept the CCfA referral, it must decide how it intends to take the matter forward and include the CCfA in its work programme.

6.6 This could include:

**Before holding a formal hearing:**

- Asking the service area(s)/partner organisation(s) to respond to the CCfA
- Referring the issue to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel to undertake a more in-depth review.

**At the formal hearing**

- Asking for further evidence and/or witnesses to be brought to a future meeting then making recommendations to the Cabinet/partner organisation.

7. Potential outcomes

7.1 Following a formal hearing, there are a number of potential outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could determine not to make a report or recommendations (for example it is not considered the right time to consider a particular issue), with the ward Councillor notified in writing;

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could determine that it is a complex issue that requires further investigation and commission the appropriate Scrutiny Panel to undertake a review of the issue;

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could write a report and make recommendations on the CCfA to the Cabinet and/or relevant partners.

---

3 Any formal hearing will be run along similar lines to a call-in hearing. Please see the explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3 for further details.
7.2 Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Scrutiny Panel has completed its work on the CCfA referral the member who made the CCfA referral will receive a copy of any report or recommendations made. The report will also be made available on the Council’s website, unless the matter was an exempt item, in which case the report cannot be made public.

8. Timescales

8.1 Once a CCfA has been assessed as not being a matter, which is excluded from referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the item will be included on the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

8.2 If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to take the matter forward, the Hearing will normally be held as an item on the next available agenda. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there are unavoidable time constraints, a separate meeting may be convened.

8.3 Should a CCfA Hearing result in recommendations to Cabinet being made, Cabinet will usually respond to the recommendations, setting out any action it intends to take, within 28 days of the date of the Cabinet agenda on which the recommendations were placed.

8.4 Should a CCfA Hearing result in recommendations to partner organisations, such organisations will also be requested to make a response to the recommendations, although they are under no legal obligation to do so.
Appendix 1 - Councillor Call for Action Request Form

This form should be used by any Councillor who would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a Councillor Call for Action in their ward.

Councillor

Ward:

Title of your Councillor Call for Action:

Date of Submission:

Have you approached the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the same issue in the past six months?

Yes □  No □

Would you like your response by:

Email □  Letter □
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why you think the issue should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Please give a brief precis of the main areas of concern:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Please supply evidence that you have in support of your CCfA:</th>
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<th>Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA:</th>
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<th>How have you tried to resolve the issue:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Is the CCfA currently the subject of legal action by any party (to your knowledge) or being examined by a formal complaints process?</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any deadlines associated with the CCfA of which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be aware:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Please complete and return the form to:

Overview and Scrutiny
Northampton Borough Council
Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton NN1 1DE  email: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk
Appendix 2 – Summary of CCfA Mechanism

**Ward Councillor** identifies issue of local concern.

Ward Councillor **agrees** to champion request.

Ward Councillor and relevant officers, members and relevant local partners **try to resolve the issue informally**.

Ward Councillor **agrees to refer** difficult problem that cannot be resolved as a formal CCfA. **Request logged with Scrutiny Officer.**

The Scrutiny Officer informs the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a CCfA request form has been received, and with advice from the Borough Solicitor ensures it is not an exempt item, and includes it on the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **agrees** to review and includes the CCfA on its work programme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **decides not** to review the issue and gives its reasons.

Following investigation, draft report agreed informally by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and issued for response to the recommendations.

**Cabinet** usually responds to recommendations within 28 days of receipt. Relevant partners requested to respond to recommendations as appropriate.

Implementation/monitoring of agreed recommendations and appropriate feedback on progress.

Ward Councillor **rejects** request in line with best practice and guidance. Signposting/advice about other mechanisms, eg complaints.

Ward Councillor and local partners resolve issue – no further action required.
Appendix 3 - Explanatory Notes

1. Definition of a local government matter and a local crime and disorder matter

Local government matter
For the purpose of the Act a local government matter, in relation to a member of a local authority is one which:

- relates to the discharge of any function of the authority;
- affects all or part of the electoral area for which the referring member is elected or any person who lives or works in the area (i.e. it must be specific to a particular locality); and
- is not an excluded matter.

However, the guidance produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Improvement and Development Agency advises that, to give full effect to CCfA, the interpretation of “Local Government matter” needs to be broader. This includes issues relating to the Council’s partners, in line with the area focus of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), and the fact that an Authority’s duties increasingly impact on other organisations, and involve partners within and outside the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Local crime and disorder matter
A local crime and disorder matter, in relation to a member of a local authority, has been defined to mean a matter concerning:

(a) crime and disorder (including in particular forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); or

(b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances that affects the electoral area represented by the member, or the people who live or work in that area.

2. Definitions of “vexatious”, “persistent”, “discriminatory” and “not reasonable”

Statutory regulations deal with matters that can be excluded from CCfA, stating, “any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee is to be excluded”.

Vexatious/Persistent
Deciding whether a request is vexatious is a balancing exercise, taking into account all the circumstances of the case. There is no rigid test or definition, and it will often be easy to recognise. The key question is
whether the request is likely to cause distress, disruption or irritation, without any proper or justified cause.

Issues around persistency are implied by this definition. However, a persistent request may well be entirely valid – it may relate to a systematic problem that has not been effectively resolved.

CCfAs need to be looked at on their merits, rather than on the basis of who is bringing them, or whether somebody thinks there is an ulterior motive for them being brought.

Where a request for a CCfA is clearly vexatious, detailed reasons for coming to this decision will be given to the Councillor concerned. There could, however, be instances where changes to the scope of the CCfA, or its focus, could make it more acceptable while still meeting the Councillor’s requirements.

**Discriminatory**

A modern interpretation of the word “discrimination” is provided at Section 45 of the Equality Act 2006, in relation to religion and belief, as follows:

A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if on the grounds of the religion or belief of B or of any other person except A, A treats B less favourably than he treats others. This definition can easily be amended to deal with other forms of discrimination, such as discrimination for reasons of sex and/or race. So a discriminatory CCfA might be one which implies or states that a group of people or an area should receive better, or worse, services on account of that group’s predominant religion, race, gender or other characteristic, as covered by discrimination legislation.

**Not reasonable**

It is suggested that, in the interests of transparency, authorities do not interpret “not reasonable” as being the same as the legal word “unreasonable”. It is best to consider it as a qualifier to the word “vexatious”, as a vexatious request is likely not to be reasonable and a request that is not reasonable is likely to be vexatious.

3. **Structure of the CCfA hearing**

A CCfA hearing will be based on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s protocol for dealing with call-in hearings.

The CCfA protocol (appendix 4) is intended to formalise the conduct of CCfA hearings and the preparation work carried out in the run-up to such a hearing. It should be noted, however, that the protocol may be varied by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet the requirements of any particular circumstances.
Prior to the hearing

1. The CCfA Request Form and any additional papers provided by the referring Councillor will be published with the agenda for the meeting.

2. The referring Councillor and relevant Portfolio Holder(s), officers and partners will be invited to the meeting.

3. Any other relevant external witnesses will be invited to the meeting.

4. Five working days’ notice of a request to attend the meeting will be given to all participants. If a question plan is to be produced, five working days’ notice of the questions planned will also be given to participants.

5. Prior to the meeting any member who may have a conflict of interest will be given relevant advice by the Monitoring Officer.

The hearing

1. The CCfA hearing will normally be the first item of business on the agenda, in order that participants and other witnesses are not kept waiting.

2. Participants and witnesses will be required to wait in a separate seating area or the public gallery and called to the table by the Chair at the appropriate point.

3. The referring Councillor will be invited to make a presentation outlining his or her main reasons for referring the matter as a CCfA. A question and answer session will follow.

4. Any other parties relevant to the hearing, for example Portfolio Holders, officers or partners, will be invited to make presentations
outlining their response to the CCfA. Question and answer sessions will follow.

5. Any other relevant external witnesses will be invited to make a presentation to the Committee without interruption, following which there will be a question and answer session.

6. Witnesses will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.

7. The referring Councillor will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Guidance

1. As the Overview and Scrutiny meetings are business meetings of the Council, only members of the Committee and staff supporting Overview and Scrutiny should sit at the Committee table for the duration of the meeting.

2. Only Committee members will be able to ask questions of individuals presenting evidence to the committee.

3. Individuals other than Committee members should inform the Chair prior to the meeting of their wish to speak at the meeting. Whilst waiting to be called to speak, they should be seated in the public gallery. The Chair will decide the appropriate time to call the speaker to the table. Once the speaker has finished what they wish to say, they will be requested to leave the table.

4. The public will be able to speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting if they are providing relevant information to an agenda item. It is important for the efficiency of the meeting that individuals wishing to make the same points are represented by one individual who can state that they are a representative. Public speaking will however be limited to three minutes.

5. Where the public wish to raise new issues for scrutinising this should be done in writing.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings will normally commence at 6pm and finish at approximately 8pm. If required by the Chair, the Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

will produce a timed agenda sheet; i.e. estimated timescales for each agenda item, for the Chair's to use as a guide during the meeting.
1.1 The new political structures adopted in May 2010 provided for one Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising 15 councillors whose job it is to:

- Receive Call-ins of Cabinet decisions
- Establish a yearly Scrutiny Work Programme
- Set up Scrutiny Panels to scrutinise policy development and service delivery
- Monitor the outcomes of scrutiny reviews

1.2 Scrutiny Panels play a critical role in informing future policy development in the council as well as scrutinising current policies and services both inside and outside the council.

1.3 It is important therefore that all non-executive councillors have the opportunity to be involved in the work of the Scrutiny Panels as it will:

- Give a wider democratic representation to inform the groups work
- Widen the knowledge and skills resource base of councillors involved in scrutiny.
- Give them a ‘hands-on’ opportunity to make a difference in areas of work that they have a specific interest in

1.4 It is hoped that non-executive councillors will elect to work on at least one Scrutiny Panel a year. The following will be put into place to help councillors to be involved:

- The draft Scrutiny Work Programme will be circulated to all non-executive councillors in May at the Annual Council
meeting, asking if they have a specific interest in any of the investigations scheduled in the forthcoming year.

- Scrutiny Panels will comprise a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Councillor and one non-executive Councillor. It is envisaged that an Overview and Scrutiny Councillor will chair the Scrutiny Panel.

1.5 In this Protocol the term "non-executive Councillor" refers to all Councillors other than the Leader and members of the Cabinet.
This Protocol defines Northampton Borough Council's approach to communications for its Overview and Scrutiny function when dealing with the media.

It applies to the publication of Overview and Scrutiny review reports and reactively dealing with any resulting enquiries from the media.

This protocol is designed to achieve three outcomes:-

- To publish and publicise the outcomes from the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny reviews;
- To be clear about roles and responsibilities in the Council for publishing the outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny reviews in relation to the Council’s policy on communications with the media; and
- To make sure the Council has a consistent and uniform approach in dealing with the media

On publication of a review the Overview and Scrutiny Officer will complete an Overview and Scrutiny Review Information sheet, copy attached at Appendix A. The Council’s Corporate Communications team will post the information on the Council’s website and email it to local media contacts. The information sheet will include a Chair’s statement representing the outcomes of the Scrutiny Panel and contact details for the Chair.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel will be available for media enquiries directly. The Chair’s statement will represent the views and outcomes of the Scrutiny Panel. Advice on handling enquiries will be available from the Corporate Communications Team.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

In dealing with the media it is crucial that issues are identified that may provide an opportunity for positive publicity or which may be contentious and plan for them as early as possible. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will update the Corporate Communications team about reviews that are planned and may be due to be published.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendations:- .................................................................

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Chair’s Statement:- .................................................................

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A copy of the full report is available from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and will be published on the Council’s website: www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny
All Officers

All officers have a duty to support all members of the Council. In respect of Overview and Scrutiny, this could involve attending meetings, giving briefings, advising Overview and Scrutiny members and providing information.

In addition to this, the following groups of officers have specific roles to support the overview and scrutiny process:

- Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service
- Overview and Scrutiny Officer
- Meeting Services

Senior Officers

The role of Directors and Heads of Service is to:

- Co-ordinate officer attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and Scrutiny Panels from within their teams when requested.
- Co-ordinate the preparation and submission of materials to Committees and Scrutiny Panels when requested, and within the agreed timescales.
- Support Portfolio Holders in responding to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations
- Provide briefings for Committee on issues relating to their service, as requested by members.

Overview and Scrutiny Officer

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer is a significant dedicated resource to support the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and offers Overview and Scrutiny Committee independent support that is not aligned with a service-based Department.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer is to provide advice, guidance and support to the Council’s overview and scrutiny function. In addition to direct support to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this includes promoting the overview and scrutiny function internally and externally, and ensuring that it is operating to best effect.

The Overview and Scrutiny officer provides support to the Committee in drawing up work programmes, planning reviews, and preparing reports and recommendations. They will provide direct research support or commission professional advice / identify external witnesses as appropriate. The Overview and Scrutiny officer also:

- Supports the Committee chairmen in the setting of agendas,
- Informs senior officers of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work programmes and co-ordinate support from these officers, ensuring that these officers are notified as early as possible of any evidence requirements.

It is not the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to provide political support to individual Members or Groups.
Overview and Scrutiny Councillor’s Conduct Protocol

Effective Overview and Scrutiny of the Council’s policies, decision making and delivery of services is a legal requirement of non-executive councillors.

This Protocol seeks to clarify the standards of conduct expected of those Councillors involved in the Overview and Scrutiny and Scrutiny Panel’s processes and give guidance to those councillors who are involved in this work.

Compliance to the following standards is required of all Overview and Scrutiny councillors and a breach of the standards will be referred in the first instance to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and if unresolved to the Chair of the Standards Committee:

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels will conduct their business in a friendly and orderly way in order to maximise the participation of all Members and facilitate constructive debate. In so doing, Councillors will refrain from personal criticism of other Councillors and officers, whatever their position in the Council.

2. Attendance by all Councillors is important to ensure the democratic processes are achieved, all points of view are given and full discussion takes place with continuity of discussion and debate. Those councillors appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Scrutiny Panels will therefore be expected to give priority to attending scheduled meetings.
3. Individual Councillors will be expected to uphold the highest standards of probity and integrity as laid down in the Member’s Code of Conduct and set out in the Council’s Constitution. They will use their powers of scrutiny in a manner worthy of the trust placed in them by the local people.

4. Scrutiny Councillors will be expected to engage in all scrutiny learning and development opportunities provided by the Council in order to carry out their roles as effective scrutineers.

5. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels will ensure effective working relationships with the Party Whips.
Pre-decision scrutiny of Forward Plan items Protocol

The Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to outline his aims and objectives for the year and issues likely to be in the Forward Plan.

From this the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers areas where Overview and Scrutiny will contribute.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer includes any additional Forward Plan items, not considered by the above process, on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee determines which items it would like an input into, based on strategic impact, relevance to the Committee’s work programme, public interest and/or financial implications, and Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of the Chair, advises the relevant Director of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s request for pre-decision Scrutiny. The Director will consider the request, in particular in respect of timings and will then provide a response to the Chair. The request for pre-decision Scrutiny also requires the agreement of the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Director and Portfolio Holder will attend the meeting to discuss the issue and set out the nature of the matter under consideration, the key issues identified, any constraints, timescale for a decision, intended impact and a summary of progress to date.
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee discusses the issue and identifies any points it would like addressed in the final report. These are minuted.

If necessary, and timescales allow, a further report may be requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report author drafts the final report for Cabinet, clearly identifying points raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and demonstrating how they have been addressed. This will clearly demonstrate how Overview and Scrutiny is contributing to better cross-party decision-making.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not usually have an input at this stage, although they would retain the right to call-in the decision after it had been made. Where it was felt appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a draft final report for Cabinet, it must be approved for release by the relevant Corporate Director, the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder, before submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The final report is submitted to Cabinet.
Protocol for Public Address at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels

It is the stated intention of Northampton Borough Council to seek the views and encourage the active participation of its citizens whenever possible. Such an opportunity exists within the agenda of public council meetings under the heading of **Public Address**.

An address by a member of the public on an issue which is due to be discussed at a Committee/Panel Meeting can make a valued contribution to the understanding of the Committee/Panel and to the ultimate decision making process.

As such it is important that anyone using the Public Address process should do so in a responsible and respectful manner and in order to maximise the benefit of their contribution they should:

- Ensure their contribution is within the time limit set by the chairperson (normally 3 minutes).
- Ensure their comments are directly related to the agenda item on which they have requested to talk.
- Avoid repeating points made by earlier public speakers; repetitious comments will be curtailed by the chair.

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Group or organisation represented</th>
<th>Agenda Item and Main point or focus of address</th>
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Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

REPORTING PROCESS

1. It will be the role of the Scrutiny Panel to cause a report to be prepared on a subject that has been assigned to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. The report will contain relevant evidence and/or opinion from persons who have been asked to contribute. They will be asked to confirm the accuracy of the evidence/opinion in it. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer who is supporting the Scrutiny Panel, will prepare the report in draft and invite the Scrutiny Panel to approve it at the next suitable meeting.

3. Once approved, the report will be sent to Heads whose Service is affected by its contents. The Heads of Service will be invited to comment on the accuracy of the contents, especially on technical matters within their competence. They will submit any such comments to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer within 10 working days of receiving the invitation.

4. If the Overview and Scrutiny Officer so decides, having received any such comments, a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel will be convened to decide whether to review its approval of the report.

5. The report once finally approved, will be submitted at the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its approval.
6. The report, once approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be submitted at the next available meeting of the Cabinet for its consideration and acceptance. It is expected that the Portfolio Holder affected by the contents of the report, and the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel will attend relevant meetings of the Cabinet and of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will meet, within about two months of the date of the meeting at which Cabinet first considered the report, to consider the Cabinet's response to the report and, in particular, its acceptance of the report recommendations.

8. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will monitor their implementation at a meeting within six months thereafter, by questioning the relevant Portfolio Holder.

9. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is unhappy with the implementation it will meet again until it is.
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Scrutiny Panel Protocol

Guidelines for operation of Scrutiny Panels

Scrutiny Panels need to operate on a relatively informal basis in the sense that they are a forum for information gathering and discussion between group members and officers rather than a formal decision making body. They have no delegated powers.

Information about each new Scrutiny Panels will be included on the Council’s intranet site on the Overview and Scrutiny webpage.

Early within the project and wherever possible, the Scrutiny Panel should identify details of any co-optees or contributors required to further the gathering of evidence and enhance the process or provide specific knowledge.

Meetings will take place as often as needed until the task is complete, on average around every six weeks. Following the scoping (planning) meeting, the Panel should aim to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

Visits can also be very useful in helping Scrutiny Panels to get to grips with issues and should be arranged for the Panel, or individual representatives of the Panel, as needed.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Panels will be less formal than meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They require an approach that allows all members of the Panel to participate fully, and incorporates questioning and discussion with contributors. Informal ways of working are to be encouraged. There will be considerable discussion between members the Panel and people asked to give information.

In the event that the task involves research, the Panel must always ascertain whether such research is/has already been undertaken elsewhere e.g. Overview and Scrutiny Committee, directorate, partner organisation.

The chair of the Scrutiny Panel has a role to make sure all Councillors have the opportunity to know about activities of the Scrutiny Panel. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be kept informed regarding progress of tasks through commission planning and progress reports. All Councillors can obtain information at any time during a review via the Council’s intranet site or the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

In discussing issues to reach conclusions and make recommendations it is hoped that the Panel will be able to reach agreement by consensus. If following discussion on a particular issue, agreement cannot be reached; a minority view on a particular issue will be included in any report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the Scrutiny Panel should operate within the agreed plan for the task and must not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the group for any other purpose. This
also applies to Councillors not on the group who have requested information about the work being undertaken.

Councillors should not do anything to pre-empt or undermine the outcome of a task and finish group’s recommendations.

The chair of the Scrutiny Panel has joint responsibility, with the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for the issuing a media briefing in relation to completed review work and any subsequent media interaction needed. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer will assist with this role in liaison with the Corporate Communications Unit.

The review process

Planning and scoping

Councillors need to be thoroughly involved in the planning of a review. Having been given an indication of what the scope should be through the agreed suggestion form, the Scrutiny Panel should consider the specific issues it will cover and agree a plan for the task. They should be assisted in this by advice from officers.

The plan should set out:

1. A clear statement of the scrutiny topic.
2. The aim (or purpose) of the project.
3. The scope of the project - what will be included and excluded.
4. Any specific questions to be answered.
5. Specific concerns or issues, which should be addressed.
6. How it will contribute to achieving Corporate Priorities.
7. Initial list of key stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve.
8. Initial list of witnesses, both internal and external, to involve.
9. Timescale for completion of the task.

Within the agreed scope, members of the Scrutiny Panel decides what information it needs and what questions to ask and if external expertise should be involved. Where needs are identified consideration should be given as to why that information/contact etc is necessary. This may include which people or organisations should be consulted and at what stage further consultation may be appropriate. In addition, the group should consult appropriate contacts on their views at the planning stage – this should include the equalities and communications teams.

Gathering information

Once the planning is finished, the group will actively gather its evidence. Some of this will be written information, such as council documents, national guidance or information from organisations providing a similar service. Information can also be collected by asking people questions. Evidence to Scrutiny Panels from officers should be fact-based and not contain recommendations unless presented in the form of options. Questioning should be aimed at trying to understand and explore issues rather than at catching the witness out. Members of the group should avoid making statements rather than asking questions. Information might also be gathered from user groups, the public, other interested parties or partners. Sometimes the group will think that their enquiries would benefit from a site visit or other activities such as by directly trying the service.

Site visits by members of a Scrutiny Panel can be an extremely valuable part of the process and could inform Councillors’ questioning of subsequent contributors.

If the Panels want to hold a public meeting to seek views on an issue they can. Members of Scrutiny Panels should be engaging with other organizations, partners, user groups, other councils etc and talking to people who are affected by the issue being considered to make sure they are gathering information.
Rather than minutes of the meeting, notes are taken to record evidenced given at meetings of the Scrutiny Panels. The notes allow people who have contributed information to check if has been understood properly.

**Reflect, learn and draw conclusions**

When the Panel has gathered all the evidence it needs, it will assess it and reflect on what it has learned. A draft report is written to help this process. This helps the Panel to draw conclusions from what they have learned. The report of the Scrutiny Panel’s recommendations must be an expression of the views of the Panel rather than a report to the Panel written by Officers. This means that it is important for members of the Panel to express their views at the drafting stage.

The relevant department will normally be given a chance to comment on the draft report before the group makes recommendations. This is an opportunity for factual corrections to be made. Sometimes the report relates to work by bodies outside the council. In that case, these bodies may be consulted.

**Report findings and recommendations**

At the end of each review reports need to be produced that are written in clear English. The reports must outline the information gathered and information be presented in a variety of ways so that they are interesting and easy to read.

The final report will be based on facts collected and give a full picture of the issues under scrutiny. It will reflect the range of views presented to the Scrutiny Panel. The report will contain conclusions (key findings) and clear recommendations.

Generally, when the report is endorsed it will be by consensus among all members of the group. However, occasionally agreement cannot be reached, so the views of all members will then be reflected in the report.

When the Scrutiny Panel has finished its report, the Chair of that Panel presents the work to the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As part of this process, they will explain the work that has been done and ask the Committee to support its recommendations. The Committee could also comment on the report or ask for further work to be done.

**Producing the Report**

Having considered all the evidence the Panel will reach conclusions and make recommendations that will be made public in a report. However, organisations that have participated in the review will be sent a draft copy; this will enable them to comment on the factual accuracy of the evidence relating to their organisation and inform the group of implications of the recommendations that may not have been considered.

Findings and recommendations of Scrutiny Panels will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for endorsement before submission to Cabinet and/or Council.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will monitor the implementation of the recommendations that have been made approximately six months after Cabinet has received the report.
Overview and Scrutiny Site Visit Protocol

The purpose of this Protocol is to provide guidance on the format of site visits carried out as part of a Scrutiny Review and on the collection and reporting of evidence by Members of the Scrutiny Panels on such site visits.

Site visits can also be very useful in helping Scrutiny Panels to get to grips with issues and should be arranged as needed.

1. When a scrutiny site visit is to be conducted the host should be sent:
   - Information on the purpose of the visit
   - Information on the Scrutiny Review and how comments may be used

2. Before a site visit Members of the Scrutiny Panel will be provided with:
   - An information sheet including relevant details (and a map if necessary)

3. The Scrutiny Officer will attend the site visit, make notes and produce a report on the findings of the site visit for the consideration of the relevant Scrutiny Panel details of which will be included within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

4. Members of the Scrutiny Panel, who have attended the site visit, will have the opportunity to add additional feedback on the report of the site visit at a future Scrutiny Panel meeting.

5. The Scrutiny Panel will have the opportunity to decide how this additional feedback should be used, for example, whether it supports previous evidence, identifies the need to collect further evidence or identifies a new issue to scrutinise that is within the scope of the Scrutiny Panel.

NB: Members should be aware that written feedback will form part of the evidence available to the Scrutiny Panel and will also constitute a background paper that will be available on request.

Attendance at the Site Visit

1. A mutually convenient date will be set with the host and the visiting Scrutiny Panel Members.

2. All Scrutiny Panel Members will be notified of the date and timings for the site visit and be informed of relevant transport arrangements.
Members of the Scrutiny Panel are committed to developing an effective relationship between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members; therefore on occasions a Scrutiny Panel may invite the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend a Scrutiny site visit. Attendance by the Portfolio Holder at any Scrutiny site visit is at the discretion of the Chair. It will be explained to the Portfolio Holder that their role on the visit would be in the capacity as an observer and as such any questioning will be directed to the host by Members of the Scrutiny Panel only.

Overview and Scrutiny Members acknowledge and respect the different rights and roles of both Scrutiny and Cabinet Members, and recognise the interdependency of the two functions on each other.

Support

To support this Protocol the Scrutiny Officer will provide:

- Information on the purpose of the site visit
- Information on the Scrutiny Review and how comments may be used in the evidence base
- Support for Members of the Scrutiny Panel, which includes in terms of providing advice to the Chair and Scrutiny Panel Members, research, production of briefing notes and drafting the Scrutiny Panel's final report
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
WORK PROGRAMME PROTOCOL

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will produce a work programme, which sets out the work of the three Scrutiny Panels for the 12-month period, although it may go beyond this.

The work programme will comprise priority issues, so as to allow for the inclusion of ad hoc and urgent items during the year.

In compiling the work programme for the forthcoming year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take into consideration the overall effect of the strategic plans of the Council, including:

- The Community Strategy
- The Corporate Plan
- The Council’s Annual Budget
- Forward Plan
- The Leader and Portfolio Holders priorities for the year

Overview and Scrutiny will consider other issues in addition to its work programme. In the first instance an approach should be made to the Chair and Vice Chair for an issue to be included.

It is important for Overview and Scrutiny to report its workings and recommendations for future work programmes to Council at least once a year.

A draft work programme will then be presented to the first meeting in the new Municipal year of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for adoption. The order in which the work programme will run is a matter for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine. Once adopted, the work programme will be published.
WITNESS PROTOCOL

1  GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS REGARDING WITNESS EVIDENCE

Witnesses are an essential ingredient when undertaking an overview and scrutiny review and their evidence is an invaluable source of information. Attending an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel will often be a new experience for people. It should be remembered that external witnesses are present on a voluntary basis.

The following guidance is written to ensure the experiences for witnesses when giving evidence are positive and stress-free.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer will:

1  Give witnesses as much notice as possible of the time, date and place of the meeting at which their evidence is to be taken

2  Inform the witness of the purpose of the review and the areas on which the overview and scrutiny body will want to question them

3  Wherever possible give the witness a list of questions, or the line of questioning, in advance, explaining that this will not be a restrictive list

4  Provide witnesses with copies of reports, papers and background information where appropriate

5  Indicate whether any written documents are required in support of the witness’s oral evidence. Requests for presentations will be made a minimum of one week prior to the meeting.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

6 Invite witnesses to submit written evidence, if appropriate, and where this is provided it should be circulated to the committee/group in advance of the meeting at which the evidence will be taken.

7 Inform witnesses that the Overview and Scrutiny meeting is held in public, is open to the press and that all reports are public documents unless they contain exempt or confidential information.

8 Inform witnesses that Scrutiny Panels are not public meetings, but the evidence submitted to them are submitted for public viewing.

9 Respect the right of external witnesses to decline to attend council meetings, but submit written evidence instead.

10 Arrange for witnesses to be introduced to the Chair of the meeting prior to the start of the meeting.

11 Introduce witnesses to the committee/group.

12 Ensure all witnesses are treated with courtesy and respect.

13 Ensure all questions to witnesses are made in an orderly manner under the direction of the Chair and that councillors ask questions relevant to the objectives of the review.

14 Provide the Review findings to all witnesses who request them.
2 QUESTIONING TO GAIN THE MOST FROM WITNESSES

The evidence of witnesses to a review may often be the most valuable source of information. However, if the questions are not the right ones they may not be effective in soliciting the best information. Asking questions is not about profiling yourself, making a personal speech or arguing with witnesses as this can put them off giving evidence. Considering what questions to ask and the types of question to use to gain focused information often means preparation beforehand. Below are examples that can be considered.

Question types

Most people will be familiar with the two basic question types ‘open’ and ‘closed’. These can be described as follows:

Closed:
Are used when you require a brief factual answer as they close down discussion e.g.

“What is your name?”

“Do you work in other organisations?”

Open:
Are used to gain more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer as they stimulate further discussion on an issue e.g.

“Please give us an example of how your service has improved?”

“Tell us about how your service is organised”

But there are also some questioning styles, which can elicit different types of responses and therefore different outcomes.

In preparing for questioning witnesses, it might be helpful to think about the way in which questions can be asked to get the outcome that you are looking for.

Probing:
Seek verifiable data and usually start with the words who, what, why, where, when, or how. They are used to gather information about a situation e.g.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

“How much have we spent on this service this year?”

“Who was consulted before the changes were implemented?”

**Opinion finding:**
Ask for subjective information that gets at opinions, values or beliefs. They will help you understand views e.g.

“How do you feel the consultation went?”

**Getting the detail:**
Can help find out more specific detail from the witnesses e.g.

“You mentioned costs a moment ago – can you be more specific?”

“Explain that in more detail for us please.”

**Best/least questions:**
They are similar to opinion finding questions as they help to test the limits of participant’s needs and wants e.g.

“What is the best thing about the service we offer?”

“What is the worst thing about the way we publicise our services?”

**Third party questions:**
Can help people express sensitive information and help uncover thoughts in an indirect manner, but beware that they do not become leading questions e.g.

“Some people say it takes too long to get a response from our services. How does that sound to you?”

**Crystal ball or hypothetical questions:**
Can help to explore ideas e.g.

“If time and money were no object, what sort of computer system would you design for the department?”

**Questioning do’s and don’ts**

To make the best use of the time available for a witness, it is important to think about not only the type of question but also the way in which it is asked. The following suggest some issues to think about:
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

**DO:**
- Ask clear concise questions covering a single issue
- Ask challenging questions that will stimulate thought
- Ask reasonable questions based on what witnesses will know about
- Ask honest and relevant questions
- Ask a question
- Allow time for thoughtful responses

**DON’T:**
- Ask rambling, ambiguous questions that cover a number of issues
- Ask questions that don’t provide opportunity for thought
- Ask questions about issues not in the witness’s knowledge
- Ask “trick” questions designed to confuse witnesses
- Make a personal statement or a speech
- Let witnesses cross-examine each other
- Talk or leave the room when people are giving evidence
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

3 GUIDANCE FOR WITNESSES AT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINITY REVIEW BODIES

The following list provides some useful guidelines in giving evidence for a review being undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny body of Northampton Borough Council. It is intended for use by internal and external witnesses and should be read together with the Council’s Guidance for Witness Evidence:

1 **Contacts** – every review will have a named review coordinator. You will be given this person’s name, please use them as your point of contact.

2 **Topic** – make sure you are clear of the topic and the areas that the committee/panel would like you to address. If you are not sure ask the review coordinator.

3 **Discussion** – discuss your contribution with the Review Coordinator in advance, especially if this is the first time you have given evidence to an overview and scrutiny body.

4 **Contribution** – be prepared to be asked for your opinions and views as well as to give factual information. If you are asked to provide written evidence, make this as simple and as concise as possible – if you are a Council officer remember that you are not presenting a committee report but providing information to help the councillors conducting the review.

5 **Presentations** – if you have been asked, or have offered, to give a presentation in relation to your evidence to the committee/group let the review coordinator know what equipment you will need. Please provide copies of your presentation for Members of the panel – wherever possible in advance of the meeting.

6 **The meeting** – Members of the committee/group want to make sure participants feel free and able to attend so they will ensure that meetings are as informal as possible and that you are able to contribute fully to the topic under review.
EMPLOYEE GUIDE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Your Role in Overview and Scrutiny
– What is expected of you?

Overview and Scrutiny is the main way by which Cabinet is held to account in public. As well as scrutinising individual decisions, scrutiny has an important role in reviewing Council polices and making recommendations, to the Cabinet or full Council, on future policy options. It can also review the discharge of non-Executive functions and reports on matters of more general concern. This summary guide provides you with a snapshot of the various ways in which you might get involved in Overview and Scrutiny.

These are:

- Overview and Scrutiny
- Call-in
- Preparation information for overview scrutiny members i.e. preparing a briefing note or Committee report
- Getting involved in a detailed review

The Overview and Scrutiny function is supported by an Overview and Scrutiny Officer who provide advice and support to Councillors to undertake their work. This includes research, analysing data and report preparation.

Northampton’s Overview Scrutiny Structure is:

- One Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three standing Scrutiny Panels
- The Scrutiny Panels carry out wide ranging Reviews
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates and manages the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

The Committee comprises fifteen Councillors, three of which will normally be the Chairs and the three Scrutiny Panels. The Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Co-ordinating work programmes
- Allocation of resources
- Allocating areas of responsibility in cases of doubt
- Re-allocation of areas of responsibility in the event of changes in Cabinet portfolios
- Involvement of other people in the Overview and Scrutiny process

- The Scrutiny Panels carry out time limited strategic and operational reviews.
- All non-executive Councillors are given the opportunity to be involved in the reviews by putting themselves forward to join the Scrutiny Panels throughout the year to review issues of interest and importance and inform critical policy development.

Call-in

When a decision is made by the Cabinet collectively, any Councillor may call in that decision for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider. This is subject to the ‘urgency’ provisions set out in the Council’s Constitution. The power of call in does not apply to the day to day management and operational decisions made by employees under delegated powers and may only be exercised in relation to non-key decisions as part of a review of service plans or during the best value process.

Employees should therefore build an implementation buffer into their project plan just in case the decision that they are involved in progressing is called in. The Overview and Scrutiny Call-in Protocol sets out the procedure and guidance notes.

Preparing information for Scrutiny Councillors i.e. preparing a Committee report

Employees may be asked to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Councillors have an understanding of the
Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

issue of service area to be scrutinised including; aims and objectives, how they might be developed, the practicalities of service delivery and issues and problems facing the Council.

This may involve preparing a report and/or providing information and advice on:

- existing policies and practices;
- recent committee reports/decisions;
- legislative requirements upon the Council;
- demand v supply/Recovery Plan/Community Plan targets; and
- limiting factors on performance.

Getting involved in a detailed review (Scrutiny Panels)

For more detailed investigations Scrutiny Panels are established to consider specific topics in detail over a specified period of time. The Scrutiny Panels are made up of small number of Councillors and often co-opted members who analyse and assess a specific Council or another organisations activities and processes, with a view to making improvements.

Overview and Scrutiny is not about undertaking a witch-hunt it is about working with the Cabinet and employees to improve Council services. Overview and Scrutiny Councillors will aim to adopt a non-adversarial approach and to work with employees to identify improvements.

When both a Cabinet Member and senior officers are summoned to appear before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or are invited to make a contribution to proceedings, each shall contribute within the scope of the normal boundaries of the officer and Member roles, at the direction of the Chair.

Normally the Reviews that are carried out by the Scrutiny Panels take no longer than six months. Meeting frequency is around six weekly. Where appropriate, off-site venues will be used for the meetings where doing so will give Members greater awareness/engagement with local communities.

It is worth noting that Councillors are entitled to information in accordance with their rights as a Councillor. These rights are
specified in the **Council’s code of conduct**. Employees have a duty to provide information in accordance with the advice, to all Councillors irrespective of their status and political party. Requests for information that do not meet the criteria set out in the code of conduct should, in the first instance, be referred to your line manager, and where the matter cannot be resolved, to the Council’s Monitoring Officer. Under no circumstances should they be ignored.

**Further Information**

This summary guide provides a brief introduction, which I hope you find useful. Please do not hesitate to contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer who will be happy to help:

**Overview and Scrutiny Officer**

Direct dial: (01604) 837408

e-mail: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk
## Glossary of Terms

Detailed below are some of the terms used in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, which explain how the Council uses or interprets a term, phrase or abbreviation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>Scrutiny Committees summarise their work and findings in an Annual Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>The annual summary of income and expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet (Executive)</td>
<td>The Executive body responsible for day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which they take executive decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call-in</td>
<td>The process by which Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASPAR</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Anti-Social Behaviour PARtnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair/Deputy Chair</td>
<td>The person who chairs a body of the Council e.g. a Scrutiny Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>The senior employee of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>A member of the public who is not a Member or employee of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>A formal body consisting of elected Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPaSS</td>
<td>Community Profiling and Shared Solutions The aim of the ComPaSS Unit is to routinely profile crime and disorder and criminal justice on behalf of the seven Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) within Northamptonshire. This involves the regular collection and analysis of relevant data, on behalf of all local CDRPs, highlighting hotspot areas and community safety issues, as well as providing evaluated solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Opted Member to a Scrutiny Committee</td>
<td>An individual with an area of expertise or experience who is invited to sit on a Committee or Work Group (either for the Municipal year or for the duration of a specific review) to provide information and advice to maximise effective decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>The term used for the organisation or in respect of the meeting of all of the Councillors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillor (or Member)</td>
<td>An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempt information</td>
<td>Information which is exempt from the normal publication rules (normally under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Decision</td>
<td>An important decision which affects more than one ward of the Council or will involve spending of large amounts of money. They must be made public and can only be taken after appropriate notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Council</td>
<td>The political head of the Council, usually the leader of the largest group of Members (or coalition) - responsible for the proposal of policies and day to day running of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member (Councillor)</td>
<td>A Councillor; the elected representative of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of the Public</td>
<td>Anyone who is not a part of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>The formal record of the proceedings of a meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Borough Council (NBC)</td>
<td>The local authority, which delivers borough council services to the whole of Northampton. These are mostly different to the services provided by Northamptonshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>A paid official of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>The process offers both opportunities and challenges for Councillors and members of the public to improve the quality and delivery of services the Council provides to its local communities. The work of overview and scrutiny includes:-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Policy                      | - Policy Development and Review  
- Oversight of the Best Value Review Programme  
- Holding the Executive to account | Performance Indicator |
<p>| Policy and Financial Framework | A plan of action or approach to an issue - part of the Council's Policy Framework |
| Portfolio Holder            | The Council's main policies and approach to managing its finances |
| Protocol                    | A Member of the Executive with responsibilities for specific aspects of the Council's policy or work |
| Scrutiny                    | A document, which sets out, how people will behave or matters will be handled | (See Overview and Scrutiny). The way in which Members oversee the work of the Council and investigate the needs of the community |
| Scrutiny Review             | A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other councils’ countrywide, and challenge existing practice where relevant |
|                            | The review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smartwater Ink</th>
<th>consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A colourless solution that contains a unique forensic code that is invisible to the naked eye. The code is registered to individual addresses and can be used to mark valuables and items at people’s homes. If anyone is stopped with marked items, identification is made by flashing an ultraviolet light over the items. Traces of SmartWater will fluoresce green and can then be traced back to their owner. This can be used as evidence should the matter go to the court and can result in a prosecution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>An area of Northampton for which elections are conducted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview and Scrutiny Site Visit Protocol

The purpose of this Protocol is to provide guidance on the format of site visits carried out as part of a Scrutiny Review and on the collection and reporting of evidence by Members of the Scrutiny Panels on such site visits.

Site visits can also be very useful in helping Scrutiny Panels to get to grips with issues and should be arranged as needed.

1. When a scrutiny site visit is to be conducted the host should be sent:
   • Information on the purpose of the visit
   • Information on the Scrutiny Review and how comments may be used

2. Before a site visit Members of the Scrutiny Panel will be provided with:
   • An information sheet including relevant details (and a map if necessary)

3. The Scrutiny Officer will attend the site visit, make notes and produce a report on the findings of the site visit for the consideration of the relevant Scrutiny Panel details of which will be included within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

4. Members of the Scrutiny Panel, who have attended the site visit, will have the opportunity to add additional feedback on the report of the site visit at a future Scrutiny Panel meeting.

5. The Scrutiny Panel will have the opportunity to decide how this additional feedback should be used, for example, whether it supports previous evidence, identifies the need to collect further evidence or identifies a new issue to scrutinise that is within the scope of the Scrutiny Panel.

NB: Members should be aware that written feedback will form part of the evidence available to the Scrutiny Panel and will also constitute a background paper that will be available on request.

Attendance at the Site Visit

1. A mutually convenient date will be set with the host and the visiting Scrutiny Panel Members.

2. All Scrutiny Panel Members will be notified of the date and timings for the site visit and be
informed of relevant transport arrangements.

3 Members of the Scrutiny Panel are committed to developing an effective relationship between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members; therefore on occasions a Scrutiny Panel may invite the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend a Scrutiny site visit. Attendance by the Portfolio Holder at any Scrutiny site visit is at the discretion of the Chair. It will be explained to the Portfolio Holder that their role on the visit would be in the capacity as an observer and as such any questioning will be directed to the host by Members of the Scrutiny Panel only. Overview and Scrutiny Members acknowledge and respect the different rights and roles of both Scrutiny and Cabinet Members, and recognise the interdependency of the two functions on each other.

Support

To support this Protocol the Scrutiny Officer will provide:

- Information on the purpose of the site visit
- Information on the Scrutiny Review and how comments may be used in the evidence base
- Support for Members of the Scrutiny Panel, which includes in terms of providing advice to the Chair and Scrutiny Panel Members, research, production of briefing notes and drafting the Scrutiny Panel’s final report
1. Introduction

1.1 “Councillor Call for Action” (CCfA) was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and came into force on 1 April 2009.

1.2 The Act enables any member of the Council to refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee any Local Government matter or any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward/division.\(^1\)

1.3 The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward or division, which the Councillor represents. A Councillor can refer a matter even if no citizen has asked him/her to consider it, and there is no requirement for Councillors in multi-member wards to agree – any of the ward Councillors can refer a matter.

2. Limitations

2.1 It must be noted that CCfA is not guaranteed to solve a given problem. CCfA can provide a method for discussing such problems and, through discussion, trying to overcome them.

3. Issues excluded from referral as a CCfA

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors) (Excluded Matters) (England) Order 2008 excludes the following matters from referral as a CCfA:

\(^1\) For definitions of a local government matter and a local crime and disorder matter please see explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3.
• Individual complaints concerning personal grievances or commercial issues.

• Any matter relating to an individual or entity where there is already a statutory right to a review or appeal (other than the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman), for example:
  
  Planning and licensing applications and appeals
  Council Tax/Housing Benefits complaints and queries
  Issues currently under dispute in a court of law.

• Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of its sub-committees.  

3.2 A referral, as long as it is not an excluded matter, will ensure that the matter is included on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.

3.3 A referral made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is seen as being the end of the CCfA process (the last resort) and not the first step.

4. Steps to be taken prior to making a Councillor Call for Action referral

4.1 Prior to a Councillor referring a matter as a CCfA to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Councillor must have tried to resolve the issue/problem themselves using all mechanisms and resources available to them at ward level. Councillors should:

• If a local crime and disorder matter, raise the issue through the Community Safety Partnership to find a way to resolve the issue.

• Ensure that all relevant partner organisations have been informed of the issue and given enough time to resolve it, for example through formal letters written on behalf of constituents, discussion at public meetings, petitions, communication with local MPs and Councillors in other Councils etc.

• Ensure that all relevant internal potential routes to solution have been followed, for example informal discussions with officers and/or members, questions at committees, motions on the agenda at full Council etc.

• Ensure that this is not an issue that is currently being or should be pursued via the Council's complaints procedure.

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2 For definitions of vexatious, discriminatory and not reasonable please see explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3.
• Check whether or not any other form of local scrutiny is investigating the issue, for example, Northamptonshire Joint Scrutiny Committee or one of the Northamptonshire District Council’s Scrutiny Committees.

4.2 Attached at Appendix 2 is a flow chart detailing the above process.

5. **How to make a Councillor Call for Action referral**

5.1 If the issue/problem is still not resolved the Councillor can refer it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a “Councillor Call for Action”. To do this the Councillor should complete and submit to the Scrutiny Officer a CCfA Request Form outlining what the issue is and what steps have been taken towards a resolution. The request form, a copy is attached as Appendix 1, is available on the Council’s website (www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny), or from the Scrutiny Officer. The request form for a CCfA includes:

- The name of the Councillor and ward they represent
- Title of the CCfA and date of submission
- Why you think the issue should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- A brief précis of the main areas of concern
- What evidence has been collated in support of the CCfA
- Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA
- What you have done to try and resolve the issue prior to requesting a CCfA
- Whether the CCfA is currently the subject of legal action by any party (to your knowledge) or is being examined by a formal complaints process
- Whether there are any deadlines associated with the CCfA of which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be aware.

5.2 The Scrutiny Officer will receive the referral form, log it to track its progress, and, with the advice of the Borough Solicitor, will assess the issue to ensure that it is not a matter excluded from referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 The Scrutiny Officer will inform the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the item will be included on the next Committee agenda. The Councillor will be informed whether or not their referral has been successful.

5.4 A successful referral will ensure that the CCfA will be placed on the next agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is then up to the members of the Committee to decide whether or not to take the matter further.
6. Decision of the Committee whether to take the matter further

6.1 In deciding whether or not to take the matter further the Committee will consider:

- Anything that the Councillor has done in relation to this matter; and

- Representations made by the Councillor as to why the Committee should take the matter up. (Councillors have the option of either presenting their CCfA form without supporting papers, or of preparing a report setting out their views. Any reports prepared by Councillors will be circulated with the agenda alongside the CCfA referral form).

6.2 The criteria the Committee will use to decide whether or not to take the matter further include:

- Is the Committee satisfied that all reasonable attempts have been made to resolve the issue by the ward Councillor? And do the responses received by the referring Councillor demonstrate that the matter is not being progressed?

- Has the Committee considered a similar issue recently – if yes have the circumstances or evidence changed?

- Is there a similar or related issue, which is the subject of a review on the current work programme? It may be more appropriate to link the new issue to an existing review, rather than hold a separate CCfA hearing. Relevant time pressures on resolving the CCfA should be taken into account.

- Have all relevant service areas or partner organisations been informed and been given enough time to resolve the issue? What response has the Councillor received?

- Is this a case that is being or should be pursued via the Council’s corporate complaints procedure?

- Is it relating to a “quasi-judicial” matter or decision such as planning or licensing?

- Is the issue part of an individual’s own personal agenda (an issue of genuine local concern should have an impact on the local community).

- Is this an issue currently being looked at by another form of local scrutiny, for example Northamptonshire Joint Scrutiny Forum or one of the Northants District Councils.

- As with all scrutiny, does the matter referred have the potential for scrutiny to produce recommendations, which could realistically be
implemented and lead to improvements for anyone living or working in the referring member’s ward?

6.3 In considering the CCfA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may invite the relevant Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service or external organisation to discuss the issue with the Committee and answer any questions.

6.4 If the Committee decides not to accept the CCfA referral it must inform the Councillor and provide reasons.

6.5 If the Committee decides to accept the CCfA referral, it must decide how it intends to take the matter forward and include the CCfA in its work programme.

6.6 This could include:

**Before holding a formal hearing:**

- Asking the service area(s)/partner organisation(s) to respond to the CCfA
- Referring the issue to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel to undertake a more in-depth review.

**At the formal hearing**

- Asking for further evidence and/or witnesses to be brought to a future meeting then making recommendations to the Cabinet/partner organisation.

7. Potential outcomes

7.1 Following a formal hearing, there are a number of potential outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could determine not to make a report or recommendations (for example it is not considered the right time to consider a particular issue), with the ward Councillor notified in writing;

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could determine that it is a complex issue that requires further investigation and commission the appropriate Scrutiny Panel to undertake a review of the issue;

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could write a report and make recommendations on the CCfA to the Cabinet and/or relevant partners.

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3 Any formal hearing will be run along similar lines to a call-in hearing. Please see the explanatory notes pages at Appendix 3 for further details.
7.2 Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Scrutiny Panel has completed its work on the CCfA referral the member who made the CCfA referral will receive a copy of any report or recommendations made. The report will also be made available on the Council's website, unless the matter was an exempt item, in which case the report cannot be made public.

8. **Timescales**

8.1 Once a CCfA has been assessed as not being a matter, which is excluded from referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the item will be included on the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

8.2 If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to take the matter forward, the Hearing will normally be held as an item on the next available agenda. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there are unavoidable time constraints, a separate meeting may be convened.

8.3 Should a CCfA Hearing result in recommendations to Cabinet being made, Cabinet will usually respond to the recommendations, setting out any action it intends to take, within 28 days of the date of the Cabinet agenda on which the recommendations were placed.

8.4 Should a CCfA Hearing result in recommendations to partner organisations, such organisations will also be requested to make a response to the recommendations, although they are under no legal obligation to do so.
Appendix 1 - Councillor Call for Action Request Form

This form should be used by any Councillor who would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a Councillor Call for Action in their ward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of your Councillor Call for Action:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Submission:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you approached the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the same issue in the past six months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you like your response by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email [ ] Letter [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why you think the issue should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please give a brief precis of the main areas of concern:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please supply evidence that you have in support of your CCfA:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which areas or community groups are affected by the CCfA:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have you tried to resolve the issue:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the CCfA currently the subject of legal action by any party (to your knowledge) or being examined by a formal complaints process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any deadlines associated with the CCfA of which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be aware:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please complete and return the form to:

Overview and Scrutiny
Northampton Borough Council
Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton NN1 1DE     email: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk
Appendix 2 – Summary of CCfA Mechanism

Ward Councillor identifies issue of local concern.

Ward Councillor agrees to champion request.

Ward Councillor and relevant officers, members and relevant local partners try to resolve the issue informally.

Ward Councillor agrees to refer difficult problem that cannot be resolved as a formal CCfA. Request logged with Scrutiny Officer.

The Scrutiny Officer informs the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a CCfA request form has been received, and with advice from the Borough Solicitor ensures it is not an exempt item, and includes it on the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to review and includes the CCfA on its work programme.

Following investigation, draft report agreed informally by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and issued for response to the recommendations.

Cabinet usually responds to recommendations within 28 days of receipt. Relevant partners requested to respond to recommendations as appropriate.

Implementation/monitoring of agreed recommendations and appropriate feedback on progress.

Ward Councillor rejects request in line with best practice and guidance. Signposting/advice about other mechanisms, eg complaints.

Ward Councillor and local partners resolve issue – no further action required.
Appendix 3 - Explanatory Notes

1. Definition of a local government matter and a local crime and disorder matter

Local government matter
For the purpose of the Act a local government matter, in relation to a member of a local authority is one which:

- relates to the discharge of any function of the authority;
- affects all or part of the electoral area for which the referring member is elected or any person who lives or works in the area (i.e. it must be specific to a particular locality); and
- is not an excluded matter.

However, the guidance produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Improvement and Development Agency advises that, to give full effect to CCfA, the interpretation of “Local Government matter” needs to be broader. This includes issues relating to the Council’s partners, in line with the area focus of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), and the fact that an Authority’s duties increasingly impact on other organisations, and involve partners within and outside the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Local crime and disorder matter
A local crime and disorder matter, in relation to a member of a local authority, has been defined to mean a matter concerning:

(a) crime and disorder (including in particular forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); or

(b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances that affects the electoral area represented by the member, or the people who live or work in that area.

2. Definitions of “vexatious”, “persistent”, “discriminatory” and “not reasonable”

Statutory regulations deal with matters that can be excluded from CCfA, stating, “any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee is to be excluded”.

Vexatious/Persistent
Deciding whether a request is vexatious is a balancing exercise, taking into account all the circumstances of the case. There is no rigid test or definition, and it will often be easy to recognise. The key question is
whether the request is likely to cause distress, disruption or irritation, without any proper or justified cause.

Issues around persistency are implied by this definition. However, a persistent request may well be entirely valid – it may relate to a systematic problem that has not been effectively resolved.

CCfAs need to be looked at on their merits, rather than on the basis of who is bringing them, or whether somebody thinks there is an ulterior motive for them being brought.

Where a request for a CCfA is clearly vexatious, detailed reasons for coming to this decision will be given to the Councillor concerned. There could, however, be instances where changes to the scope of the CCfA, or its focus, could make it more acceptable while still meeting the Councillor’s requirements.

**Discriminatory**
A modern interpretation of the word “discrimination” is provided at Section 45 of the Equality Act 2006, in relation to religion and belief, as follows:

> A *person (A)* discriminates against another (*B*) *if on the grounds of the religion or belief of B or of any other person except A, A treats B less favourably than he treats others*. This definition can easily be amended to deal with other forms of discrimination, such as discrimination for reasons of sex and/or race. So a discriminatory CCfA might be one which implies or states that a group of people or an area should receive better, or worse, services on account of that group’s predominant religion, race, gender or other characteristic, as covered by discrimination legislation.

**Not reasonable**
It is suggested that, in the interests of transparency, authorities do not interpret “not reasonable” as being the same as the legal word “unreasonable”. It is best to consider it as a qualifier to the word “vexatious”, as a vexatious request is likely not to be reasonable and a request that is not reasonable is likely to be vexatious.

3. **Structure of the CCfA hearing**

A CCfA hearing will be based on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s protocol for dealing with call-in hearings.

The CCfA protocol (appendix 4) is intended to formalise the conduct of CCfA hearings and the preparation work carried out in the run-up to such a hearing. It should be noted, however, that the protocol may be varied by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet the requirements of any particular circumstances.
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION PROTOCOL

Prior to the hearing
1. The CCfA Request Form and any additional papers provided by the referring Councillor will be published with the agenda for the meeting.
2. The referring Councillor and relevant Portfolio Holder(s), officers and partners will be invited to the meeting.
3. Any other relevant external witnesses will be invited to the meeting.
4. Five working days’ notice of a request to attend the meeting will be given to all participants. If a question plan is to be produced, five working days’ notice of the questions planned will also be given to participants.
5. Prior to the meeting any member who may have a conflict of interest will be given relevant advice by the Monitoring Officer.

The hearing
1. The CCfA hearing will normally be the first item of business on the agenda, in order that participants and other witnesses are not kept waiting.
2. Participants and witnesses will be required to wait in a separate seating area or the public gallery and called to the table by the Chair at the appropriate point.
3. The referring Councillor will be invited to make a presentation outlining his or her main reasons for referring the matter as a CCfA. A question and answer session will follow.
4. Any other parties relevant to the hearing, for example Portfolio Holders, officers or partners, will be invited to make presentations.
outlining their response to the CCfA. Question and answer sessions will follow.

5. Any other relevant external witnesses will be invited to make a presentation to the Committee without interruption, following which there will be a question and answer session.

6. Witnesses will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.

7. The referring Councillor will be given the opportunity to add any points of clarification before any resolution or recommendation is moved.
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Appreciative Inquiry Protocol

1 Guidelines for operation of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry

Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries need to operate on a relatively informal basis in the sense that they are a forum for adding scrutiny input into a Review or issue that is currently being worked on by Officers within the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries have no delegated powers.

Meetings will take place as often as needed until the task is complete. Timescales will vary dependent upon the issue being investigated. The Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry should aim to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

If applicable, visits can also be very useful in helping Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries to get to grips with issues and should be arranged for the Appreciative Inquiry, or individual representatives of the Appreciative Inquiry, as needed.

Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries will be less formal than meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels. Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry meetings are not held in public session.

Meetings of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry require an approach that allows all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry to participate fully, and incorporates questioning and discussion with Officers. Informal ways of working are to be encouraged.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry should operate within the agreed plan for the task and must not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the Appreciative Inquiry for any other purpose. Councillors should not do anything to pre-empt or undermine the outcome of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry’s recommendations.
The Lead Councillor for the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has a role to make sure that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are kept informed regarding progress of tasks through regular progress reports.

2 Membership

Membership of an Appreciative Inquiry will initially be drawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is usual for a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be designated Lead Councillor for an Appreciative Inquiry but on occasions, a non-Executive, who is not a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, may be nominated Lead Councillor of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry. Should it be felt that membership of the Appreciative Inquiry should be widened to include non-Executives (who are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee); the Chair will issue an email inviting non-Executives to take part.

The membership of each Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry will vary, between a minimum of two Members to a maximum of seven, according to the purpose for which it is established.

Non-Executives may join the membership of an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry, until the Appreciative Inquiry has begun to receive evidence. After this point the membership of the Appreciative Inquiry should not be increased as all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry will be required to receive and hear all evidence in order to make an informed decision at the end of the process. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will delegate authority to the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry to determine the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry.

Political balance will not apply. Should more than seven Members want to take part, a decision would be taken by the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry to ensure that at least one Member of each political group was allocated to the Appreciative Inquiry.

There is no Substitute Scheme for Members unable to attend any meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries, due to the fact that all Members of the Appreciative Inquiry will be required to receive and hear all evidence in order to make an informed decision at the end of the process.

Any of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries may appoint non-voting co-opted Members. Co-opted members will have an opportunity to influence the Appreciative Inquiry’s lines of enquiry, but they will not be able to take part in any vote, if one takes place. The Scrutiny Officer will provide relevant training to Co-opted Members on the Overview and Scrutiny process.

3 Gathering information

Once the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has been set up, it will actively gather its evidence. Rather than minutes of the meeting, notes are usually taken to record evidence given at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiries.
4 Reflect, learn and draw conclusions

When the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has gathered all the evidence it needs, it will assess it and reflect on what it has learned.

The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry recommendations must be an expression of the views of the Appreciative Inquiry rather than a report to the Appreciative Inquiry written by Officers. The Scrutiny Officer will meet with the Lead Councillor for the Appreciative Inquiry and draft the report on their behalf.

The final report will be based on facts collected and give a full picture of the issues under scrutiny. It will reflect the range of views presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry. The report will contain conclusions (key findings) and clear recommendations. When the Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry has finished its report, the Lead Councillor of the Appreciative Inquiry presents the work to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As part of this process, they will explain the work that has been done and ask the Committee to support its recommendations. The Committee could also comment on the report or ask for further work to be done.

On occasions, there will not be the need for an Overview and Scrutiny Appreciative Inquiry to produce a full report and its comments and views will be recorded in the report of the relevant Portfolio Holder that will be presented to Cabinet. This highlights that Overview and Scrutiny has made a valuable contribution to the issue and its comments taken on board.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15th November 2010

Briefing Note – Overview and Scrutiny
Co-Optee Guidance Booklet

1 Background

1.1 A Guidance Booklet for Co-Opted Members was produced in 2006 and updated in 2007 to reflect the Overview and Scrutiny structure that was introduced in May of that year.

1.2 A new Overview and Scrutiny structure was implemented in May 2010 and there is, therefore, the need to further update the Guidance material to reflect the current structure.

2 Changes to the Co-Optee Guidance Booklet

2.1 The Co-Optee Guidance Booklet, as attached at Appendix A, contains changes that purely reflect the new Overview and Scrutiny Structure, such as one Overview and Scrutiny Committee that commissions three Scrutiny Panels.

2.2 A short welcome from Councillor Christopher Malpas, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, opens the Guidance material.

3 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Co-Optee Guidance Booklet, updated September 2010, as attached at Appendix A, be approved and published on the Overview and Scrutiny page on the Council’s WebSite and included within the library of Reviews and Guidance Notes of the Centre for Public Scrutiny’s website.

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer on behalf of Councillor Christopher Malpas, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9th September 2010

www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny
Call: 01604 837408
E-mail: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk
Overview & Scrutiny
CO-OPTEE GUIDANCE BOOKLET

Version 4
September 2010
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Welcome

I am pleased to welcome you as a co-opted member to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Scrutiny Panel.

In particular, your expertise and knowledge will play an important part in informing the Scrutiny Panel’s review.

This handbook contains practical advice and sets out the role of co-optees.

Councillor Christopher Malpas
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny is potentially the most exciting and powerful element of the entire local government modernisation process. It places Members at the heart of the way in which Councils respond to the demands of modernisation. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny is the mechanism by which Councils can achieve community leadership, good governance and by which Councillors can become powerful and influential politicians.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002

Our Mission Statement (Proposed - DRAFT)

“Overview and scrutiny at Northampton aims to enhance the quality of life of all who live and work in the Borough by ensuring services are delivered effectively and supporting improvement in the Council’s services, policies and performance. Scrutiny aims to be objective, evidence-based, transparent and constructive, and to reflect the interests and concerns of local communities.”

Government is all about decision-making, and Overview and Scrutiny is about understanding why these decisions are made, and ensuring they are the best ones possible.

Overview and Scrutiny provides the opportunity for Councillors and members of the public to improve the quality and delivery of services to local communities.

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the checks and balances to hold the Cabinet and other decision makers to account, and to review the services provided to the citizens of Northampton.

Overview and Scrutiny is charged with finding ways of ensuring the issues that matter to the public are the focus of their attention, and with finding new ways of getting citizens involved in the things that affect them.
The Political Management of the Council

Northampton Borough Council provides many services for the citizens of Northampton these include:

- Housing
- Refuse Collection
- Planning
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Leisure Facilities
- Street Cleansing
- Litter

There are 47 elected Councillors in Northampton Borough Council, who act as Community Leaders and representatives for the people who live in their wards. They also pursue a variety of roles within the Council, which range from designing strategies and policies and making decisions to making recommendations for change.

The full Council (47 Councillors) chaired by the Mayor sets the annual budget and the Council’s overall policies. It also has responsibility for amendments to the Council’s Constitution (or book of rules and procedures) and is responsible for appointing the Leader, the Cabinet and the Committees of the Council.

Members of the public can attend and address the Council and listen to the debates that take place.

The Council operates within a new structure; this includes the full Council, Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Audit Committee and regulatory Committees.
Co-opted Members to Scrutiny Panels

Members of the public, partner organisations, Councils, the Voluntary Sector and recognised experts, can be co-opted on to a Scrutiny Panel for the life of the Panel, to investigate specific issues of importance. This can happen months in advance when the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is set in May for planned work or more spontaneously when ad hoc Panels are set up during the year.

Scrutiny Panels are focused policy development and service/policy review. The work of the Panel is to recommend changes. Recommendations are normally reached by consensus, rarely is a vote required. In circumstances where a vote is required, co-opted members will not have a vote.

Co-Opted Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider applications from potential Co-Optees to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal year. It may also ask a particular group or organisation with specific or relevant expertise from outside the Council, if it could nominate a representative, to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings recommendations are normally reached by consensus, rarely is a vote required. In circumstances where a vote is required, co-opted members will not have a vote.

The roles and responsibilities of co-optees include:

- A willingness to attend all meetings set to complete a Review
- Playing an active and full role in investigations observations / visits to other Councils
- Bringing a view that Councillors might not have to a Review
- Contributing constructively to discussions
- A willingness to share knowledge, experience and expertise
- Identifying issues for further consideration during the review
- Treating witnesses according to Council guidance
- Having a genuine interest in local government
- Gaining an understanding of the role and function of scrutiny
- Recognise that certain information gained as a member of the review may be confidential to the Council and should be treated as such
If required, short training / briefing sessions will be organised for all co-optees to explain the Overview and Scrutiny systems and processes in the Council.

Public Participation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is keen to develop Scrutiny as an accessible and open process. Public participation is an important part of the Overview and Scrutiny process and members of the public may get involved in a number of ways: -

• **Attending a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

• **Writing to the Scrutiny Panels.** Scrutiny Reviews consider written evidence and members of the public, community groups or other key stakeholders can write in to bring evidence to the attention of the Scrutiny Panel members. Written evidence may put forward a particular perspective on the issue being considered or may highlight statistical evidence to inform the Review.

• **Becoming an expert witness.** Being called as a witness gives individuals a rare and valuable chance to make a real contribution to improving the quality of local services. Potential witnesses will either be asked to provide written evidence as detailed above, or be invited to attend a Scrutiny Panel meeting to present their evidence and answer any supplementary questions.
Types of Overview and Scrutiny Meetings

There are two types of Overview and Scrutiny meetings in Northampton Borough Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and press (unless confidential matters are being discussed) and are held approximately every eight weeks. Additionally, special meetings may be called. Meetings are usually held at the Guildhall, but there are times when meetings are held elsewhere according to the issue being investigated. All of these meetings are advertised in advance and papers for the meetings are available on the Council’s website.

In May 2010, a new Overview and Scrutiny structure was introduced which comprises one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three Scrutiny Panels. Scrutiny Panels are led by Councillors. Often individuals and representatives of organisations, who have expertise or have expressed an interest in a particular subject, are co-opted to the Scrutiny Panel for the life of the Review. Scrutiny Panel Reviews are selected from issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers important to the people of Northampton.

The actual investigations are carried out by a series of Scrutiny Panels. The Chairperson of the Scrutiny Panel reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Panel’s progress at each meeting and with their final report prior to forwarding it to Cabinet / Council.

2 Scrutiny Panels

Scrutiny Panels operate within a specified time frame. They are responsible for setting the objectives of the Review, scoping the work to be carried out, gathering evidence in a variety of ways, evaluating the evidence and making recommendations for change to the Cabinet or full Council. Recommendations can be accepted or rejected by Cabinet. Cabinet informs Overview and Scrutiny of its decisions. Those recommendations that are accepted are monitored for implementation by Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Panels can take place in various settings
depending on the evidence being heard.

3 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

The Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or two Councillors can Call-in a decision of the Cabinet / Portfolio Holder.

A called in decision is examined at either a special Overview and Scrutiny meeting or the next available scheduled meeting.

The Chair consults with the Committee to formulate a line of enquiry. The Cabinet and relevant officers are advised of the situation.

Once the meeting is scheduled, it is advertised within five clear working days. Members of the public with a special interest may be invited to present evidence. Once all evidence has been taken, it is evaluated and written recommendations are made to Cabinet.

Cabinet must consider Overview and Scrutiny recommendations and provide a formal response. Cabinet can accept or reject any or all of the recommendations. If the recommendations are accepted then Cabinet explains how and when they will be actioned. If the recommendations are rejected, Cabinet informs Overview and Scrutiny of its reasons for doing so.
Declarations of Interest

There are times when Councillors might have a particular interest in an item being considered by a Committee. For example, this might be a financial interest relating to the company for whom they work. There are other occasions where the interest is non-financial but could relate to a friend or the membership of an Association. Co-opted members are required to declare the same interests. They should declare personal or prejudicial interests and ensure that confidential information, as determined under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972, is treated in the strictest confidence.

When appointed, a declaration of interest form to register their financial or other interests will be sent to the Co-opted member.

The information on the register includes:

- Details of any employment or business carried out.
- Name of employer.
- Details of any directorships.
- Contracts between themselves / their firm and the Council.
- Land interests in the area.

The register is maintained by Democratic Services, telephone (01604) 837101, email: fmcgown@northampton.gov.uk
Code of Conduct

Councillors and co-opted members who have voting rights are subject to a Code of Conduct, which is based on a model code laid down nationally. Co-opted members of Scrutiny Panels will not have voting rights so this Code does not automatically apply to them. Nevertheless such co-optees will be expected to abide by the main points of the Code, which are: -

- To promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person

- To treat others with respect

- Not to do anything which compromises the impartiality of those who work for the Council

- Not to disclose confidential information

- Not to behave in a manner which may bring the Council into disrepute

- Not to use the member’s position to improperly secure an advantage for themselves or any other person

- To declare any personal interests the member might have in a matter being considered at a meeting they are attending; and if the interest is a “prejudicial” one to leave the room while the matter is being discussed.

(An interest is a prejudicial one if a member of the public with a knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member’s judgement of the public interest).

See also the previous section on the declaration of interests.
Allowances and Expenses

Basis for Payment

Co-opted members can claim for reasonable expenses incurred as a result of undertaking the duties involved.

Travel Allowances and Expenses

The following allowances and expenses may be claimed: -

Car Mileage, Motorcycle and Bicycle Allowances.

The rates per mile are those that are paid to officers of the Authority.

Standard Rail Fare

Actual cost of tube fares, bus fares, car parking and toll charges.

Dependency Care

Co-opted members who incur expenditure on the care of children or dependent relatives whilst undertaking the duties of membership may claim for the cost of this up to a reasonable amount.

Submission of Claims

Claims for travel allowances and expenses must be made within two months. Payment outside that period can only be made if there are identified circumstances that prevented the claim being submitted within the required time limit.

Payment Arrangements

Payment of claims will be made upon submission of a fully completed claim form supported by appropriate receipts. The claim form should be sent to Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer. telephone (01604) 837408, email: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair)
Councillor John Yates (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ifty Choudary
Councillor Tony Clarke
Councillor Penelope Flavell
Councillor David Garlick
Councillor Brendan Glynane
Councillor Jane Hollis
Councillor Judith Lill
Councillor Irene Markham
Councillor Lee Mason
Councillor Richard Matthews
Councillor Dennis Meredith
Councillor Kevin Reeve
Councillor Pam Varnsverry
Glossary of Terms

Detailed below are some of the terms used by Northampton Borough Council, which explain how the Council uses or interprets a term, phrase or abbreviation.
<p>| <strong>Annual Report</strong> | Scrutiny Committees summarise their work and findings in an annual report. |
| <strong>Audit Commission</strong> | The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively. It regulates the proper control of public finances by local authorities and the National Health Service, and is responsible for conducting inspections relating to Best Value Reviews and to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of local councils. |
| <strong>Allowance</strong> | A payment towards expenses or costs. |
| <strong>Members’ Allowances</strong> | Paid to Members in recognition of out of pocket expenses or direct costs of being a Member of the Council. |
| <strong>Best Value</strong> | Relates to the Local Government Act, 1999 - the means by which the Council seeks to deliver high quality services in an efficient and cost effective way. |
| <strong>BVPP</strong> | Best Value Performance Plan. |
| <strong>Backbencher</strong> | A term applied to Members who are not part of the Cabinet. |
| <strong>Budget</strong> | The annual summary of income and Expenditure. |
| <strong>By-Election</strong> | An election which occurs between main (4 yearly) elections. |
| <strong>Cabinet (Executive)</strong> | The Cabinet body of elected Councillors responsible for day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casting vote</td>
<td>they take cabinet decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair/Vice Chair</td>
<td>The process by which Overview and Scrutiny Committees can look at whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision and require it to be considered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>A second vote made by the chair of the meeting to decide a matter when there is a tied vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>The person who chairs a Committee of the Council e.g. a Scrutiny Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code of Practice/Code of Conduct</td>
<td>An alliance of groups or parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>The most senior paid official of the Council with overall responsibility for the whole of the Council’s operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Strategy</td>
<td>A set of rules, usually of expected behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Since 1801, every 10 years the nation has set aside one day for the Census - a count of all people and households. It is the most complete source of information about the population that we have. The latest Census was held on Sunday 29 April 2001</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Under the Local Government Act 2000, all Councils are required to work in partnership with the community as well as private, voluntary and public sector partners to develop a long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>Co-Opted Member to a Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>An individual with an area of expertise or experience who is invited to sit on a Committee or Work Group (either for the Municipal year or for the duration of a specific review) to provide information and advice to maximise effective decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)</td>
<td>A performance management framework for Councils to draw together all the assessments made by the inspectorates, external Audit and Government departments</td>
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<td>Constitution</td>
<td>Councils are rated in one of five categories (excellent, good, fair, weak, poor). One of the main outcomes of the assessment will be an action plan for improvement and a programme of work for the subsequent year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>The set of rules governing the decision-making arrangements and activities of Northampton Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Councillor (or Member)</td>
<td>The term used for the organisation or in respect of the meeting of all of the Councillors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Tax</td>
<td>An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting Review</td>
<td>The money raised by the Council from residents of the Borough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)</td>
<td>A cross-cutting Review addresses a topic which covers more than one service area, and in certain cases, examines services provided by organisations other than the Council (e.g. the police, health trusts, voluntary sector organisations, etc). One of the aims of such a Review is to ascertain how well the various agencies communicate and work together, and to put forward recommendations for improvements in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>The most senior paid officials, after the Chief Executive, each having responsibility for wide areas of the Council's operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Mayor</td>
<td>An individual elected directly by the electorate (not Councillors) to run the Council [Not a system adopted in Northampton]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>A paid official of the Council sometimes referred to as an Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>See Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempt information</td>
<td>Information which is exempt from the normal publication rules (normally under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward Plan</td>
<td>A list of key decisions which will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Paid Service</td>
<td>Taken by the Cabinet. The plan is updated each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office</td>
<td>A statutory role, usually combined with that of Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)</td>
<td>The Government department responsible for internal affairs in England and Wales, e.g. public order, public safety, immigration, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Member</td>
<td>The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) was established by and for Local Government in April 1999. It aims to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- deliver practical solutions to improve local government performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- develop innovative approaches to ensure the transfer of knowledge within local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- act on behalf of local government as a whole, promoting joined-up, locally delivered services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Decision</td>
<td>Either a Councillor who is not a member of a recognised political party, or in the context of the Standards Committee, a member who is neither a Borough Councillor or a Parish Council representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Council</td>
<td>An important decision which affects more than one ward of the Council or will involve spending large amounts of money. They must be made public and can only be taken after appropriate notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The political head of the Council, usually the leader of the largest group of Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Association (LGA)</td>
<td>(or coalition) - responsible for the proposal of policies and day to day running of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)</td>
<td>The LGA represents the local authorities of England and Wales – a total of just under 500 authorities. There are 34 County Councils, 36 Metropolitan Borough Councils, 47 English Unitary Authorities, 33 London Authorities, 238 Shire District Councils and 22 Welsh Unitary Authorities. The LGA also represents Police Authorities, through the Association of Police Authorities (APA); Fire Authorities and Passenger Transport Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Ombudsman</td>
<td>The LGIU is an independent research and information organisation supported by over 150 councils and the Local Government Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>The LGIU aims to be an advocate for strong democratic local government with the financial base and powers required to act with and on behalf of local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member (Councillor)</td>
<td>The nationally appointed person (department) which looks into complaints by the public about the way they have been treated by or the service they have received from Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An employee who is responsible for managing employees, resources and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Councillor; the elected representative of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of the Public</td>
<td>Anyone who is not part of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>The formal record of the proceedings of a meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Officer</td>
<td>The officer appointed under the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 to oversee the legality of the Councils actions and the ethical behaviour of Members and employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Borough Council (NBC)</td>
<td>The Local Authority, which delivers borough council services to the whole of Northampton. These are mostly different to the services provided by Northamptonshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>A paid official of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview and Scrutiny</td>
<td>The process offers both opportunities and challenges for Councillors and members of the public to improve the quality and delivery of services the Council provides to its local communities. The work of overview and scrutiny includes:-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Policy Development and Review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Oversight of the Best Value Review Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Holding Cabinet to account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Performance Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>A plan of action or approach to an issue - part of the Council's Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Financial Framework</td>
<td>The Council's main policies and approach to managing its finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Proportionality / Balance</td>
<td>The system by which each group is represented on Council bodies in proportion to the number of members of the particular group relative to the size of the council as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Holder</td>
<td>A member of the Cabinet with responsibilities for specific aspects of the Council's policy or work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol</td>
<td>A document, which sets out, how people will behave or matters will be handled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referendum</td>
<td>A ballot of all electors of the Borough - in particular on whether they wish to have an elected mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>The functions of the Council which &quot;regulate&quot; e.g. licensing and planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of Procedure</td>
<td>The rules that govern the way specified matters must be handled (previously known as Standing Orders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>(See Overview and Scrutiny). The way in which Members oversee the work of the Council and investigate the needs of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Review</td>
<td>A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other councils' countrywide, and challenge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
standards where existing practice where relevant.
The Review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken.

Standards Board
The national body which oversees ethical standards of behaviour

S151 Officer
The finance officer is employed under s151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 - who is responsible for the financial probity and arrangements of the Council

Ward
An area of Northampton for which elections are conducted

Work Programme
The Work Programme sets out the work of the Committee for the 12-month period, although it may go beyond this.
FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2010 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2011

What is a Forward Plan?
The Forward Plan is a list of the key decisions, which are due to be taken, by the Cabinet during the period covered by the Plan. The Council has a Statutory duty to prepare a Forward Plan. The Plan is updated monthly and is available to the public 14 days before the beginning of each month. It covers a 4-month rolling period. It can be accessed from the One Stop Shop and/or the Council website www.northampton.gov.uk.

What is a Key Decision?
A key decision in the Council’s constitution is defined as:

- Any decision in relation to the Executive function* which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of saving which are significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. For these purpose the minimum financial threshold will be £50,000;

- Where decisions are not likely to involve significant expenditure or savings but nevertheless are likely to be significant in terms of their effects on communities in two or more wards or electoral divisions; and

- For the purpose of interpretation a decision, which is ancillary or incidental to a Key decision, which had been previously taken by or on behalf of the Council shall not of itself be further deemed to be significant for the purpose of the definition.

* Executive functions are those, which are the responsibility of the Cabinet as opposed to, for example, regulatory functions, which are the responsibility of the Council’s Planning or Licensing Committees.

Who takes Key Decisions?
Under the Council’s constitution, key decisions are taken by
- Cabinet
- The Leader or Deputy Leader (in matters of urgency only)
- Individual officers acting under delegated powers (it is rare for any decision delegated to an officer to be a key decision)
Are only Key Decisions listed in the Forward Plan?
The Council only has a statutory obligation to publish only Key Decisions on the Forward Plan. However, the Council has voluntarily decided to list non-key Cabinet decisions on the Plan as well. In order to clarify matters on the Plan, Key decisions have a symbol next to the item.

What does the Forward Plan tell me?
The Plan gives information about:
- What key and non-key decisions are coming forward in the next four months (these decisions have a symbol next to them)
- Other non-key Cabinet decisions that are coming forward in the next four months
- Whether the decision will be taken in public or private
- When those key decisions are likely to be made
- Who will make those decisions
- What consultation will be undertaken
- Who you can contact for further information

Who is the Cabinet?
The Members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian Hoare</td>
<td>Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Partnerships &amp; Improvement</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.bhoare@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.bhoare@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Varnsverry</td>
<td>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.pdvarnsverry@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.pdvarnsverry@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Beardsworth</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Housing</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.sbeardsworth@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.sbeardsworth@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Church</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.rchurch@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.rchurch@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trini Crake</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Environment</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.tcrake@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.tcrake@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Markham</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Performance and Support</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.bmarkham@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.bmarkham@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Perkins</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Finance</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllr.dperkins@northampton.gov.uk">cllr.dperkins@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the role of Overview and Scrutiny?
The Council has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee that appoints three Panels for Environment, Housing and Planning & Regeneration.

The Committee and Panels role is to contribute to the development of Council policies and to consider any matter affecting the area of Northampton or its citizens. In addition, the Committee also scrutinises decisions of the Cabinet. Dates of these meetings and other Council meetings can be found at www.northampton.gov.uk

How and who do I contact?
Each entry in the Plan indicates the names of all the relevant people to contact about that particular item. Wherever possible, full contact details are listed in the individual entries in the Forward Plan. They can also be reached via the switchboard (01604) 837837.

For general information about the decision-making process please contact Frazer McGown, Democratic Services Manager at The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE Tel: 01604 837101, E-mail: fmcgown@northampton.gov.uk.
Councillor Brian Hoare, Leader of Northampton Borough Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Expected Decision to be Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance Monitoring Dashboard to the End of August 2010</td>
<td>🚩 Note the report, approve any capital appraisals/variations and agree any necessary actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Management of Community Centres</td>
<td>🚩 Agree framework and process for the community groups to take on responsibility for community centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFI Housing</td>
<td>🚩 To approve revised HRA budget for the Council’s PFI Housing Project (Reports in Public and Private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending Review 2010</td>
<td>To note the announcements due to be made on the 20th October 2010 and to consider any consequent actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award of Decent Homes Contract</td>
<td>🚩 Award of contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boot and Shoe Quarter - potential designation of conservation area</td>
<td>Approve the draft document for the purposes of public consultation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision to be made by</th>
<th>Expected Date of Decision</th>
<th>Key or Non-Key Decision</th>
<th>Who Will be consulted</th>
<th>How will they be consulted</th>
<th>Report Published /Portfolio Holder/Contact Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Budget Managers, Heads of Services and Management Board</td>
<td>Budget monitoring meetings, management board and Call Over</td>
<td>26-10-2010 Cllr D Perkins Bill Lewis, Head of Finance <a href="mailto:blemis@northampton.gov.uk">blemis@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Cabinet Advisory Group, centre management committees, neighbourhood management.</td>
<td>Direct discussion; comment on draft documents</td>
<td>26-10-2010 Cllr Paul Varnsverry Thomas Hall, Head of Policy and Community Engagement <a href="mailto:thall@northampton.gov.uk">thall@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Finance, Legal, Housing and Planning</td>
<td>At Project Board Meetings</td>
<td>26-10-2010 Cllr S Beardsworth Chris Cavanagh, Head of Regeneration and Development <a href="mailto:ccavanagh@northampton.gov.uk">ccavanagh@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3 Nov 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Management Board</td>
<td>By Email</td>
<td>26-10-2010 Cllr B Hoare David Kennedy, Chief Executive <a href="mailto:dkennedy@northampton.gov.uk">dkennedy@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Corporate Director of Finance and Support and Head of Legal</td>
<td>In writing</td>
<td>16-11-2010 Cllr Beardsworth Christine Ansell, Head of Landlord Services <a href="mailto:cansell@northampton.gov.uk">cansell@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Appropriate internal departments</td>
<td>Electronic copy of report and supporting documentation</td>
<td>05-10-2010 Cllr Richard Church Sue Bridge, Head of Planning <a href="mailto:sbbridge@northampton.gov.uk">sbbridge@northampton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Expected Decision to be Made (ᵦ = KEY decision)</td>
<td>Decision to be made by</td>
<td>Expected Date of Decision</td>
<td>Key or Non-Key Decision</td>
<td>Who Will be consulted</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Infrastructure for the Voluntary and Community Sector</td>
<td>ᵦ Agree specification and procurement process</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Voluntary and Community Sector representatives, including current provider; County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME Housing Strategy 2010-2013</td>
<td>ᵦ To approve the final version of the BME Housing Strategy for adoption and publication</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Portfolio Holder for Housing; Director of Planning and Regeneration, Director of Finance, Borough Solicitor; members of the public, external stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Plan Progress Report - September</td>
<td>That Cabinet note the contents of the report and considers what actions are necessary, if any, to address arising issues.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Directors and Heads of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Monitoring Dashboard to the End of September 2010</td>
<td>ᵦ Note the report, approve any capital appraisals/variations and agree any necessary actions</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Budget Managers, Heads of Services and Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Expected Decision to be Made (Key Decision)</td>
<td>Decision to be made by</td>
<td>Expected Date of Decision</td>
<td>Key or Non-Key Decision</td>
<td>Who Will be consulted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage Strategy Review</td>
<td>Consider the results of consultation and proposals</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>All tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Facilities Grant - Framework</td>
<td>To consider a new framework for disabled facilities grants</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Service, Users, Finance and Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Forums Report: Period June 2010 to November 2010</td>
<td>Cabinet to receive regular update from the Forums including outcome of their Review and welcome the achievements.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Various forums and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011 - 2014</td>
<td>Cabinet agree to approve the strategy and use it as a guide to financial planning for 2011-14.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>24 Nov 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Management Board, Finance and other Colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Plan Progress Report - October</td>
<td>That Cabinet note the contents of the report and considers what actions are necessary, if any, to address arising issues</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Directors and Heads of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Expected Decision to be Made (Key Decision)</td>
<td>Decision to be made by</td>
<td>Expected Date of Decision</td>
<td>Key or Non-Key Decision</td>
<td>Who Will be consulted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns Development, Northampton</td>
<td>To consider the content of the Heads of Terms as set out in the report. Instruct the Chief Executive to complete the Heads of Terms on behalf on the Council</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Members, Finance, Legal Services, Asset Management, Town Centre Operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Crispin S106 Agreement - Transfer of land to the Council</td>
<td>Authorisation to accept transfer of St Crispin Park and other parcels of land arising from a S106 agreement</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Internally – Legal Services, Asset Management, Neighbourhood Environment Services. Externally – Residents and potential users of the facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson House</td>
<td>Transfer to an RSL</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Local Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Budget Setting 2011 - 2014</td>
<td>To approve the draft budget 2011-2014 for public consultation.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Base Setting 2011/12</td>
<td>To approve the Council tax base for 2011/12.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Expected Decision to be Made (:key decision)</td>
<td>Decision to be made by</td>
<td>Expected Date of Decision</td>
<td>Key or Non-Key Decision</td>
<td>Who Will be consulted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2010-2011</td>
<td>That Cabinet recommend to Council that they note the Council’s treasury management performance to 30 September 2010</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>S.151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Audit Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of Caretaking and Cleaning in Flats</td>
<td>To consider provision of cleaning service, funded by Service Charging</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>19 Jan 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>All tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Plan Progress Report - November</td>
<td>That Cabinet note the contents of the report and considers what actions are necessary, if any, to address arising issues.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>19 Jan 2011</td>
<td>NON-KEY</td>
<td>Directors and Heads of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Engagement Strategy</td>
<td>Approval of the Resident Involvement Strategy</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>19 Jan 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>All tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of Environmental Services with Daventry District Council</td>
<td>To enter into a contract for the provision of environmental services with recommended bidder</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>19 Jan 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Elected Members, Management Board, Staff, Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Trust</td>
<td>Establishment of a Leisure Trust</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>19 Jan 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Elected Members, Officers, Staff, Service Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Expected Decision to be Made (KEY decision)</td>
<td>Decision to be made by</td>
<td>Expected Date of Decision</td>
<td>Key or Non-Key Decision</td>
<td>Who Will be consulted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Reduce, Waste Disposal PFI Contract</td>
<td>Cabinet to note progress, agree Service Level Agreement and delegate necessary authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environment.</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>9 Feb 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Via NCC Project Reduce consultation Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Plan 2011-2014</td>
<td>Report of Assistant Chief Executive</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>23 Feb 2011</td>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Local residents, partners and stakeholders, Members, senior management and staff.</td>
</tr>
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