



NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – The Move of the University of Northampton

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review: The Move of the University of Northampton

The purpose of the Review is to review the impact on the town and local areas; including student accommodation

#### CORE QUESTIONS:

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

- 1 Please provide information of the work being undertaken by:

The University of Northampton, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), and other partners to support the relocation of the University (*specific organisation to be put to the specific expert advisor e.g NBC to the Cabinet Member*)

*Buddies of Becketts (BOB), the non-profit group of volunteers that formed in 2016 and that aims to improve Becketts Park and encourage greater community usage, has been liaising with the University of Northampton from since it was formed. In particular, we have worked very closely with Nick Allen, Executive Officer, Office of the Vice Chancellor.*

- 2 Please provide your opinion on the social, cultural, physical, economic and environmental effects of the move of the University. *Please can you aim to keep your response to this question to a maximum of 250 words*

*BOB believes the effects of the University move has been, in the main, very positive. Physically the University fits in very well with its surroundings. Its design is attractive and complements the Avon building and the river. Although some people complain about the pedestrian bridge's colour/lack of paint, it is a lovely link between the park and University and I think blends into the environment. I am*

*aware the University has been monitoring the wildlife and have no concerns regarding that.*

*The profile of Becketts Park has been enhanced by the move with a lot more interest in the park and BOB being generated.*

- 3 Please provide your views on the positive impact and challenges, across the various areas of the town, in respect of the move of the University. (NB the various areas such as town centre, Bedford Road, Far Cotton, Beckett's Park, Avenue Campus, Park Campus, Kingsthorpe village will be included in this core question to the relevant expert advisor)

*There is a lot more footfall through Becketts Park. This is mostly along the path that leads from Victoria Promenade to the University pedestrian footbridge. This footpath has been enhanced with improved lighting and CCTV coverage. Other paths have seen an increase as well – from the North end near Cheyne Walk and by Nunn Mills entrance. The majority of students, staff and visitors entering Becketts Park use the pedestrian bridge. This location has an improved atmosphere to it as it is being regularly used and with the improvements to lighting and CCTV and also fencing supplied by NBC, it feels markedly safer than it was a couple of years ago.*

*BOB is currently working on recommendations for the whole park which will include improvements to the signage at this location and completion of some additional fencing.*

*Becketts Park has not experienced students using the park during the summer months yet. BOB however does not envisage any major issues with the students in the summer.*

*We will be recommending designated BBQ areas in Midsummer Meadow area. The location has been suggested partly because many park users want BBQ facilities close by and partly to keep Becketts Park an open space clear of clutter for community events and general enjoyment.*

- 4 Do you have any other information, concerns or suggestions you wish to raise in relation to the move of the University of Northampton?

*For BOB, the move has helped raise the profile of Becketts Park and our own group. This has been positive.*

*There are also many opportunities for BOB to collaborate with the University students and staff on a whole host of activities and subjects. This includes providing students experience in event management and planning as BOB organises and supports many community events in the park, landscape and horticultural experience as well as general volunteering such as for charity events, litter picks, gardening etc.*

*The University has helped provide soil and some plants for our park planters. They have provided some funding and practical support for our community events. We have a good information flow.*

*The University has provided space and facilities for meetings. BOB has held a successful AGM last year there and a number of Becketts Park Management Meetings have also been held at the University. These meetings bring NBC, partners and interested parties together every few months to discuss Becketts Park and allocate tasks according to the Park's Action Plan.*

*Our only concern is that should Nick Allen ever leave the University, his replacement might not be as enthusiastic or supportive and, although we have other University staff contacts, his involvement with BOB and Becketts Park to date has been invaluable. His hard work should be acknowledged.*

**NICK STEPHENS**  
**Chair**  
**Buddies of Becketts**