

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Date: **Monday, 10 June 2013**

Time: **6:00 pm**

Place: **The Jeffrey Room, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.**

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

Members of the Committee

Chair	Councillor Jamie Lane Jamie Lane
Deputy-Chair	Councillor Brian W Sargeant Brian Sargeant
Committee Members	Councillor Tony Ansell Councillor Joy Capstick Councillor John Caswell Councillor Mick Ford Councillor Brendan Glynane Councillor Elizabeth Gowen Councillor Phil Larratt Councillor Matt Lynch Councillor Lee Mason Councillor Beverley Mennell Councillor Nilesh Parekh Councillor Suresh Patel Councillor Sivaramen Subbarayan

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Calendar of meetings

Date	Room
25 July 2013 6:00 pm 9 September 11 November 27 January 2014 7 April 9 June	All meetings to be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Item No and Time	Title	Pages	Action required
1 6:00 pm	Apologies		Members to note any apologies and substitution
2	Minutes	1 - 7	Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 TH April 2013.
3	Deputations/Public Addresses		The Chair to note public address requests. The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a Public Address Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.
4	Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping)		Members to state any interests.
5 6:05 pm 20 mins	Environmental Services Contract Action Plan	8 - 14	The Committee to undertake scrutiny of the Action Plan arising from the Independent Review of the Environmental Services Contract.
6	Tree and Shrub Maintenance	15 - 19	The Committee to consider a briefing on tree and shrub maintenance.
7	Performance Monitoring		
7 (a) 6:40 pm 10 mins	Rent collected as a proportion of rent owned dwellings (HI 12) and Rent arrears as a percentage of the annual debt (H1 13)	20 - 22	The Committee to consider Performance Indicators H1 12 and HI 13.
7 (b) 6:50 pm 10 mins	Cleanliness of Open Spaces/ Parks	23 - 25	The Committee to consider the performance trends for cleanliness of open spaces and parks.
7 (c) 7:00 pm 10 mins	Car Crime	26 - 28	The Committee to consider the performance trends for car crime.
7 (d) 7:10 pm	Performance Management Scrutiny Absences	29 - 32	The Committee to consider an update on the performance management

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15 mins	Management Data		data for absence management.
8 7:25 pm 10 mins	Licensing Function Performance	33 - 36	The Committee to review the performance of the Licensing function.
9	Monitoring implementation of the accepted recommendations contained in the following Overview and Scrutiny reports		
9 (a) 6:25 pm	Neighbourhood Model		The Committee to consider an update from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement on the Neighbourhood Model.
9 (b) 7:45 pm 10 mins	Councillor Empowerment Fund	37 - 39	The Committee to undertake monitoring activity of the scheme now it has been in operation for 12 months.
9 (c) 7:55 pm 10 mins	Lease between Northampton Borough Council, Northampton Football Club and Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club	40 - 44	The Committee to monitor the accepted recommendations contained within its report. A copy of Cabinet's response to the Overview and Scrutiny is attached for information.
10 8:05 pm 5 mins	O&S Annual Report 2012/13	45 - 63	The Committee to approve the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013 .
11	Scrutiny Panels		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive a progress report from the Scrutiny Panels.
11 (a)	Scrutiny Panel 1- Improving the Town's Parks		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to approve the scope of the Review- Improving the Town's Parks (copy to follow)
11 (b) 8:10 pm 10 mins	Scrutiny Panel 2- Retail Experience	64 - 162	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the final report from Scrutiny Panel 2 prior to submission to Cabinet.
12 8:30 pm 10 mins	Scrutiny Panel 3 - Infrastructure requirements and Section 106 Agreements	163 - 257	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the final report from Scrutiny Panel 3 prior to submission to Cabinet.

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13 8:30 pm 5 mins	Overview and Scrutiny Reporting and Monitoring Working Group	258 - 259	The Committee to confirm the membership of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group.
14	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/2014	260 - 261	The Committee to consider its work programme for 2013/2014.
14 (a)	Scrutiny Panel 2 - Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (Including HIMOs)		The Committee to confirm the Chair and membership of Scrutiny Panel 2.
15	Monitoring Work Programme 2013/2014	262 - 264	The Committee to note the Overview and Scrutiny Monitoring Work Programme 2013/2014.
16 8:40 pm 5 mins	Report back from NBC's representative to NCC's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee		Councillor Matt Lynch to provide an update on the work of NCC's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. (Copy to follow).
17	Potential future pre decision scrutiny	265 - 266	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider any potential issues for future pre decision scrutiny.
18	Urgent Items		This issue is for business that by reasons of the special circumstances to be specified, the Chair is of the opinion is of sufficient urgency to consider. Members or Officers that wish to raise urgent items are to inform the Chair in advance.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25 April 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Les Marriott (Chair), Councillors Matt Lynch (Vice Chair), Tony Ansell, Elizabeth Gowen, Lee Mason, Beverley Mennell, Brian Sargeant and Danielle Stone.

Witnesses David Kennedy Chief Executive
Julie Seddon Chair of Community Safety Partnership

Officers Tracy Tiff Scrutiny Officer
Joanne Birkin Democratic Services Officer

Members of the Public Mark Unwin

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Mick Ford, Nilesh Parek and Suresh Patel.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. ADDITIONAL MEETING

The Chair advised the Panel that there would be a long gap between the scheduled meetings to be held on 10th June and 9th September 2013 and that this could delay the work of the new scrutiny panels. He suggested that there should be an additional meeting to be held on 25th July 2013. This would allow the scopes of the new panels to be approved and they could then begin their evidence gathering before September.

AGREED: An additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held at 6.00pm on 25 July 2013.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP) PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered a report on the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Julie Seddon, Chair of the Community Safety Partnership presented the report.

The main points of discussion were as follows:-

Following a number of years of consistent performance improvement by the partnership there had been some reductions in performance and it had not achieved all of the 2011/12 targets. Financial pressures and reduced resources for partner organisations and the public have made crime reduction increasingly difficult all over the country.

The rolling 12 month total for overall crime reduced by 2.5%. The strongest performances were tackling violence and low level theft.

There had been a significant spike in burglary of dwellings during September. Vehicle crime, although still significantly lower than 2009/10, had shown considerable increases in theft from vehicles.

There had been good reductions in recorded anti-social behaviour issues, but perception of problems was increasing.

Domestic Abuse continued to be a key focus and an increase in first time victim reporting had been achieved.

Although there had been improvements in performance for both violent crime and anti-social behaviour incidents they would remain as priorities for 2013/14. The main area of concern would be Serious Acquisitive Crime and partnership work will be concentrated on addressing this.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had indicated that he wished to focus on young people and reduction in drugs and anti-social behaviour. It was strongly emphasised that CSP would be part of that work.

The CSP had been a participant in the Scrutiny Panel on Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety and already introduced some changes as a result of the Panels draft recommendations.

AGREED: - That a further update report on the performance of the CSP received in six months' time.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the Performance Monitoring highlight report for December 2012 to March 2013.

The report was the provisional outturn report.

The Committee were reminded that several items had already identified for consideration at future meetings these were:-

- Rent Collections
- Rent Arrears
- Cleanliness of Open Spaces
- Car Crime
- Absence Management Data

AGREED: That the final outturn report be considered at the July meeting of the Committee.

8. O&S WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

The Committee considered a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14. As a result of the Work Programme four topics had been identified. The Committee were asked to prioritise these and also indicate whether they wished to serve on the Panels. The Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that other non Executive Members would then be asked if they wished to serve on any of the Panels.

AGREED :-

That the priority of suggested reviews be as follows

Scrutiny Panel 1 – Improving the Town’s Parks

Membership of the Panel would comprise:

Chair Councillor Elizabeth Gowen
Members Cllr Jamie Lane, Matt Lynch

Scrutiny Panel 2 Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (including HIMOs)

Membership of the Panel would comprise:

Chair Councillor Danielle Stone
Members Cllr Lee Mason, Beverley Mennell, Mick Ford

Scrutiny Panel 3 West Northants Development Corporation (WNDC)

Membership of the Panel would comprise:

Chair Councillor Jamie Lane
Members Cllrs Brian Sargeant, Suresh Patel, Mick Ford

Welfare Reform Act (after the Parks one completed)

Membership of the Panel would comprise

Chair Councillor Lee Mason

Members Cllr Beverley Mennell, Danielle Stone, Brian Sargeant, Elizabeth Gowen

9. SELF-EVALUATION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2012

The Committee considered a report on the self-evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

The main points of the discussion were as follows:-

The evaluation exercise had proved very positive.

The main recommendations were that there should be more regular updating on Cabinet priorities which could then be used to strengthen opportunities for pre decision scrutiny.

Also, although there were regular reports to Committee monitoring the progress of recommendations of completed reviews there should be more detailed Action Plans to assist in the monitoring.

The Committee were advised that Action Plans would be introduced for the new set of Scrutiny Panels and that the Leader would be invited to the Committee on a six monthly basis to advise on Cabinet priorities.

AGREED: The report be approved.

10. SCRUTINY PANELS

(A) SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - SERIOUS ACQUISITIVE CRIME, VIOLENT CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Committee received the final report of the Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

The main points of the discussion were as follows: -

The scope had not included domestic violence as this was potentially a separate review topic.

There had been a great many participants in the review and a wide range of co-optees and witnesses had participated.

Some of the key points had centred on the importance of partnership working. There were many factors involved in influencing crime and the perception of crime and the Panel felt that it was clear that more needed to be done to establish linkages and tackle potential problems quickly. One positive outcome had been that there had already been some changes made as a result of the review and it was felt that this demonstrated that scrutiny could be used to make positive changes quickly.

Councillors had also felt that they needed to be made aware of issues within their wards as soon as possible so that they could fulfil a community information role and liaise with the public on issues to prevent them from escalating.

Neil Bartholomey, a co-optee on the Panel, felt that it had been a very positive experience and stated that he felt that things were already changing for the better because of the work done by the Panel.

It was commented that whilst projects such as CASPAR had made a huge difference in the past their strength had been based on involving residents. It was felt that if residents were fully engaged then there would be a better chance of the improvements being maintained.

The Chair emphasised that the quality of the witness evidence had been very good and wished to thank all of the witnesses and officers for their participation.

AGREED

The report be endorsed and submitted to Cabinet in July 2013.

(B) SCRUTINY PANEL 2- RETAIL EXPERIENCE.

The Committee noted the report on the progress of the Retail Experience Scrutiny Panel.

It was noted that the final meeting would be on 9th May 2013 and the report considered by Committee on 10th June.

(C) SCRUTINY PANEL 3- INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Committee noted the report on the progress of the Infrastructure Requirements and Section 106 Agreements Scrutiny Panel.

It was noted that the final meeting would be on 16th May 2013 and the report considered by Committee on 10th June.

(D) LGSS SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Committee considered a report on the Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) Scrutiny Inquiry. The Chair explained that the report would be an appendix to the full Council report on implementation of LGSS, which had been deferred until 13th May 2013.

The Chair commented that one outcome of the Inquiry had been a more in depth consideration of how services provided by LGSS would be available to Members. He considered that the Inquiry had been very intensive and had covered a lot of information in a very short time frame. He considered that it had been very beneficial to gain a proper understanding of the future delivery of services.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the progress of the LGSS arrangements. He advised the Committee that work was almost complete on the

Partnership delegation agreement which had been revised several times. He emphasised that the delay had been necessary in order to ensure that the Borough reached the best possible agreement. He stated that the arrangements now had very clear guidance on the level of support members could expect.

The Chief Executive said that he did not consider that there would be any noticeable difference to members of the public. In effect the changes were about the back office delivery systems which the customer did not need to know the detail of. It was intended that staff would transfer over under TUPE on 1ST June 2013 but there would be few immediate changes of location.

The Chair explained that one of the aspects of the Inquiry had been to examine the Risk Register and he felt that it would have been helpful if that had been made available sooner. However he did appreciate that a lot of work had been undertaken to minimise the risks during the negotiating period.

Councillor Stone commented that she had felt reassured that the level of service provided to customers would be at the same standard or higher, she felt that she now had a better understanding of LGSS and the reasons for its implementation.

The Chair thanked all the staff, who had attended or provided information to the Scrutiny Inquiry. He also thanked Councillor Bottwood for his regular attendance at meetings.

AGREED:

1. That the report of the LGSS Scrutiny Inquiry be noted.
2. A progress report be brought to Committee after 6 months of operation.

11. CARE AND QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) AND CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY(CFPS)DISTRICT WORKING PROJECT

The Committee considered a briefing note on the Care and Quality Commission (CQC) and Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) district working project.

Councillor Stone felt that this project had provided her with an important insight into the work of the CQC which she considered was timely in light of the health change responsibilities at the Country Council.

The Committee were advised that there would be a Councillor Development session to provide a brief on the work of the Care and Quality Commission.

AGREED: That the briefing note on the CQC and CfPS district working project be noted.

12. REPORT BACK FROM NBC'S REPRESENTATIVE TO NCC'S HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Danielle Stone attended the meeting of the NCC's County Health and Social Care Committee held in February 2013.

Councillor Stone reported that Northamptonshire LINK would be replaced by Health watch Northants. She commented that there were many organisations in the Health and Social Care fields which were undergoing major changes and suffering due reduced resources. Councillor Stone had suggested that mental health issues needed to be included on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

AGREED: that the update be noted.

13. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY.

No items were identified.

14. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that there were three matters which had been entered for the Centre for Public Scrutiny Awards. These were the Independent Living Review, the Community Centres Review and the Paperless Committees trial. Shortlisting would take place in May.

As it was his last meeting the Chair expressed his thanks to all of the officers and members that had been involved in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He thanked members for their positive contribution to meetings.

The meeting concluded at 7:20 pm

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Update on the Environmental Services Contract Action Plan

1 Background

- 1.1 In June 2011, Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with Daventry District Council, outsourced its Environmental Services to the contractor Enterprise.
- 1.2 The Committee has previously received a report on the service improvement plans in place.

This report summarises the progress made to date.

2 Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 The contract with Enterprise is managed by the Partnership Unit in Northampton Borough Council. The Partnership Unit manages the contract on behalf of both Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council. Enterprise are responsible for all refuse and recycling, parks and open space maintenance and street cleansing services.

3 Status of workstreams within the service improvement plan.

- 3.1 The original improvement plan initially driven at that time by the findings of the Beasley report and reported to this committee earlier in the year, contained over 40 major work streams to bring improvements to this service area.
- 3.2 An extract of the current version of the improvement plan is attached at appendix 1. At this time it contains just over 20 outstanding actions. The status of the work streams is summarised below, many of these matters concern both NBC and DDC however a small number are actions of concern to just one of the councils.

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- 3.3 All issues have been addressed on a priority basis with those concerning the quality of service delivery or that have considerable potential financial implications taking priority.
- 3.4 The following matters identified on the original primary improvement plan are now complete. These matters will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed again if the level of improvement in service is not satisfactory:
- 3.4.1 Contract Management Processes, Meetings and Liaison.
- Contract management framework agreed
 - Meeting schedule prepared
 - Dispute process agreed
 - Develop and implement an effective service management system and service development plans
 - Standard performance report formats agreed for Partnership board
 - Dash board indicators identified and reported
 - Performance Data Audits
 - Audit of all licenses/insurance required for statutory and non-statutory declarations.
 - NBC Training and Development needs
- 3.4.2 Revision of Superannuation Payments
- Agreed employee list and status
 - Calculation and reimbursements completed
 - Future commitment agreed and payments re-profiled for monthly contractual commitments
- 3.4.3 Provision of GPS Camera for DDC
- Equipment evaluated, operating systems agreed, equipment provided
- 3.4.4 Information for housing tenants and leaseholders within Northampton
- Content and process agreed
- 3.4.5 Payment of utilities within EMS operational areas, budget provision for 12/13 onwards
- NBC budget provision secured
- 3.4.6 Multiple operational issues in the process of being actioned by operations group within contract management framework.
- Green Flag Awards
 - Britain in Bloom
 - Maintenance of graves
 - Closed churchyards and cemeteries plan
 - Play/exercise equipment reports from EMS
 - Cleaning/maintenance of town gateways

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- 3.4.7 Assisted collections arrangements with DDC
- Process agreed, matter to be kept under review
- 3.4.8 Rural Lane/Private Road Collections within DDC
- Process agreed, matter to be kept under review
- 3.4.9 Contract Manual, Protocols and Process Charts (Part completed, subject to evaluation). Documents provided include:
- EMS Resource Audit Report
 - EMS Annual Crew Audit Documents
 - Operational Plan (Inc. Depot Management Plan)
- 3.4.10 Definitions and Records
- Definition of complaints and process agreed
 - Definition of missed bins and counting process agreed
- 3.5 The following matters have been subject to considerable negotiations but have not been resolve. These are now scheduled to escalate to formal dispute within the contract:
- Ownership of Wheelie Bins/Contract Obligations
 - Highway Tree Maintenance
 - EMS loss of South Northants recycle
 - Salary/Wage and Contractual Overtime TUPE Transfer Implications on NBC
 - Additional cost to NBC contact centre
 - Hearing dates, format and evidence for the disclosure processes agreed
- 3.6 The following matters are in the final stages of negotiations. If unresolved they would be considered for the formal dispute process:
- Performance Payment Mechanism
 - Property Number/Council Tax baseline Data and growth
- 3.7 The following matters remain on the Primary Improvement plan and are generally within agreed completion times:

Document to be added to the Contract Manual and Protocols above:

- EMS Annual Contract Review Report (now overdue reported to Board)
- EMS Resource Marketing Plan Documents
- EMS Recycling Strategy (now overdue reported to Board)
- Annual Business Plan
- Expiry Plan
- Environmental Impact Control Plan

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- Review of disaster recovery plan and business continuity plan
 - Customer Services Strategy/Communications Plans/ Web Publishing
- 3.8 Other matters in progress within agreed time plan

- Sports Facility Electronic Booking facilities and Usage Monitoring
- Customer satisfaction programme and surveys

4 Conclusions

4.1 That the update be noted.

4.2 That, when published a copy of the document produced by Steve Elsey be circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the link included on the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#).

ENTERPRISE CONTRACT - PRIMARY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN
22 May 2013 O and S extract

Appendix 1 Report for 10th June 13

ID	ISSUE	ACTIONS	TIME-SCALES	PARTNERSHIP UNIT LEAD OFFICER	R A G	NOTES/COMMENTS	OPEN/CLOSED
1	Performance Payment Mechanism	i Review detailed processes for capturing data used in the Perf Payment Mech; recalc Qtr 1 and 2 Deduction; calc Qtr 3 and Qtr 4 Deduction; propose reasonable compromise for 2012/13 Deductions	May-13	KM	Financial	KM has completed his investigation and a draft report is being prepared Meetings with EMS and DDC are in hand	open
2	Property Number/Council Tax Database	e NBC position to be agreed.	On-going	MT	Financial	Letter from EMS claiming for extra collections etc. Response resisting claim. MT to respond to EMS by 5 April -This information has been provided, further discussions planned.	open
3	Ownership of Wheelie Bins/Contract Obligations	g NBC position to be agreed.	End of year 12	SE	Financial	In dispute - agreement pending. Hearing date 5 June 13	open
5	Performance Data Audits	d Document process.	Feb-13	OG		Completed	closed
		e Plan process for auditing all PIs over 12-18 month rolling period.	Apr-13	OG		Initial audit programme drafted. Documentation audits to be added at appropriate dates	closed
		f Rationalise PIs within contract.	Jun-13	MT		Clarity on what is reported, requirement/need. Linked to 5e. DC/OG working on proposal to rationalise. Any changes to be agreed through the Contract Management Group.	open
9	Highway Tree Maintenance	b EMS and NBC agree final positions prior to next commercial meeting	Oct-12	MT	Financial	To dispute Step 4. Hearing date 5 June 13	open
		e NBC position to be agreed.	Nov-12	SE		Case evidence agreed	open
16	EMS Annual Contract Review Report - clause 30.8	Content agreed in principle.	30.4.13	MT		Report outlines agreed in principle. Dates and order of priority agreed.	open
18	EMS Resource Marketing Plan Documents	Content agreed in principle.	31.5.13	MT		Report outlines agreed in principle. Dates and order of priority agreed.	open
19	EMS Recycling Strategy clause 18	Content agreed in principle.	30.4.13	MT		Report outlines agreed in principle. Dates and order of priority agreed.	open
28	Contract Manual – clause 14	Content agreed in principle.	On going	MT		Completed in part	open
29	Annual Business Plan (referred to in SOMS 1-6)	Content agreed in principle.	TBA	MT		Report outlines agreed in principle. Dates and order of priority agreed.	open
40	Review of disaster recovery plan and business continuity plan	To review plan	30.8.13	MT		In hand	open
38	Expiry Plan	Content agreed in principle.	30.6.13	MT		Report outlines agreed in principle. Dates and order of priority agreed.	open

ENTERPRISE CONTRACT - PRIMARY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN
22 May 2013 O and S extract

Appendix 1 Report for 10th June 13

ID	ISSUE	ACTIONS	TIME-SCALES	PARTNERSHIP UNIT LEAD OFFICER	R A G	NOTES/COMMENTS	OPEN/CLOSED
39	EMS loss of South Northants recycle		Mar-13	MT	Financial	Letter and invoice now received from Enterprise. Additional info to EMS -Under legal consideration. To dispute Step 4. Hearing 5 June 13	open
39	Customer Services Strategy developed	To include Customer Care Policy, pg 40 section 19	Apr-13	JL	Customer service	Part of Comms plan.A communications plan has already been submitted by EMS to the group, although this is currently being reviewed and it is proposed a further plan is produced. Designs have been submitted to the group for the proposed web page. Updated drafts now being considered by coms and contact groups.	open
41	Partnerships identified and developed	Friends of groups to be identified and action plan developed	Sep-13	MT			open
14	Sports Facility Electronic Booking facilities and Usage Monitoring	a Identify a source of a new cash register for the Racecourse	Mar-13	MT		Not now required	closed
		b Develop credit card/online booking facility	Mar-13	MT		MT to meet EMS to discuss options-Operations are drafting business solution	open
10	Cyclical Highway Maintenance	a MT attended initial meeting with NCC/May Gurney regarding their new working arrangements and proposals to develop a new SLA for Cyclical Highway Maintenance	TBA	MT		In discussion with NCC	open
		Review of improvements to Northampton Gateways (23)	Apr-13	MT		Audits complete on the seven main gateways. Meeting with NCC, EMS held.Maintainance spec and responceibilities under clarification. All work now planned and now near completion	closed
23	Green Flag Awards	Planning and approach.	Mar-13	RA		Rangers now involved, an and application for Abington/Delapre parks and Daventry country park in hand	open
24	Britain in Bloom	Planning and approach.	Jan-Oct 13	SE		Progressing. Future meetings booked. See NBC Bloom action plan in hand	open
42	Environmental Impact Control Plan	Plan to be produced, five step carbon management programme	Aug-13	MT		Content to be agreed	open
6	Communications Plans/ Web Publishing	a Agree Strategy and content	Feb-13	SE (JL, DDC, Chair of Comms Grp)	Customer service	Project scoping being managed by Julie Lewis. Draft strategy under consultaion	open

ENTERPRISE CONTRACT - PRIMARY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN
22 May 2013 O and S extract

Appendix 1 Report for 10th June 13

ID	ISSUE	ACTIONS	TIME-SCALES	PARTNERSHIP UNIT LEAD OFFICER	R A G	NOTES/COMMENTS	OPEN/CLOSED
41	Carry out customer surveys	Questionnaire to be produced and survey carried out as per annexe 16.5.1.1.2	TBA	OG	Customer service	EMS to do - still open - first draft rejected. Dispatch date to be agreed	open
45	Bin round changes/ Black /Green bag changes	Clarification of bin round data and updates to be sent to us regularly to update our systems and websites	Jun-13	MT	Customer service	On-going. Will change when round changes made. A detailed programme has been submitted to the Contract Management Group. Time table agreed and implimented	open
12	Salary and Wage TUPE Transfer Implications on NBC - Contractual Overtime	a Enterprise provided names of staff, particularly those being paid contractual overtime	Oct-12	MT	Finacial	Details from EMS sent to Legal/HR/Finance. Dispute Step 4. Hearing date 5 June 13	open

→
 Steve Elsey (SE) NBC
 Mick Tyrrell (MT) NBC

 Olive Gray (OG) NBC
 Derek Cooper (DC) NBC

 David Kennedy (DK) NBC
 Julie Seddon (JS) NBC
 Chloe Paintin (CP) NBC
 John Farrell (JF) Enterprise

 Sue Morrell (SM) NBC
 Enterprise Managed Service EMS
 Northampton Borough Council NBC
 Daventry District Council DDC
 Kieron King (KK) Enterprise
 Keith Mitchell (KM) NBC

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Tree and Shrub Maintenance

1 Tree and Shrub Maintenance

The maintenance of the majority of trees and shrubs that are in the ownership of NBC, are maintained by Enterprise. Enterprise also maintains Highways trees and shrubs, as part of the agency agreement we have with NCC.

Enterprise is not responsible for tree or shrub maintenance in certain Housing areas e.g. residents gardens, communal areas within the curtilage of flats, although they are prepared to offer advice on maintenance in these areas if asked.

All trees, irrespective of whether their maintenance is funded from the General fund or the HRA, are maintained to the same standards. The standards/policies and inspection regimes relating to the trees are those which were in place prior to Enterprise taking over the services. Continuity is also achieved by the two officers at Enterprise who manage the trees, being the same people that previously managed the trees on behalf of NBC.

Enterprise has internally allocated the same level of budgets to tree maintenance as those allocated when NBC managed the trees.

The contract deals with the general maintenance of the existing trees and shrubs and hedge lines, which are the responsibility of NBC or maintained on behalf of NCC, apart from those Housing areas mentioned above. Any maintenance requested to be carried out that would not be deemed to be general maintenance would be outside the scope of the contract. For example, if NBC requested the removal of a tree that was not causing an obstruction to a public footpath, was not dead or dying and causing a health and safety issue or was not causing structural damage to nearby buildings, then the removal would be outside of the scope of the contract and an additional payment would be required. Any work that was requested for purely cosmetic reasons would also be outside of the contract.

I have not seen any reduction in the standard of tree maintenance since the contract with Enterprise commenced, and I still work directly with the tree

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department at Enterprise to ensure that these standards are maintained. I believe that the provisions of the contract with Enterprise will continue to deliver the standards we expect.

2 Tree maintenance - NBC trees

- All arboriculture works is carried out in accordance with recognised good arboriculture practice including BS 3998: Recommendations for Tree Work. Tree maintenance will only be undertaken where there is a requirement to do so.
- A programme of inspections and surveys is in place to identify any maintenance issues with trees and develop work programmes.
- An Enterprise tree officer is on call 24 hours to deal with emergencies such as trees brought down during high winds.
- There are some time restrictions on when maintenance work can be carried out, due to nesting birds and protected species.
- Any complaints from residents about individual trees will be investigated by the tree officers and the resident informed of their findings.
- Customers will be contacted within 5 working days of their initial enquiry to arrange a site visit. Customers will then be informed within 2 working days of the site visit if any work will/can be carried out on the tree. In most cases the work will be carried out within 28 days of the agreement to carry out the work. Exceptions may be due to weather, emergencies or large/difficult jobs, and trees with tree preservation orders or those in conservation areas.
- A list of “frequently asked questions” is available.

3 Tree maintenance - NCC trees (Highways)

- Highways trees on strategic and main distributor roads, are inspected and work undertaken on safety grounds and to ensure visibility and prevent obstruction.
- Only reactive and emergency work will be carried out on trees on other roads.

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

4 Shrubs and shrub bed maintenance – (NBC and NCC Highways)

- NBC and NCC shrubs are maintained to the same specification.
- Highway and Amenity shrub beds are visited on an annual basis as part of the winter works programme and receive full containment pruning operations
- The main period of shrub and shrub bed maintenance takes place between Oct/Nov until the end of March/April.
- Shrub bed maintenance will include the removal of litter and weeds. Weed control will include a combination of chemical treatment and manual removal.
- Shrub maintenance will also include the removal of self-set trees and shrubs from grassed areas and around the curtilage of NBC owned properties.
- During the growing season, shrubs will be maintained to ensure that they do not cause obstruction or damage, or present health and safety implications.

5 Budgets

Northampton Borough Council received an allocation of £186,500 for the financial year 2012/13, from Northamptonshire County Council, for the Cyclic Highway maintenance agreement. This funding covers not only highways tree and shrub maintenance, but also grass cutting and weed control on adopted highways.

NBC have allocated £331,157 from the general Fund as expenditure on trees within the contract payment to Enterprise.

Unfortunately, the element of the HRA budget that contributes to the contract payment in relation to trees is not shown as a separate item. The HRA contributes a total of £796,891 to the contract payment, but this includes all aspects of grounds maintenance and cleansing on Housing land.

6 Conclusion

That the report be noted.

Brief Author: Mick Tyrell, Contracts Manager, Partnership Unit

22 May 2013

TREES F.A.Q. SHEET

1. The tree(s) outside my property block light to my house/ garden; can they be removed/pruned?

In law there has been no tested case to prove or disprove right to light and as such there is NO ABSOLUTE RIGHT TO LIGHT, to either land or property.

Whilst Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council are sympathetic we do not undertake tree works to facilitate light to either land (gardens, etc) or property (houses, conservatories, solar panels, etc).

2. Trees overhang my garden, can I prune them?

In Law there is no legal obligation for a tree owner, private or public, to prune trees in order to prevent branches spreading over a boundary, unless structural damage is caused.

Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council endeavour to ensure a 2-metre clearance distance from overhanging trees to residential structures (i.e. houses, garages, etc.) as part of our maintenance programme. However, there is a common law right which permits a person (or their agent i.e. tree surgeon, gardener, etc) to prune back any growth of tree, shrub etc to the line of their boundary, e.g. fence line, as long as any cuttings are disposed of in a responsible manner, i.e. not dumped on public property or private land.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

B.1 Any prunings, fruit etc must be offered back to the owner of the tree, but if the owner declines to accept them it is up to the person who has pruned the tree to dispose of the waste in a responsible manner.

B.2. The law of trespass applies. So the pruning can only be carried out from the enquirer's side of the fence unless permission is obtained from the landowner.

B.3. By carrying out any work to a tree as above, the person takes responsibility for their actions. Should injury/ damage or failure of the tree occur, as a result of such action, the person who carried out the work becomes liable.

B.4. If the tree carries a Tree Preservation Order or is in a Conservation Area permission must first be obtained from the local planning authority (LPA). This information can be found in a leaflet 'Protected Trees- A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures'

3. My T.V. signal is poor, the company who supplied it says the trees are interfering can they be removed/pruned?

Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council do not prune trees to ease this difficulty. A T.V. Licence does not give the holder a guarantee or legal right to reception, be it analogue, digital or satellite.

An Information Fact Sheet offering advice on how to ameliorate tree-related reception problems can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/reception.

4. The leaves/ seeds/ sap, makes such a mess when they fall and make the garden path slippery/block the drains/dirty the car, can they be removed/pruned?

Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council have a duty of care to keep pavement in good structural repair (County Council Highways Department), but Gardens (front or rear) whether those of the Council or private properties are the concern of the occupiers.

Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council can accept no responsibility for the tree leaf litter, seed drop, sap exudations etc, as these are natural physiological occurrences only to be expected by trees.

Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council do not undertake tree works to facilitate the prevention of leaf litter, seed or sap drop in gardens or footpaths.

It is important to note that except in the most extreme and exceptional circumstances, Northampton Borough Council does not remove any tree without there being sufficient disease, decay or structural damage, identified and assessed by a qualified arboriculturalist.

5. I am worried about the tree roots getting under the house and damaging foundations, what should I do?

Generally tree roots do not damage buildings. However some of Northamptonshire soil has high clay content and this, when coupled with vegetation (trees or shrubs) can cause excessive moisture loss during periods of drought. If you think your property is affected this way, you should first obtain a structural survey (often via your own building insurance company). This should then be forwarded to Insurance Services, Northampton Borough Council or Insurance Services, Daventry District Council.

6. Is there a law about the height of hedges?

Yes, since the 1st June 2005 the High Hedges act has given Local Authorities powers to deal with complaints regarding High Hedges. For further information please contact Northampton Borough Councils Planning Department 01604 837789 or Daventry District Councils Planning Department 01327 871100.

7. Why can't you 'Top' / reduce the height of the trees outside my house?

'Topping' is an outdated arboricultural practice that is no longer considered to be acceptable by the industry for a number of reasons including:

- Topping removes so much of the trees canopy it upsets the crown to root ratio temporarily reducing its food making ability.
- Topping exposes the rest of the tree, and surrounding trees and vegetation, to scorching from direct sunlight, which can damage the natural physiological processes and future survival of the trees.
- The large stubs and wounds caused by 'topping' open the tree to insect attack, disease and decay entry, compromising the future survival of the trees.
- Any new shoots that grow from the cut stubs will be weakly attached and pose a risk to safety when they become larger and heavier.
- 'Topping' a tree will encourage rapid re-growth often with larger leaves and denser crowns!
- Some species of tree cannot cope with 'Topping' and will die as a result.
- A 'Topped' tree is ugly and deformed and will never regain its natural shape and character.

8. Somebody is working on a tree but it has birds nesting/ bats roosting in it- who do I call?

Contact one of the following:

RSPB

NATURAL ENGLAND

BAT CONSERVATION TRUST

Further details can be obtained from you local library.

Current Tenants Rent Arrears

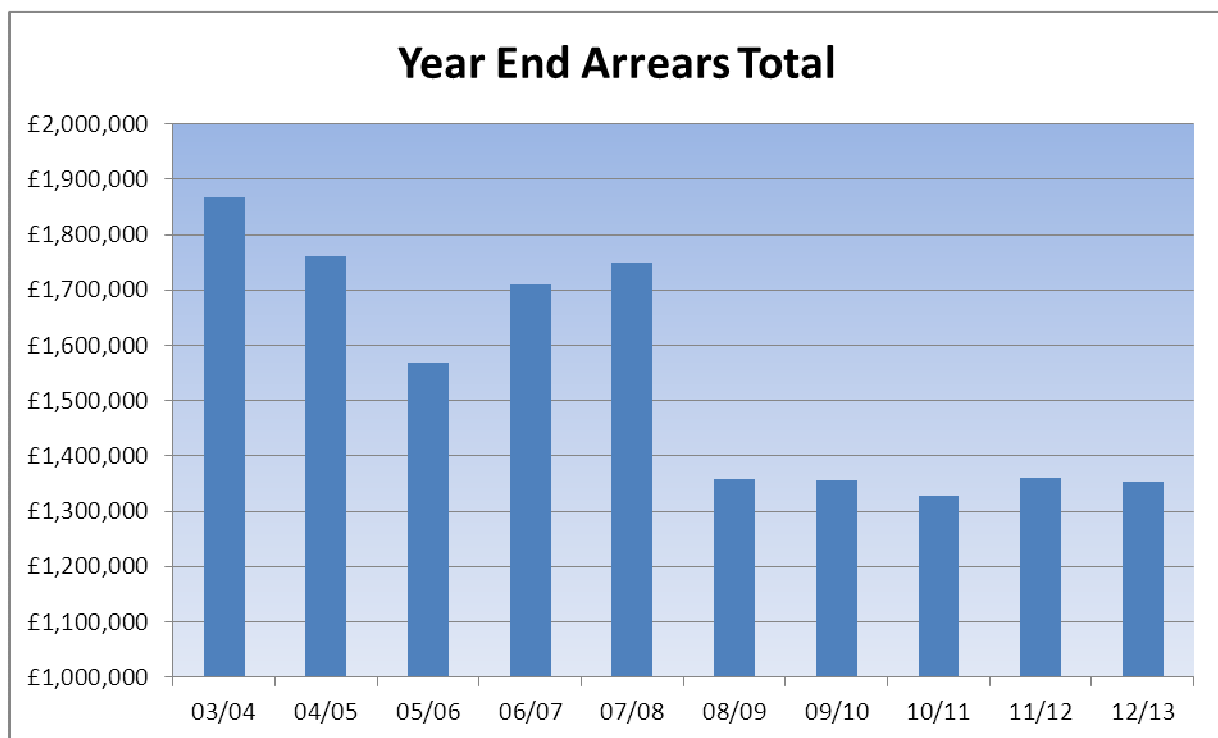
Performance Indicators - Year End Position 2012/13

Headline Figures

Arrears as a % of the Debit (HI13)	2.83%
Total Current Tenants Arrears	£1,353,966
Collection Rate (HI12)	99.70%
Number of Tenants in Arrears	3536
Bailiff Warrants Executed	63
No. of dwelling rents paid by DD	1403

Analysis

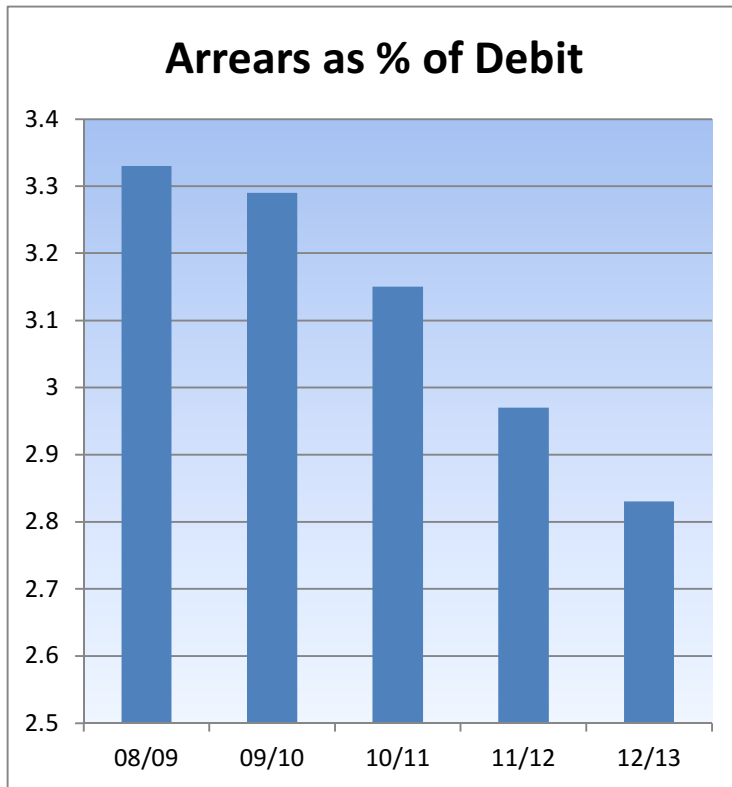
Current tenants rent arrears at £1,353,966 are very slightly reduced on 2011/12's figure of £1,359,302. To provide greater context the graph below shows year end arrears levels since 2003/04.



As can be seen arrears levels have been largely static at around the £1.35m mark for the last five years

Current Tenant's Arrears and Arrears as a Percentage of the Debit (HI13)

When considering the end of year arrears figure it is important to consider the arrears as a % of the debit, (HI13) as this takes account of the fact that the rent debit to be collected as increased by £7m+ in the last 5 years following the annual rent rises



The above graph demonstrates a consistent downward trend in arrears levels as a % of the debit.

Comparative to other housing providers using HouseMark's National Club we are currently in the lower median quartile.

To achieve upper median quartile arrears as a percentage of the debit would need to be 2.4% or less.

While not yet at this level the figures above show that good progress is being made toward achieving upper median levels of performance for HI 13.

Collection Rate (HI12)

The collection rate of 99.70% shows a slight decrease in 2012/13, although is generally consistent with last year's figure of 99.87%, this places NBC in the upper median quartile of HouseMark's National club meaning we are performing in the top half of housing providers nationally.

Number of Evictions

Two figures are provided here one for the number of bailiff's warrants that were executed for rent arrears and the second being our HouseMark return. The two figures are provided because HouseMark define an eviction as so, only if the tenant is still in residence on the actual day a warrant is executed.

	10/11	11/12	12/13
Bailiff Warrants Executed	66	53	63
Evictions - HouseMark Return	23	13	24

Generally the number of eviction undertaken remains low which reflects our aim of sustaining tenancies where this is possible. Based on a report run on the 28th May 2013 performance measured through the HouseMark National Club places NBC in the upper median quartile again this means we are performing in the top half of housing providers nationally.

Direct Debit

DD is the Council's preferred method of payment. 1403 dwelling rents are being paid by DD, about 12% of all tenancies. While lower than we would want it must be remembered that around 46% of tenants are on full housing benefit. Therefore as a percentage of those that pay either full or partial rent the numbers paying by DD rises to 22%. This is still relatively low and we will need to explore options to increase the numbers of tenants paying rent by direct debit, especially in the new world of Universal Credit.

Summary

Arrears as a percentage of the debit (HI13) have continued to decrease with our collection rate (HI12) having remained consistent and reflecting performance in the top half of housing providers nationally. It needs to be remembered that the Rent Income Team are measured as a low cost service when benchmarked using HouseMark comparators and performance should also be viewed in this context.

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Cleanliness of open spaces/parks

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Historically, there has been a lack of indicators to measure the standards of parks and open spaces. To address this situation, it was decided in 2010/11, to develop a set of indicators based on the national indicator NI 195, which was used to measure the cleanliness standard of highways.
- 1.2 These indicators were then incorporated into the Environmental Services contract as part of the mechanism for contract monitoring. These indicators are also part of the suite of indicators that are used when calculating any payment deductions due to poor performance.
- 1.3 As per the contract requirements, Enterprise carries out the inspections relating to cleanliness performance indicators. The resulting performance information is then supplied to the Partnership Unit.

2 Cleanliness Monitoring

- 2.1 The degree of cleanliness in parks and open spaces is measured by looking at three different issues that contribute to areas falling below standard.
- 2.2 These are litter, detritus and graffiti/fly posting. Each of these elements is independently measured and scored, to give a percentage of inspections that fall below standard. This percentage is then used to compare actual performance against target.
- 2.3 Although all of the targets are annual targets, inspections are carried out and reported on a quarterly basis and the performance measured as a cumulative performance through the year.
- 2.4 For example, in the first quarter, if out of 40 litter inspections, there is 1 inspection which falls below an acceptable standard, the performance would be 2.5%. ($1/40 \times 100$)

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.5 If then in the second quarter, there are 2 out of 40 inspections that fall below standard then the quarter performance would be 5% ($2/40 \times 100$)
- 2.6 The cumulative performance for the year would be 3.75% ($3/80 \times 100$)
- 2.7 As well as through the use of indicators above to monitor cleanliness, Enterprise also monitor standards in the following ways;
- Audits by the Daventry and Northampton Management Team.
 - Measurement of complaints/service requests.
 - Inspections by Area managers
- 2.8 The Partnership Unit also carry out their own pro-active inspections and will also visit areas as a result of complaints or service requests. Enterprise are advised of any issues that are identified as a result of these inspections.

3 Performance

- 3.1 The table below shows the performance targets for the indicators and the actual performance for 2011/12 and 2012/13. With regards to performance, lower actual figures indicate better performance.

Indicator	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Target	Target
	2011/12	2011/12	2012/13	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Litter	5%	1%	4%	0%	3%	2%	2%
Detritus	8%	4%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Graffiti/ Fly Posting	2%	7%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

4 Auditing

- 4.1 Each month the Performance and Business Support Officer in the Partnership Unit carries out an audit of the performance data supplied by Enterprise.
- 4.2 In order to validate the inspections for the cleanliness of parks and open spaces, the performance and Business Support Officer will spend a day onsite with the Enterprise officer, and jointly carry out the inspections.

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Although graffiti/fly posting in parks and open spaces was below target in the first year of the contract, performance has significantly improved in the second year. Indicators for litter and detritus have remained within target and also improved in the second year of the contract. All other indicators have been within target during the first and second years of the contract.

Brief Author: Mick Tyrell, Contracts Manager, Partnership Unit

23 May 2013

Northampton Borough Council Overview and

Scrutiny



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10th June 2013

Briefing Note: Vehicle Crime

1. Background

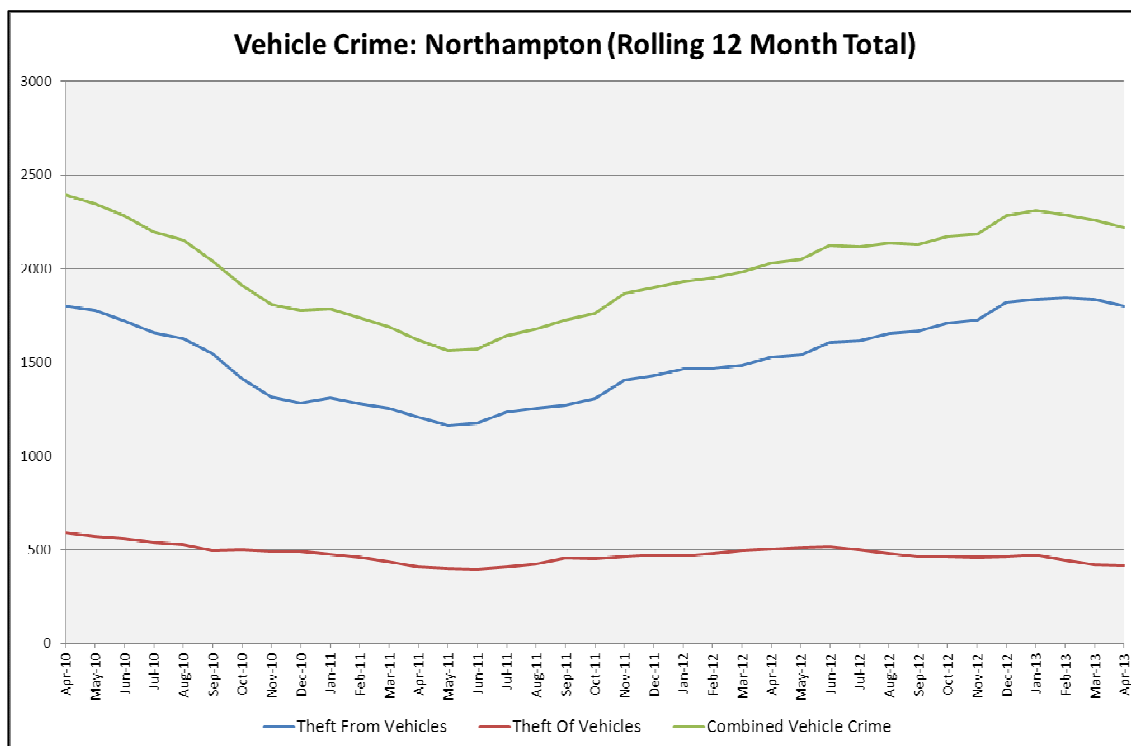
1.1 Vehicle Crime has increased significantly in Northampton Borough in the past two years. This is primarily due to thefts from vehicles (TFMV) increasing, as opposed to thefts of vehicles (TOMV). This is a countywide issue; however a large proportion of the increase is occurring in Northampton.

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide the Committee with a general overview of the vehicle crime problem in Northampton.

3. Current Situation

3.1 Performance*



www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Call 01604 837046 or 01604 837408

E-mail: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

**As of April 2013 new Home Office recording standards now include Vehicle Interference (126) within the vehicle crime group. However for the purposes of this paper this is not included in the vehicle crime figures.*

- 3.1.1 After great reductions in vehicle crime from 2007/08 to 2010/11 (-56.3%, 2179 crimes), vehicle crime has steadily increased since July 2011.
- 3.1.2 There has been an increase of 35.1% (576 crimes) since July 2011, returning crime levels back to that of 2010, as shown in the graph above.
- 3.1.3 Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV) has increased by 45.9% (567 crimes) during this period, whereas Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV) has increased by 2.2% (9 crimes) in the same period.
- 3.1.4 In the past three months there has actually been a 3.9% reduction (-91 crimes) in vehicle crime, however burglary dwelling is now on the rise.
- 3.1.5 Northampton is ranked against 15 similar CSP areas for crimes per population by the Home Office. In regards to Vehicle Crime, the CSP are ranked 13 out of 15 for 2012-13. In 2011-12, the CSP were ranked 11th.
- 3.1.6 Northampton has a vehicle crime rate (per population) 41% greater than the county average.

3.2 Locations

- 3.2.1 The hotspot wards for vehicle crime in the past 12 months are Castle, Semilong, Spencer & St James.
- 3.2.2 However, in addition to these 'traditional' high crime wards, there has been a notable percentage rise in vehicle crime in low crime wards too, particularly on the South Sector of Northampton, such as East and West Hunsbury wards.
- 3.2.3 Following interventions by the police, involving significant reassurance and education campaigns in the area this spike has now died down.
- 3.2.4 Vehicles tends to be targeted when parked on the street, in driveways or in residentially based car parks. Thefts from local authority or commercial car parks is not a big issue, thefts in this location type have actually reduced.

3.3 Peak Times

- 3.3.1 TFMV tends to occur between 22:00 – 06:00, this has been the case for the past three years, no specific time of night can be identified, TOMV also tends to occur during the night but the peak is more diffused.
- 3.3.2 Seasonally, vehicle crime tends to peak in April, August and November in recent years.

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

3.4 Items Stolen

- 3.4.1 Around one third of items stolen from vehicles tend to be vehicle parts/accessories (mainly SAT NAVs, registration plates, car stereos). Handbags/luggage, documents, cash and tools are also often stolen.
- 3.4.2 Whilst thefts of exterior car parts is difficult for victims to prevent, items stolen which have notably increased are items easily removable from the vehicle by owners, and vehicles left insecure make up a significant proportion of TFMV, indicating education/awareness is still a valid tactic for the partnership.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The partnership has agreed five Serious Acquisitive Crime (domestic burglary, vehicle crime & robbery) priority areas in-line with Northants Police priority areas to focus upon for 2013-14. These area boundaries are not aligned with ward boundaries but do span across the following wards; Castle, Semilong, Delapre & Briar Hill, Spencer, St James, Brookside and Talavera.
- 4.2 A partnership action plan has been agreed and is now progressing. For vehicle crime, this will focus upon offender management, increasing public awareness of vehicle crime risk and environmental improvements to improve defensible space.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

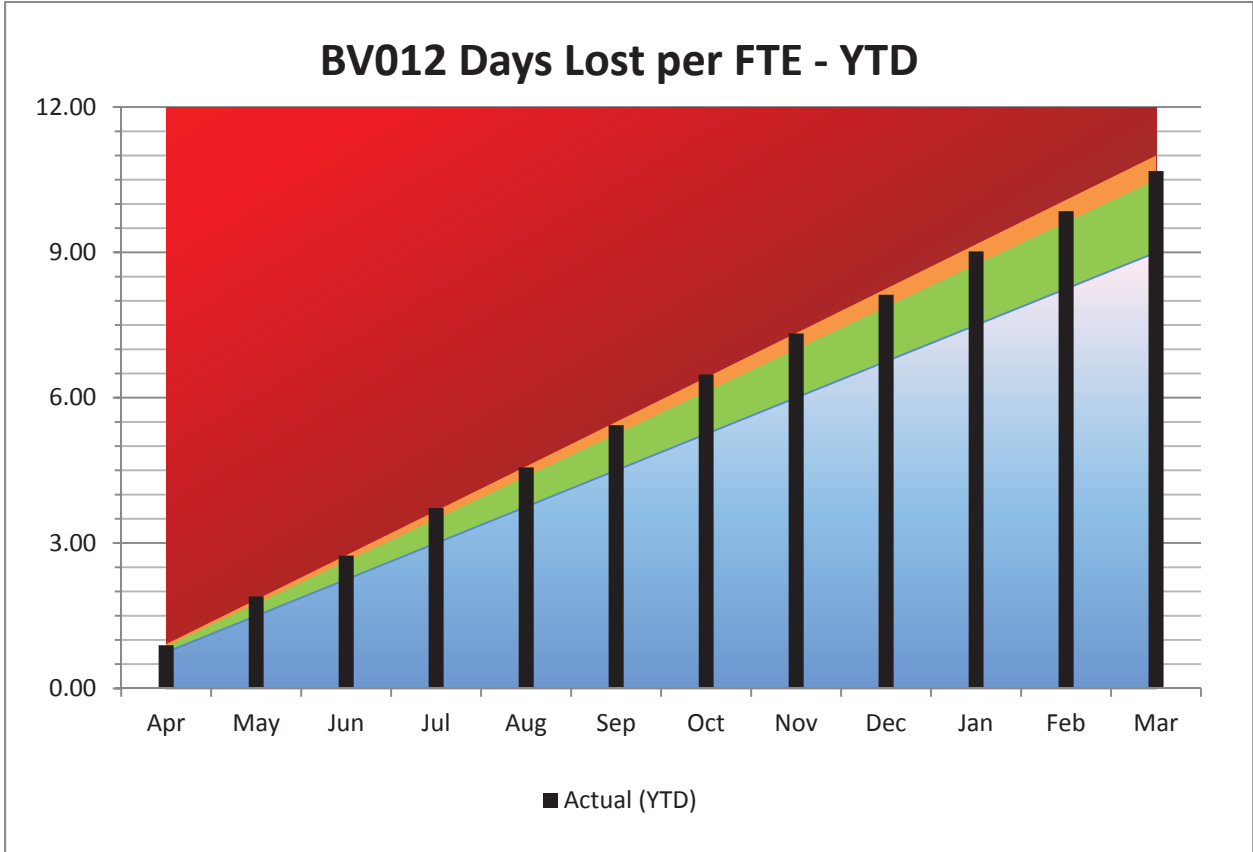
- 5.1 The update is noted.
- 5.2 A further performance update on vehicle crime is provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Community Safety Partnership briefing.

Brief Author: Will Finn, Community Safety Analyst, on behalf of Julie Seddon, Chair of Northampton Community Safety Partnership.

O & S - ABSENCE REVIEW

The BV12 Rolling Performance Indicator for March, covering the 12 month period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, is 10.68 FTE days against a target of 10 FTE days.

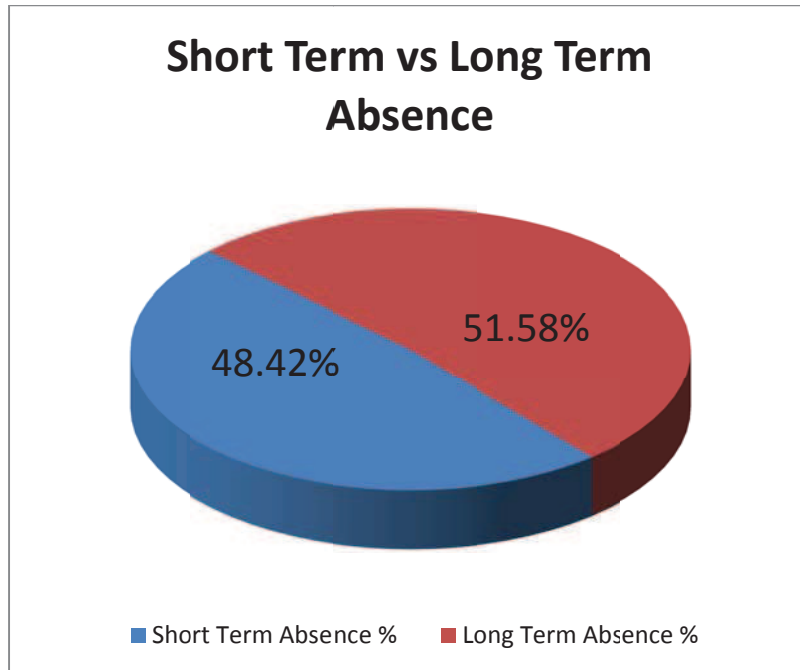
The graph below shows the cumulative BV 12 Days Lost per FTE year to date, this identifies that the result is within tolerance (amber).



Long Term vs Short Term absence

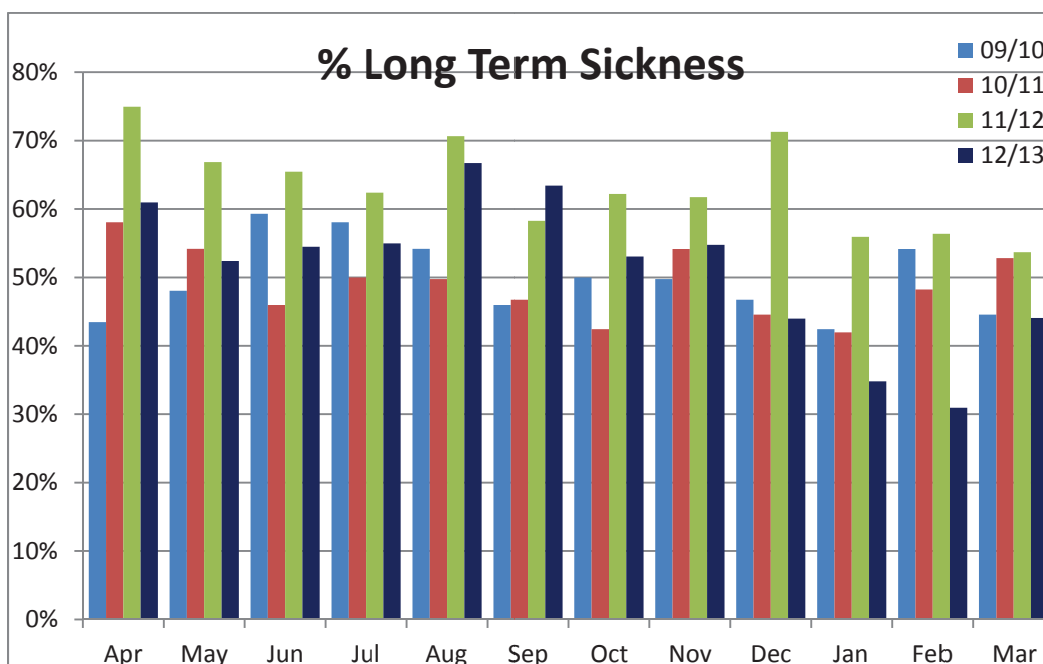
The percentage of short term sickness absence for the period is 48.42% compared to 51.58% long-term sickness absence.

The results for March show an increase in the short term absence levels with 48.42% compared to 47.16% in February. This trend will continue as we work with individuals currently on long term sick, and support them to return to work. Short term absence is a key area that managers need to focus on.



Short Term V Long Term as a percentage

Short term absences are defined as absences that are intermittent and sporadic and normally last for a period of less than four weeks. Long term absences are defined as absences that are continuous and extend over a period of four weeks or more.



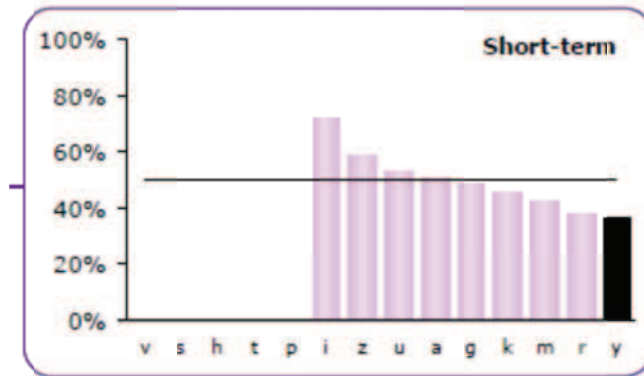
Long Term Sickness as a percentage

Benchmarking Data

Northampton Borough Council participates in the CIPFA Human Resources Benchmarking Club on an annual basis. The outturn data for 2011/12 was submitted to CIPFA in May and the final report is released in July. The participating authorities are of varying size and range from an employee headcount of 521 to 947. For the year 2011-12, Northampton Borough Council's employee headcount was 911. Graphs extracted from the report are shown below. Each bar in the graph represents an organisation's value, Northampton Borough Council's bar is highlighted in black and relates to the 2011-12 outturn position. In the following sections the benchmarking data is used to compare the 2012-13 outturn results.

Short-term sickness absence

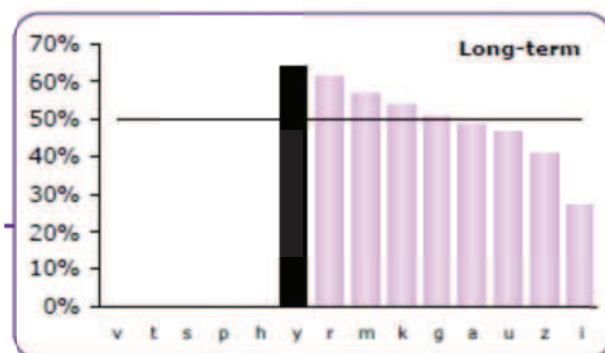
The 2012-13 outturn for short term absence levels of 48.42% represents an upward trend towards the average for the benchmarking group. This shows a positive improvement in the distribution of short and long term sickness absence and identifies that Northampton Borough Council is controlling sickness absence whether short and long term.



CIPFA 2012 Short-term sickness absence percentage

Long-term sickness absence

The 2012-13 outturn for long term absence levels of 51.58% represents a downward trend for the Authority, and is now comparable to the average for the benchmarking group. This has been achieved through the implementation of Wellness Recovery Action Plans (RAP's) that are used as a focussed casework approach to support employees and encourage early return to work.



CIPFA 2012 Long-term sickness absence days

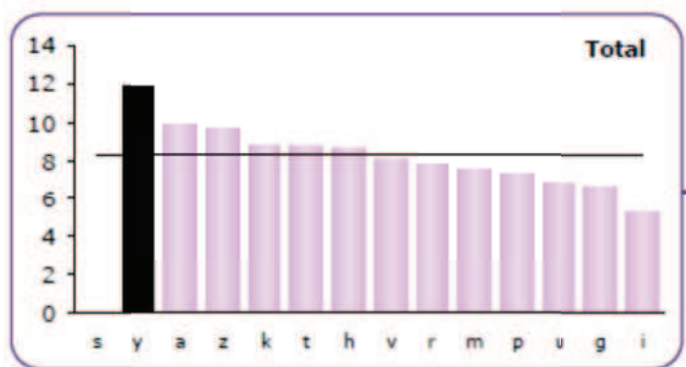
All sickness absence

The distribution of short-term and long-term sickness absence for outturn 2012-13 has shown some significant change compared to 2011-12. The outturn result is comparable to the CIPFA benchmarking group at 48.42% for short term and 51.58% for long-term sickness absence. This is a positive result of the focus on both short and long term sickness absence.

	%	Avg
Short-term	36%	50%
Long-term	64%	50%

CIPFA 2012 % split of all sickness absences

The outturn result of 10.68 FTE days lost due to sickness absence is a significant improvement on the 2011-12 result of 11.88 FTE days. Comparing the 2012-13 outturn position to the benchmarking group identifies that Northampton Borough Council is moving towards the average and the gap between our result and other organisations is reducing.



CIPFA 2012 BV 12 sickness absence



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

10 June 2013

BRIEFING NOTE:

LICENSING RESTRUCTURE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Licensing Team were transferred into the Directorate of Customers & Communities (formerly Environment and Culture) as part of the council's wider restructure in 2008. The team initially sat within the Regulatory Services section of Public Protection, but was transferred to Community Safety, located in the CSP Unit based in Fish Street in 2009. This enabled the service to work alongside and establish closer working links with the Police Licensing Team and link in with the wider community safety agenda, whilst still retaining its independent focus.
- 1.2 In order to fully integrate and formalise the administrative activity across the Community Safety Team and establish clear administrative and enforcement functions for licensing a decision was made to restructure the Licensing team.
- 1.3 The need for the restructure arose from a strategic review of Licensing that was undertaken, which identified that greater capacity in senior officer support for licensing matters and enforcement activity would be achieved through this process.
- 1.4 This restructure also enabled the realignment of budget to increase capacity within the licensing/enforcement function.
- 1.5 The new structure reflected the need to respond to the political appetite to provide a greater enforcement role for licensing, coupled with a strong emphasis on partnership working.
- 1.6 The proposal focussed on clearly defining the Enforcement and Administration roles of the Licensing function, enabling a clear definition of roles and improved performance. This saw the realignment of the supervisory responsibilities for the Licensing Administration Team under the Community Safety Administration and Project Officer, and the creation of 3 Senior Licensing Officer posts (appendix 1).

2 UPDATE/INFORMATION

- 2.1 The newly restructured Licensing Team came into place on 1 May 2012 (appendix 2).
- 2.2 One of the first tasks of the newly established team was to respond to the recommendations from the strategic review of the service. From this review 8 recommendations were identified:

R1 Define and communicate a clear service vision, outlining its purpose through strategic objectives

Performance indicators for Licensing team have been developed and agreed; regular team meetings take place, with set agenda ensuring all key areas of business are covered. All members of the Licencing committee receive a weekly activity brief which includes delegated decisions made by officer.

R2 Define a clear governance framework inclusive of quality management
Delegated Powers have been reviewed and updated, and are all held on a central Licensing database. Index sheet has been drawn up, listing all powers and identifying review dates.

R3 Route all calls through the Contact Centre

This is currently being reviewed, as it bears a financial cost to the service, which could result in a reduction of administration support for the team.

R4 Design the administrative process for taxi and hackney carriage licensing to achieve efficiencies through channel shift

Customer Journey process mapping undertaken to help inform delivery of service. Contact made with other LA Licensing teams to source examples of 'best practice'. Changes already put in place for appointments system and location of One Stop Shop desk to enable more effective and efficient delivery of service. Further web development has been undertaken and online applications being progressed.

R5 Develop Lalpac software to realise process efficiencies and enable effective case work management

Visits to Coventry and Oxford Licensing teams' undertaken and best practice shared both ways. New information recording template has been established and went 'live' in April. Annual report, detailing a wide range of service delivery will be available in June 2013; this will become an annual occurrence.

R6 Undertake workforce development and succession planning to enable greater flexibility in the Licensing role

Review completed and new structure in place from 01.05.2012. There is now increased enforcement capacity and a clear split between the admin & Senior Licensing Officer/Enforcement. Appropriate training and development has been put in place for officers where relevant.

R7 Develop a risk based approach to enforcement with a greater emphasis on education and prevention

Rolling programme of Licensing Enforcement activity is now in place, ensuring continued close working with partner agencies. Review of taxi licensing conditions has been completed and adopted. New Safety

Awareness course for first time Private Hire flagging offenders has been successfully piloted and has now been adopted. Taxi Induction course for new drivers continues to be held on a regular basis. Involvement in Best Bar None assessments continues.

R8 Maximise income from annual invoicing and reduce debt recovery costs

Following legislative changes for liquor licences, new process have been agreed and adopted, resulting in historic arrears now being collected. Close liaison with the Finance Exchequers team and improved invoicing has resulted in a significant reduction in arrears. Chip and Pin system is now in place, and has enable a speedier delivery of service to our customers. All staff are trained on the Agresso system and central recording system for Licensing.

3 Performance Activity 2012/13

<u>Licences Granted</u>		<u>Enforcement Activity</u>		<u>Courses held</u>	
Liquor Licences Various	638	Taxi Misc (Multi-Agency checks, vehicles checks, flagging, warning letters)	385	Taxi Driver Induction Course	8
Temporary Event Notices	401	Driver Cautions	47	Hackney Driver Tests	8
Taxi Licences Granted	122	Driver Suspensions	5	Safety Awareness Courses	2
Street Trading Licences	20	Licensed Premises Visits	77		
Car Boot	63	Suspensions of Liquor Licences	17		
Sex Establishments	4	Best Bar None Assessments	12		
House to House Collections	37	Street Trading/ Car Boot/ Sex Establishments Visits	70		
Street Collections	54				
Total	1339	Total	613	Total	18

During 2012/13 over 2200 appointments were undertaken with taxi drivers, which average out to over 10 appointments per day, 4 days per week.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The review and restructure of the Licensing function has resulted in a clear structure being established, ensuring clarity between the administration and enforcement elements of the service. A more effective and efficient 'front office' service is now provided for our customers, and a clear and structured approach is taken to enforcement activity, placing an emphasis on education and prevention.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Content of the briefing paper noted and accepted.
- 5.2 Annual Licensing report is presented to Overview & Scrutiny on an annual basis, commencing in June 2014.

Author: Debbie Ferguson
on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Overview & Scrutiny

May 2013

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Councillor Community Fund 2012/13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks to brief members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the Councillor Community Fund during 2012/13.
- 1.2 The Councillor Community Fund was introduced in 2012/13. It seeks to empower councillors, helping them to play a full role in supporting a healthy and vibrant voluntary and community sector in their localities.

2. Context

- 2.1 Each elected member of Northampton Borough Council had a budget of £3,000 provided in 2012/13 to contribute towards the costs of local voluntary and community sector groups and/or activities.
- 2.2 The Councillor Community Fund is one of a number of ways in which the borough council supports the local voluntary and community sector. These include:
 - a. Funding local voluntary and community sector infrastructure support. This work supports the development and sustainability of the sector; enables the sharing of best practice, helps develop services to deliver against unmet need and provides support to volunteers. The current infrastructure support contract with Northampton Volunteering Centre expires in March 2014.
 - b. Providing grants to local voluntary and community organisations through the Partnership Fund Grant Scheme. Currently, this scheme provides £550,000 to local groups. Each application must be for a minimum of £2000.
 - c. A Borough Council Small Grants Fund for local good causes and projects, providing grants of up to £2,000 per application. This fund is being managed by Northamptonshire Community Foundation on behalf of the Borough Council.

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3. Councillor Community Fund 2012/13

- 3.1. In 2012-13, 158 Councillor Community Fund Grants¹ were awarded to 96 organisations. The value of the grants totalled £77,144.51 and represented 52% of the total Councillor Community Fund Budget of £147,000 for the 45 elected members of Northampton Borough Council.
- 3.2. The Councillor Community Fund has been widely used to support local initiatives and activities.
- 3.3. Table 1 (below) provides summary information of total spend per councillor for 2012/13. Forty one Councillors have drawn upon their 2012/13 Councillor Community Fund allocation.
- 3.4. Three councillors have spent their full allocation of Councillor Community Fund for 2012/13. A further seventeen councillors (38%) have spent £2,000 or above, of those, thirteen councillors have spent over £2,500.
- 3.5. Just over a fifth (ten councillors) of elected members have spent under £1000.
- 3.6. A significant number of Councillor Community Fund applications involved joint applications by two or more members. This allowed for larger projects to be funded, such as the Multi Faith Day or the repairs to a water pump at a water sports centre.

Table 1: Councillor Community Fund spend by number of councillors

Amount spent	Number of councillors	Percentage of councillors
£3,000	3	7%
£2,000 – £2,999	17	38%
£1,000 - £1,999	11	24%
£1 - £999	10	22%
£0	4	9%

- 3.7. A wide range of organisations received funding from the 2012/13 Councillor Community Fund. These included:
 - Organisations working with children and young people such as schools (Cedar Road, Hardingstone, Hunsbury, Kingsley and Wooton Primary Schools), uniformed groups such as Scouts, Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade, children's centres and youth clubs;
 - Sports organisations / clubs;
 - Local residents associations and neighbourhood groups;

¹ In this instance, each Councillor Community Fund application made by each individual member is treated as a single application. For example, if five councillors each contributed to a single project, this is treated as if it were five applications.

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- Parish councils (including Billing, Collingtree, Duston, Great Houghton, Hardingstone and Wooton & East Hunsbury PCs)
- Organisations working with older people;
- Organisations working with people with disabilities;
- Community centres / facilities;
- Cultural organisations;
- Women's groups;
- Environmental and conservation groups.

3.8. Many activities and purchases were funded through the Councillor Community Fund during 2012/13. This included contributions towards the costs of:

- Events (such as the Multi Faith Day);
- Sports and cultural projects;
- Community Safety (such as installation of alley gates, bicycles for Police Community Support Officers, signage, "No Cold Calling" stickers);
- Health, wellbeing and first aid equipment and activities;
- Community facilities (such as tables, chairs, crockery, repairs and maintenance of facilities, litter bins);
- Activities for children and young people (including a breakfast club, holiday activities, theatre activities);
- Community Development (such as volunteer training, hiring of meeting rooms and the printing of community newsletters);
- Environmental projects (such as planting, repairs to footpaths and installation of fencing).

4. Conclusions

4.1 That the Councillor Community Fund 2012/13 briefing be noted.

23 May 2013

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CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Response of Cabinet to recommendations made by O & S Panel H on 25 May 2011 concerning lease and other contractual provisions relating to Sixfields Stadium
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	7 th March 2012
Key Decision:	No
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Planning & Regeneration
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Tim Hadland
Ward(s)	St James Ward

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the approach of Cabinet to recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Panel H, contained in Appendix 1 of this report, concerning the lease and other contractual provisions relating to Sixfields Stadium.
- 1.2 In doing so Cabinet thanks O & S Panel H for the valuable work done in reviewing the operation of athletics facilities and associated issues at Sixfields Stadium. The Council supports the ambitions of the, of both Northampton Town Football Club (NTFC) and of Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club (R&NAC) in promoting high quality professional and amateur sport in Northampton and wishes to see the continuing success of both organisations. The inclusion of Sixfields Stadium and surrounding land within the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone reflects this support and is intended to help provide opportunities to allow improvements to facilities, as part of the wider goals of promoting growth and employment creation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet responds to the recommendations made by O & S Panel H to Cabinet on 25 May 2011, as set out at 6.1.1 to 6.1.8. of Appendix 1 to this report, by adopting the following approaches:
- 2.1.1 That the Corporate Asset Manager should generally require existing provisions within the Lease of land and property at Sixfields (made between this Council and Northampton Town Football Club Limited dated 13 April 2004) to be complied with, in a manner consistent with good estate management practice whilst seeking to maintain a positive and constructive relationship with NTFC.
- 2.1.2 That the Corporate Asset Manager working with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning should:
- (a) approach NTFC to explore any changes that could be made, by mutual agreement, to the existing Lease to help clarify the responsibilities of NTFC to maintain athletics facilities at Sixfields Stadium (by reference to certain external standards)
 - (b) seek NTFC and R&NAC's mutual co-operation to improve parking arrangements for users of the athletics facilities, whilst noting that under the terms of the Licence between NTFC and R&NAC there are no specific parking rights granted to the latter
 - (c) explore, in partnership with NTFC, whether there may be potential opportunities for local educational bodies, Unity Leisure Trust or other similar bodies to either (i) assist with the management of the existing athletics facilities at Sixfields on behalf of NTFC or (ii) to help attract additional funding to support investment and boost participation in sport at the Stadium.
 - (d) work with NTFC to refine management regimes at the Stadium (recognising any reciprocal obligations that need to be performed by R&NAC), to enable effective, co-ordinated and co-operative use of the infield of the athletics track for both (i) football training and (ii) for athletics field event training and competition and to consider practical arrangements to help prevent accidental damage to track facilities.
- 2.1.3 That Cabinet supports the maximum use of the Stadium by community groups on the six "free of charge" days, reserved annually under the Lease. It instructs the Director of Environment and Culture to work with Unity Leisure Trust and other suitable bodies to promote the effective use of such time allocation by local sporting organisations, with a particular emphasis on use of the stadium by young persons.

- 2.1.4 That Cabinet supports the Panel's aspiration that the athletics facilities at Sixfields Stadium should be of a standard externally assessed as suitable to enable it to host athletics competitions for a wide range of users, particularly schools competitions. Cabinet recognises that the standards and requirements of external sporting bodies may change over time and that compliance with NTFC's Lease provisions and /or NTFC's and R&NAC Licence provisions may not of itself satisfy such requirements for some or all athletics disciplines, at all levels.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Between December 2010 and March 2011, Overview & Scrutiny Panel H undertook an investigatory scrutiny, the purpose of which was to "Review the operation of the Lease that Northampton Borough Council has with Northampton Town Football Club, the contractual arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club; and make recommendations for improvement to the [Sixfields athletics] facility, if appropriate". An Executive Summary of the findings of the Panel, incorporating their "Conclusions and key findings" and "Recommendations" is at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.1.2 The report of the Chair of Scrutiny was presented to cabinet on 25 May 2011. Cabinet noted that report. The Panel's recommendations are set out at 6.1.1 – 6.1.8 of Appendix 1. As a result of the change of administration in May 2011 and organisational changes flowing from this, together with the development of positive strengthened relationships with key sports clubs within the Town during the second half of 2011, a formal Cabinet report in response to the issues raised has necessarily been delayed beyond the usual period.
- 3.1.3 The Panel had considered a range of matters principally related to the contractual and operational relationships between (a) this Council and its tenant of the entire Sixfields Stadium complex - Northampton Town Football Club Limited (NTFC) and (b) between NTFC and its contractual licensee of part of the stadium complex, Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club (R&NAC). It took evidence from those two organisations and from Council officers. An inspection of the Stadium was also made.
- 3.1.4 O & S Scrutiny Panel H recognised the existing contractual position, noting the terms of the original lease and licence - including variations to the latter that had been mutually agreed between NTFC and R&NAC.
- 3.1.5 The primary concern of the Panel was to achieve a sustained improvement in the condition of the athletics facilities/ equipment at the stadium, which would in turn enable use of those facilities for hosting schools, junior and adult competitions across all track and field disciplines. To help achieve this aim the Panel also made a number of recommendations that would, in its view, improve the day-to-day management of the athletics facilities by NTFC and its relationship with R&NAC. The Panel also made a recommendation concerning exploring the potential scope for changing future management arrangements of the athletics facilities at the Stadium, through third party involvement.

3.1.6 During the period since the report of O & S Scrutiny Panel H was presented to Cabinet in May 2011, the Council had been working constructively with NTFC and other sporting organisations in the Town to ensure that there is greater alignment around shared aspirations.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The Council supports the continued development of Northampton Town Football Club and recognises the broader work it does in the community, promoting participation in football and education. NTFC has certain specific liabilities under its long lease of the Sixfields Stadium complex, granted in 2004 for a term of 150 years at a peppercorn rental. These importantly include maintenance responsibilities related to the athletics track and related facilities.

3.2.2 The Council similarly supports the success of Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club and acknowledges the valuable work it does with athletes from development stage through to performance level. R&NAC has a 25 year licence agreement granted in 2004 to use athletics facilities at Sixfields Stadium. There are specific rights granted as well as obligations to pay charges for the use of the facilities. These fees are paid to NTFC.

3.2.3 There have been past disputes between NTFC and R&NAC concerning (a) utilisation of the facilities, (b) maintenance of the running track, fixed and moveable equipment and (c) in respect of charges raised by NTFC. The standard of the facilities is presently assessed and certificated by United Kingdom Athletics (UKA). There are different grades of certificate and these are subject to regular change. There is a desire shared by both clubs and by this Council to limit the scope for future disagreements.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 The Council could choose not to accept any of the recommendations made. The Lease would still govern the Council's relationship with NTFC. However, issues noted by Scrutiny Panel H may not be addressed and potential opportunities for working with both Clubs to help improve facilities and improve relationships would be missed.

3.3.2 The Council could choose to adopt an approach that takes account of the spirit of the recommendations of scrutiny Panel H. In some instances they are partially aspirational in nature, some are not contractually enforceable and others do involve active co-operation between NTFC and R&NAC themselves - if they are to be implemented as intended by O & S Panel H.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are none specifically

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are none specifically for the Council flowing from the adoption of these recommendations.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 There are limited potential legal implications concerning the adoption of these recommendations. The Council has only an existing contractual relationship with Northampton Town Football Club under a Lease. It has no contractual relationship or direct legal responsibilities to Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club. If there are mutually agreed changes or clarifications made to the existing Lease, a deed of variation may be required to record these changes. The Council has no authority to impose additional or revised terms.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 There are no specific new equality implications in adopting these recommendations. However, the implementation of a number of them may assist in extending the range of persons regularly using the facilities at Sixfields Stadium including young persons and those with disabilities.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 O & S Panel H took evidence from and consulted extensively with Northampton Town Football Club and with Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Adoption of the recommendations within this report would not deliver any specifically prioritised corporate objectives. However, the wider promotion of sport and recreation is consistent with elements of the present Corporate Plan.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 None specifically

5. Background Papers

5.1 Asset Management Files

5.2 O & S Scrutiny Panel H report to Cabinet 25 May 2011

Simon Dougall, Corporate Asset Manager x 8177

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2012/2013

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

A Message from Councillor Jamie Lane Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report highlights the work of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) and its Scrutiny Panels over 2012/2013.

It has been an extremely busy year for O&S with three very in-depth Reviews being undertaken around:

- Serious Acquisitive Crime, violent crime and community safety
- Retail experience
- Infrastructure requirements and S106 Agreements

All of these Reviews had the assistance of key co-opted members and their expertise and knowledge played a welcomed part in assisting the Panels in compiling their findings, conclusions and recommendations. The reports of these important Reviews will be presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2013/2014.

I was very pleased that public suggestions totally influenced the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/2013 and for the Work Programme 2013/2014, over twenty suggestions from the public were received.

The Committee scrutinised the Council's budget proposals by delegating work to its Reporting and Monitoring Working Group to identify three key budget proposals for the Committee to scrutinise in-depth.

It is very important for O&S to be involved with decisions at an appropriate early stage to apply real influence and play the important role of 'critical friend.' Again, Overview and Scrutiny has continued to fulfil its robust pre-decision scrutiny role by undertaking a number of key pre-decision activities.

An evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton took place using the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)'s framework "Accountability Works for You", together with two mini peer Reviews undertaken by Officers and Councillors from Broxtowe Borough Council and Rugby Borough Council. It had some very positive outcomes, acknowledging the achievements made, a number of which have been recognised as best practice. I was pleased to note that minimal recommendations were proposed regarding potential improvements to the O&S function.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Les Marriott for all his hard work in chairing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past two years.

I would like to thank all those involved in Overview and Scrutiny over the past year. I highlight the support of all those involved in Reviews is required for a successful outcome.

I do hope that you find this report informative and interesting.



Councillor Jamie Lane

Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

Achievements

How was this impact made during 2012-2013?

The Panels carry out in-depth Scrutiny Reviews, whilst the O&S Committee concentrates on strategic issues, including holding the Executive to account, performance management and scrutiny of crime and disorder. This structure attracts increased public participation and the involvement of non-Executives in Scrutiny Reviews.

Key Example:

Involvement of Non- Executives (not Scrutiny Members) in Overview and Scrutiny

This O&S structure enables non-Executives, who are not O&S Members, to be fully involved in the O&S process.

Key Example: The Scrutiny Panel that looked at Infrastructure Requirements and Section 106 was made up of eight non-Executives, of which four were not O&S Councillors, demonstrating complete involvement of non-Executives in the O&S process. In addition, a non-Executive from Northamptonshire County Council and a non-Executive from Daventry District Council were co-opted to this Review highlighting joint scrutiny work.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

In 2010 the scrutiny of crime and disorder was formalised, putting in place clear working arrangements between the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Committee. A bi-annual report from the CSP continues to inform the O&S Committee of work undertaken, and non-Executives decide if further review or scrutiny is required. This report focuses on the levels of performance and whether crime has increased in the light of reduced resources, if so what measures have been taken to meet any shortfall in performance. This is an example of excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners. In addition to this approach to crime and disorder scrutiny, a Scrutiny Panel investigated serious acquisitive crime, violent crime and community safety, details of which are given later within this Annual Report.

Overview & Scrutiny adds great value to the community safety work undertaken within Northampton. Their continued interest and contribution is welcomed, and the focussed pieces of work they undertake continue to support and progress the delivery of community safety projects across the Borough.

**Debbie Ferguson,
Community Safety Partnership Manager**

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Performance Management Scrutiny

At the start of the Municipal year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a development session on the performance trends to enable non-Executives to undertake their performance management scrutiny role.

The scrutiny of specific measures is included on the agenda of meetings of the O&S Committee. This has resulted in measures being reviewed on an exception basis with relevant Cabinet Members being called to present to the Committee. Cabinet Members are scrutinised on performance, the causes of underperformance and the corrective actions being taken. Active debate is undertaken and support and challenge is offered to the recommendations being made to deliver service improvements.

Critical Friend to Cabinet

Robust Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The O&S structure enables regular, robust pre-decision scrutiny. Three in-depth pre-decision scrutiny activities were undertaken this year.

Key example: Scrutiny input into the Tenant Involvement Strategy, Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Strategy 2012-2015.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the CAAP – Focused changes to the pre-submission over three meetings – 25 July 2012, 17 September and 12 November in order that its comments could be put forward as part of the consultation process.

Information obtained from the following sources formed the main body of evidence gathered by the Committee:

- Cabinet Member (Housing)
- Director of Housing
- Head of Strategic Housing
- Housing Services Manager, Landlord Services

This pre-decision scrutiny activity demonstrates non-Executives providing input into the decision making at an early stage.

LGSS Scrutiny Inquiry

The Committee commissioned a Scrutiny Inquiry to work with key officers with regard to some services of this Council being undertaken by Local Government Shared Services (LGSS). This enabled non-Executives to receive reports and updates at various stages of the process.

A key outcome of the Inquiry was an in-depth consideration of how services provided by LGSS will be available to Councillors. The Inquiry discussed a

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vast amount of information and data over a very short time frame. It had been very beneficial to gain a clear understanding of the future delivery of services.

Call-In

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly, and during 2012/2013 there was one call in hearing which demonstrates that the decision making process is transparent and open to challenge.

Influencing Policy Development

Three in-depth Scrutiny Reviews were undertaken during 2012/2013. The final reports will be presented to Cabinet early in the Municipal year 2013/2014.

Review work of 2011/2013 has received Cabinet's response. 85.19 % of the recommendations were accepted, and 3.7% was enhanced by Cabinet, highlighting that Overview and Scrutiny is continuing to make significant influence of Council policy, both in terms of holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development, and the well-being of the citizens of Northampton.

Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny

The self-evaluation of the O&S function at Northampton was repeated in 2012, the aim of which was to produce an Excellence Plan for O&S building upon the good practice that has been previously recognised.

The purpose of the evaluation was: -

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton
- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

A significant amount of evidence gathered from various sources. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee completed the self-evaluation framework form based on the following key areas:

- Work Programme
- Work of the Panels/Evidence gathering
- Outcomes and Impact
- Accountability role

Councillors completed a short questionnaire, comprising six main questions.

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The Scrutiny Teams of two Local Authorities undertook mini peer reviews. The Scrutiny Officer, NBC, carried out a comparison of Northampton Borough Council's Scrutiny function with that of other districts as suggested by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

The report highlighted a number of achievements and recommended that the findings be used to produce an Overview and Scrutiny Excellence Plan building upon the good practice undertaken by O&S at Northampton Borough Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Excellence Plan will then be used to: -

- Encourage involvement in the process of those being scrutinised
- Communicate the potential of Scrutiny to local communities
- Build confidence of those undertaking Scrutiny activities

Raising the profile of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton

The profile of Scrutiny and Overview has been raised with a number of important and successful reviews carried out during 2012/2013. We are keen to keep this up and are always inviting suggestions for the work programme from various partners, agencies and members of the public.

The Scrutiny Review process at Northampton is widely recognised both within the Council and amongst the citizens of Northampton. The O&S Work Programme received extensive press coverage, locally.

Paperless Committees Innovation

The purpose of the innovation was to implement paperless Committees, using O&S as a Pilot. Advancement of technology provides a real opportunity to protect the environment by utilising ICT to its full capacity and reducing the quantity of printed material.

The innovation created benefits such as financial savings; highlighted the Council as modern, forward thinking and being environmentally responsible.

The press (BBC Northants) attended one of the earlier meetings of the innovation and reported it as 'forward and modern thinking and that it was like being in Tomorrow's World.'

Northampton's paperless committee trial was referred to in the Kent local press positively, as Kent County Council is looking to introduce a similar scheme.

External feedback on the innovation demonstrated public interest had been received, as far afield as central Government and Kent County Council.

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Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and the Care and Quality Commission (CQC) Action Learning Set (ALS)

A Project is underway, hosted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), together with a number of Local Authorities:

- Northampton Borough Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Warwick District Council
- Dacorum Borough Council
- Test Valley Borough Council

The CQC is keen to explore developing relationships with district and borough councils which is the main aim of this project. Therefore an Action Learning Set (ALS) comprising the above Local Authorities was formed.

The Action Learning Set (ALS) consists of Councillors and Scrutiny Officers. Councillor Danielle Stone, NBC's representative to NCC's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, and Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, are members of the ALS.

A main aim of the Project is the production of a document that details the relationship between district Councils and the CQC. The document is currently being drafted.

An action from the ALS was for Northampton to host a briefing session for Northants and neighbouring Authorities about the work of the CQC and how district Councils can link in. This session will be arranged early in the Municipal year 2013/2014.

Key Example of Review work: Serious Acquisitive Crime, violent crime and community safety

The purpose of the Review was to:

- To investigate, as a benchmark, Northampton's crime statistics in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify 'hotspots' in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify the impact that serious acquisitive crime and violent crime has on the residents of Northampton
- To identify the serious acquisitive crime and violent crime issues that Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other Agencies, can have an impact upon

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The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 agreed to include a review of serious acquisitive crime, violent crime and community safety. These were issues that had been identified by a number of members of the public as key concerns. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2012 and concluded in April 2013.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Corporate Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods, creating an attractive, clean and safe environment.

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were around the themes:

- Housing
- Planning and Regeneration
- Neighbourhood wardens
- Partners and Agencies
- Community Forums
- Northants Probation Services

A copy of this report will be provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire.

This has been a most interesting scrutiny Review, highlighting as it has the complex factors behind crime. The trends are worrying. The evidence from our expert witnesses shows clearly two things:

- 1. Information to the community from the community safety partnership is key to creating an understanding of the facts rather than the myths. It is also key in creating an understanding of how we can all take measures to reduce opportunities for crime, how to report crime, and how to work with preventative and enforcement agencies.*
- 2. Partnership working came out from the evidence as absolutely essential to the maintenance of good community relations, for effective preventative measures and for good policing. We all have a part to play in keeping our neighbourhoods safe and pleasant to live in.*

I have learned a great deal from this process and I look forward to the recommendations being taken up for debate and consideration.

Councillor Danielle Stone
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Serious Acquisitive Crime, violent crime and community safety

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Public engagement within the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton

O&S has included various issues referred to it from the public onto its Work Programmes. The details below provide key points of how O&S work has reflected the concerns of service users.

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/2013 was totally influenced by public suggestions.

Key example: Retail experience

The purpose of the Review was to:

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of the retail experience at Northampton. This was an issue that had been identified by a number of members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2012 and concluded in May 2013.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Priority 1 – Northampton on track – a vibrant town.

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Recommendations of the Review centred around:

Retail experience
Cleaving
Partnership working

This was a very in-depth Review that took place between April 2012 and May 2013.

The Councillor role is an important one and the Council's Scrutiny process is a good place for Councillors to make a real difference. I consider that in carrying out this Review and producing a comprehensive report, the Scrutiny Panel has done that.

The Panel received both written and spoken evidence from a wide variety of expert advisors including Cabinet Members for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Environment, Northampton Borough Council, an independent business owner, University of Northampton and the Northampton Community Forums.

The Panel made a series of site visits to a selection of towns and cities, the findings of which informed the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

Councillor Matt Lynch
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

Co-Opted Members

The Scrutiny process benefitted from the expertise and knowledge of six co-opted Members to Reviews this year.

I found the experience of looking in depth at serious acquisitive crime and violence in Northampton very enlightening and felt that by the end of the Scrutiny Panel we had a far more informed view due to the evidence we heard, the rigour adopted when questioning witnesses and the statistical analysis which was undertaken as part of the scrutiny. Some commonly held myths were debunked, agencies were held to account and areas which require more in depth scrutiny were identified. It was a very well worth exercise and one which I would be happy to repeat.

Sharon Henley, Crime Prevention Design Adviser, Northants Police
Co-Optee – Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

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Scrutiny Panels

How has the work of the Scrutiny Panels made a difference to the Council and our residents?

Recommendations from three Scrutiny Reviews that were undertaken during 2011/2012 are being implemented and monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Empowerment Fund

As reported in the Annual Report 2011/2012, this high profile Review highlighted that a Councillor Empowerment Fund benefits CVGs. Non-Executives ensured that CVGs were engaged in the Review. Upon the advice of the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Forum, a sample of CVGs provided a response to the core questions demonstrating an inclusive approach to engaging with CVGs. The Groups attended the same meeting and addressed the Scrutiny Panel together. They felt their views were heard and taken into account. The recommendations of the Review comprised innovative methodologies to gather further community feedback such as the Voluntary and Community Forum promoting the Scheme.

Recommendations of the Review were around the themes:

- Annual Councillor Allowance
- Easy to complete application form and comprehensive guidance notes
- Positive publicity
- Key partners promoting the scheme amongst CVGs
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Scheme

Cabinet enhanced one of the recommendations of the report, increasing the annual allowance to £3,000, accepted a further four recommendations and rejected four recommendations of the Review.

An interim monitoring report was received in September 2012 and the O&S Committee will monitor the success of the scheme after it has been in operation for one year.

Hate Crime Reporting Mechanisms

This was another high profile Scrutiny Review that received a wealth of evidence from key agencies and partners.

10 recommendations were included in the report. They were broadly focussed on how the Council further incorporates the hate crime process into its day to day working and how it works with partners to provide a joined up approach and response.

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Cabinet accepted all of the recommendations contained within the Overview and Scrutiny report and congratulated the Scrutiny Panel on its high quality, comprehensive report.

Customer Services

This short, sharp Review focused on evaluating all the Council's customer services.

It was highlighted that over the last two years there have been significant improvements made within customer services throughout that the Council and new and innovative improvements have been made.

This Scrutiny Review demonstrates the importance of good quality customer services to each and every customer.

Cabinet accepted all of the recommendations contained within the Overview and Scrutiny report and congratulated the Scrutiny Panel on its high quality, comprehensive report.

Independent Living Strategy

As reported in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2011/2012, the purpose of the Review was to evaluate the draft Independent Living Strategy for older people and make recommendations for development of this Strategy.

Recommendations of the Review are around the themes:

- Independent Living Strategy
- Partnership working
- Working with older people
- Service delivery
- Sheltered Housing
- Funding Opportunities
- Monitoring

Cabinet's response to this Review is expected in the autumn 2013.

Review work 2012/2013

Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton has undertaken some excellent Review work again this year.

The best practice Scrutiny Review work has continued to be built upon. Over the last year, Scrutiny Reviews have attracted interest from both external organisations and the public.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton continues to be Councillor-led and focuses on the major issues affecting the town. It has therefore carried out some very high profile Reviews this year, the impact of which will be reported in next year's O&S Annual Report:

Serious Acquisitive crime, violent crime and community safety

Please refer to page 7 for a precis of this Review.

Retail experience

Please refer to page 9 for a precis of this Review.

Infrastructure Requirements and S106 Agreements

The purpose of this Review was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of infrastructure requirements and S106 Agreements. A number of proposals around these issues had been proposed by members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 3 to undertake the Review. An in-depth Review commenced in July 2012 and concluded in May 2013.

The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
Baseline data:

- purpose and scope of S106 Agreements and introduction to CIL
- Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Schedule
- Central Area Action Plan Infrastructure Schedule
- Sources of funding for infrastructure
- Table of existing NBC S106 obligation monies and information relating to NCC and WNDC S106 monies
- Developer Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
- Future provision of skills and training programmes

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

- Affordable housing
- Memorandum of Understanding for the Growth Management Scheme for the A45/M1
- Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy
- Map: defended and undefended areas
- Drainage Strategy (summary)
- A copy of a Section 106 Agreement
- Desktop research

This Review links to a number of the Council's corporate priorities, including Priority 1 – Northampton on track – a vibrant town, Priority 2 – invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods and Priority 5 – better homes for the future.

Recommendations of the Review were around the themes:

- Infrastructure requirements
- Affordable housing

The Scrutiny Panel received a wealth of background information and data to inform its comprehensive review of a period of ten months. A series of interviews with a number of expert advisors were also held.

The Scrutiny Panel conveys it's thanks to Officers from Huntingdonshire District Council for taking the time to visit Northampton and give an informative presentation on "the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A Local Authority's Perspective".

As part of its monitoring regime, Overview and Scrutiny will review this report six months after Cabinet has received it.

Councillor Phil Larratt
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3

Looking ahead

The Work Programme for 2013/2014 has been approved and the Scrutiny Panels will begin to scope the Reviews shortly. They will be looking at the following important topics:

- Improving the town's parks
- Management and regulation of private sector housing (including HIMOs)

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

- West Northants Development Corporation (WNDC)
- Responding to the Welfare Reform Act

What are our Challenges for 2013-2014?

- To build on Overview and Scrutiny's achievements by setting stretching targets to broaden our impact, to be identified in the Overview and Scrutiny Excellence Plan.
- To continue to ensure the Overview and Scrutiny work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and public – consulting with a wide range of organisations, partners and the public for suggestions for scrutiny review and then on the actual work programme.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny works with the community and key partners to respond to concerns.
- To continue to ensure that the work of O&S has a positive effect on decision-makers and provide evidence that it has made a real difference.
- To increase public participation in O&S at Northampton by increased public suggestions for scrutiny Review and increased attendance at O&S Committee and Panel meetings.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

Glossary of Terms

Call-In

The process by which the O&S Committee considers whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision.

Cabinet (Executive)

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.

Councillor (Member)

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

Pre-decision Scrutiny:

O&S may inform Executive decisions on topics on the Forward Plan by making evidence based recommendations or advice prior to formal decision by the Executive.

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 consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/2013

Contact details for more information

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, is always very happy to speak to local people about the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest areas which may be appropriate topics for future work, you can speak to her by calling 01604 837408 or by [email](#).

You can view recent agendas and minutes on the Council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk or by contacting [Democratic Services](#)

Overview and Scrutiny has its own dedicated website within the Council's website. The current work of Overview and Scrutiny and the reports already published are available on this site. The address is www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

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 overleaf and return to: -

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

Email: [Scrutiny](#)

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: [Scrutiny](#)

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

**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report 2012/2013**

If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Tracy Tiff on 01604 837408.

Jesli angielski nie jest Twoim jezykiem ojczystym
a potrzebujesz pomocy w przetlumaczeniu tego
Если английский не Ваш родной язык и Вам
нужна помощь с переводом этого документа,
то свяжитесь с Трайсу Тиф. Тел. 01604 837408

Haddii afka Ingriisigu aanu ahayn luuqad-daada
kowaad oo aad u baahan-tahay in lagaa caawiyo
turjumidda warqaddan fadlan kala xidhidh Tracy
Tiff tilifoonka 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。

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আপনার সাহায্যের দরকার হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে ট্রেইসি টিফ-এর
সাথে 01604 837408 এই টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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recording please call 01604 837408



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2013

BRIEFING NOTE:

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – IMPROVING THE TOWN’S PARKS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake a Review regarding improving the town’s parks, the rationale being “ *to evaluate community engagement for the improvement of parks and green spaces.*”
- 1.2 Membership of the Scrutiny Panel comprises Councillor Elizabeth Gowen (Chair); Councillors Brendan Glynane, Jamie Lane, Matt Lynch and Sivaramen Subbarayan.
- 1.3 At the first meeting of the Scrutiny Panel, Councillors agreed the scope of the Review; a copy is attached at Appendix A, for the Committee’s approval.

2 UPDATE

- 2.1 The Panel agreed that the purpose of the Review should be revised: “*To improve community engagement within the town’s parks.*”
- 2.2 The Panel agreed that the Chairs of Friends of Abington Park, Friends of Delapre Park, Friends of the Racecourse and Friends of West Hunsbury Parks be approached suggesting that they are co-opted to this Scrutiny Review.
- 2.3 In discussing the rationale for the Review, the Scrutiny Panel felt that the required outcomes should be:
 - To make recommendations for the improvement within the town’s parks that better meet the needs of the community
 - To ensure that every park and open space within the town achieves its potential
 - To inform the terms of reference and membership of the Park Management Committees

2.4 The schedule of meetings comprises:-

June 2013 to November 2013

- 6 June 2013 - Scoping meeting
- 1 July 2013 - Evidence gathering
- 5 August 2013 - Evidence gathering
- 4 September - Evidence gathering
- 2 October - Evidence gathering
- 25 November - Approval final report

2.5 Various site visits will be programmed in during this period.

2.6 Meetings of the Scrutiny Panel will commence at 6.00 pm and be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall.

2.7 In accordance with the Scrutiny Panel Protocol, the Chair of this Scrutiny Panel will provide written progress reports to future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the purpose of the Review is updated: *“To improve community engagement within the town’s parks.”*

3.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approves the scope of the Scrutiny Panel 1 – Improving the town’s parks, as attached at Appendix A.



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – Improving the Town's Parks

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To improve community engagement within the town's parks

2. Outcomes Required

- To make recommendations for the improvement within the town's parks that better meet the needs of the community
- To ensure that every park and open space within the town achieves its potential
- To inform the terms of reference and membership of the Park Management Committees

3. Information Required

- Background data
- Background reports
- Best practice data
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Site visits

4. Format of Information

- Background reports such as:

Improving Northampton's Parks and Open Spaces Report
(Cabinet 12 June 2013)
Parks and Open Space Strategy for Northampton

- Background data to inform the terms of reference and membership of the Park Management Committees
- Evidence from the Cabinet Member for Environment
- Evidence from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement
- Evidence from ward Councillors with key parks within their wards

- Evidence from Friends Groups/User Groups
- Evidence from the Park Rangers
- Evidence from Enterprise Management Services (EMS)
- Desktop research identifying best practice elsewhere
- Site visits to the town's three key parks:

Abington Park
Delapre Abbey
Racecourse

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site visits
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-

➤ Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

6. Co-Options to the Review

- Nicola Hedges, Chair, Friends of Delapre Abbey, Brian Stevens, Chair, Friends of Abington Park, Mavis Wilmshurst, Chair, Friends of West Hunsbury Parks and Sean Silver, Chair, Friends of the Racecourse, to be approached suggesting that they are co-opted to this Review for its life.

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- An Equality Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

June 2013 to November 2013

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| • 6 June 2013 | - Scoping meeting |
| • 1 July 2013 | - Evidence gathering |
| • 5 August 2013 | - Evidence gathering |
| • 4 September | - Evidence gathering |
| • 2 October | - Evidence gathering |
| • 25 November | - Approval final report |

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

9. Responsible Officers

Lead Officers Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities
 Steve Elsey, Head of Public Protection

Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

10. Resources and Budgets

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities, and Steve Elsey, Head of Public Protection, to provide internal advice.

11. Final report presented by:

Completed by 25 November 2013. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

12. Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (June/July 2014)

Overview & Scrutiny Committee



SCRUTINY PANEL **Retail Experience**

May 2013



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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Scope of the Review
Appendix B	Précises - Executive Summaries of various key documents
Appendix C	Policy briefing on high street and town centre regeneration, published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)
Appendix D	Cleaning Rota for the town centre
Appendix E	Precis - 100 ways to help the High Street – A Toolkit for Town Centres Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

Foreword

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was to:

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

The Scrutiny Panel was made up of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: myself (Chair of the Scrutiny Panel); Councillor Suresh Patel (Vice Chair); Councillors Tony Ansell, Elizabeth Gowen and Danielle Stone, together with other non-Executives Councillors Sally Beardsworth and Dennis Meredith and Sheridan New, former Grosvenor Centre Manager, co optee.

It was a very in-depth Review that took place between April 2012 and May 2013.

The Councillor role is an important one and the Council's Scrutiny process is a good place for Councillors to make a real difference. I consider that in carrying out this Review and producing a comprehensive report, the Scrutiny Panel has done that. I would like to convey my sincere thanks to members of the Scrutiny Panel for their work on this Scrutiny Review.

The Panel received both written and spoken evidence from a wide variety of expert advisors including Cabinet Members for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Environment, Northampton Borough Council, an independent business owner, University of Northampton and the Northampton Community Forums.

The Panel made a series of site visits to a selection of towns and cities, the findings of which informed the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

Desk-top research was carried out by the Scrutiny Officer regarding the offer, profile, image and catchment of Stoke and Walsall and Metropolitan Borough of Walsall.

Recommendations are contained within the report.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Review.



Councillor Matt Lynch

Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2 (Retail Experience)

Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -

- Councillors Tony Ansell, Sally Beardsworth, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith, Suresh Patel, Danielle Stone and Sheridan New (co-optee) who sat with me on this Review
- Marion Goodman, Head of Customer and Cultural, for her support to this Review
- Councillor Tim Hadland, Cabinet Member (Planning, Regeneration and Enterprise), Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Councillor John Caswell, Cabinet Member (Environment), NBC, Gil Johns-Ogilvie, University of Northampton, Raymond Overall, Independent Business Owner, Stephen Chown, Chair, Northampton BID, Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Manager, NBC, David Farquhar, Assistant Director, Highways, Northamptonshire County Council, Tony Mallard, Chair, Northampton Federation of Residents' Associations, Laura Jones, Deputy Head of Community Safety, Northamptonshire Police, various Northampton Community Forums and ward Councillors for providing expert advice to inform this Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Review was to:

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of the retail experience at Northampton. This was an issue that had been identified by a number of members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2012 and concluded in May 2013.

A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Matt Lynch (Chair); Councillor Suresh Patel (Vice Chair); Councillors Tony Ansell, Sally Beardsworth, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith and Danielle Stone and Sheridan New, former Grosvenor Centre Manager, (Co-optee.)

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Priority 1 – Northampton on track – a vibrant town.

The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

- Context:
 - Local statistics
 - Demographics – local and national
- Baseline data:
 - National statistics
 - Definition of the Town Centre
 - Vision for the Town Centre
- Synopses of various research documents and other published documents
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from residents
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from the Town Centre Challenge Event

- Best practice data
- Site visits
- Desktop research

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

- 5.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
- 5.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that evidence from both the Policy Briefing produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) that as the recession continues, the health and vitality of local high streets is likely to be an issue which scrutiny will wish to investigate. One of the approaches suggested by the Policy Briefing that Scrutiny may wish to look at is local issues. This was the approach that this Scrutiny Review concentrated on – looking at Northampton town centre and focusing on a range of key issues.
- 5.1.2
- 5.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the Central Area Action regarding town centre regeneration, in particular the section “Delivering a Vibrant Retail Centre:
- Defining and strengthening Northampton’s Primary Shopping Area (as shown on the ‘Proposals Map’) is vital if the Central Area is to fulfil its role as a town centre (as defined by PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) and the principal shopping centre for Northamptonshire. To show the distinction between the types of use classes within Northampton Central Area, the Primary Shopping Area has been broken down into Primary and Secondary Frontages :
- Primary Frontages are the focus for retail uses
 - Secondary Frontages will have a retail focus but provide opportunities for a greater diversity of uses away from retailing, such as financial services, restaurants and drinking establishments “
- 5.1.4 It was realised that creating better shop fronts may be an expense that cannot be afforded for some small retailers, it might therefore be necessary to decide which should be given priority getting a shop back into use or having an improved shop front.
- 5.1.5 Evidence collated indicated the need for more to be done to make the town centre a more visually attractive place. The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that de-cluttering of street furniture/signage was very important and gave a much better perception if the street scene was cleared. The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the announcement that was made during the evidence gathering of this Review that the Council was making £50,000 available for a town centre face lift. This funding will be spent on a general upgrade of street furniture.
- 5.1.6 The Scrutiny Panel felt that it was very important to encourage a much wider town centre

experience, rather than just concentrate on the retail offer. It is important to promote a sense of place and having specific events helped to do this. There could also be a wider tie in to National and International events or “days”.

- 5.1.7 The Scrutiny Panel felt that it was very important to raise the profile of retailing as a career and that it should not be seen as a job of last resort. They referred to the presentation that they had received from Skillsmart who provide retail training opportunities. Since this presentation, Skillsmart confirmed that it would liaise with Northampton BID to see how retail training could be promoted within Northampton.
- 5.1.8 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the introduction of “pop up shops”, acknowledging that “pop up shops” are relatively low cost short term leases to get a retail property back into use. The Scrutiny Panel felt that it would be beneficial for services, such as the voluntary sector, to be signposted to the opportunity for pop-up campaigns.
- 5.1.9 During one of its meetings, the Scrutiny Panel heard of the town rangers that Rugby Town Centre BID had introduced. The Town Rangers were felt to be a very positive feature.
- 5.1.10 The Council’s good communication methods were acknowledged. It was felt that there was a dynamic relationship with the media, with the Council being proactive in media on Northampton Alive.
- 5.1.11 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that free parking is having an impact on the numbers of people using the town. Every survey that has been conducted by the town centre management has referred to the perception that parking is expensive. Often this is not the case and parking in several other towns is more expensive than Northampton.
- 5.1.12 It was emphasised that more needs to be done with partnerships. The Police is a key partner in controlling anti-social behaviour in the town centre. The Scrutiny Panel noted the responses from Northants Police that a cared for town centre can alleviate misuse of the environment and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel recognised that it is important that any negative perceptions of the town centre are dealt with, but at the same time everyone should be made to feel welcome in the town centre area, it was particularly encouraging to see activities such as the Northampton by the Sea event which had been held in summer 2011 as it encouraged families into the town centre. Northampton had used an approach to attract consumers to the town during the Christmas shopping period 2012 by providing Christmas entertainment, such as the ice rink. The benefit of this initiative was welcomed by the Scrutiny Panel.
- 5.1.14 Town Centre events have an impact of increased footfall.
- 5.1.15 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the enthusiasm of students of the recent student lock in at the Grosvenor Centre and noted from the evidence received that should future events be held that the overall success of such events be promoted.
- 5.1.16 The evidence collated alluded that people would like a vibrant town centre comprising both chain stores and independent traders, with a variety of good eating and drinking venues and is family orientated at the weekends. A number of respondents made reference to the town becoming a centre for culture.

- 5.1.17 Northampton has some attractive architecture and should be promoted to its full advantage.
- 5.1.18 Like a number of towns and cities, Northampton has a number of vacant shops. Evidence received suggested the erection of artwork, created by local artists, on display boards, would enhance the aesthetics of the town centre.
- 5.1.19 From the evidence collated, the Scrutiny Panel is aware of the threats to traditional retailing that has already come from the expansion of the Internet for shopping. It was realised that there could be further threats due to forthcoming changes in technology.
- 5.1.20 It is highlighted that street entertainers in Norwich gave a nice atmosphere to the shopping experience and the Scrutiny Panel felt that this could be investigated for Northampton.
- 5.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel supported the provision of Litter Wardens that were employed in Norwich.
- 5.1.22 During the visit to the car park area at the Grosvenor Centre, it was noted that some lights were not working. A boarded up window was observed, as was an out of date maintenance sign. The advertising boards inside the lifts were empty. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the area around the lifts could benefit from a deep clean.
- 5.1.23 The evidence obtained from the site visits that the Scrutiny Panel undertook determined that a number of town centres visited had good signage in situ. The signage in the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton, was felt to be very good. Initiatives to enhance the retail experience that take place in the Grosvenor Centre were supported.
- 5.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that the public is encouraged to report incidents in relation to street cleansing.
- 5.1.25 The Scrutiny Panel noted that reduction of signage work is on-going and is a key initiative not only within Northampton but across the county.
- 5.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the experience gained from the witnesses and the co-optee to this Review, particularly the wealth of knowledge and experience of the retail sector. It was recognised that it would be useful to continue this invaluable relationship to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of this Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

- 6.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:
- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community

- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

Scrutiny Panel 2 recommends to Cabinet that:

Retail Experience

- 6.1.1 The wider town centre experience is promoted and includes retail, leisure, culture, events and eating out.
- 6.1.2 Improved promotion of National and International events/activities.
- 6.1.3 Improved marketing of Northampton in relation to events held in the town centre.
- 6.1.4 Review the possibility of street entertainment (buskers) in the town centre.
- 6.1.5 Ensure town centre retailers and residents are informed on any proposed major developments/building projects in the town centre
- 6.1.6 Actively promote the hour's free parking and free parking on Sundays to Community Groups and Residents' Associations.
- 6.1.7 Investigate the opportunity to display local artists' artwork in vacant shop front windows in the town centre.
- 6.1.8 Promote the Enterprise Loan Panel to the retail sector, Northampton BID and the University of Northampton.
- 6.1.9 Review Planning Policies with a particular focus on restricting changes of use from retail to other use particularly where there is saturation.
- 6.1.10 The success of the current Pop-up Shops is widely advertised and further promoted. It is also promoted to the Voluntary Sector so that it can run short-term campaigns using the Pop-up model.
- 6.1.11 A Town Centre Czar is appointed, in an advisory capacity.

Cleansing

- 6.1.12 The standard of street cleansing is maintained at a consistent level across the town centre.
- 6.1.13 Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the street cleansing contract.
- 6.1.14 Enterprise Management Services (EMS) works closely with partners (i.e. Town Centre BID) to improve engagement and understanding of partners' needs.

- 6.1.15 NBC works with town centre businesses around trade waste and where necessary takes the appropriate enforcement action.
- 6.1.16 Any cleaning matters be reported immediately to EMS to ensure a swift response is delivered.
- 6.1.17 An additional Town Centre Ranger is employed with a particular focus on litter. The Town Ranger is issued with a smart, clearly identifiable uniform and where possible existing Rangers are also issued with smart, clearly identifiable uniforms.
- 6.1.18 The “Report It” App is promoted to the wider community.
- 6.1.19 Northampton Borough Council has dialogue with retailers regarding the cleanliness of their forecourts.
- 6.1.20 The current status of Byelaws in relation to cleansing is investigated and enforced as appropriate or where Byelaws do not exist, consideration is given to the implementation of suitable Byelaws.

Partnership Working

- 6.1.21 NBC works closely with the Town Centre BID regarding any new business initiatives/opportunities.
- 6.1.22 NBC continues to work closely with all partners.
- 6.1.23 NBC develops an education package for primary schools around the importance of recycling and the prevention of littering.
- 6.1.24 Councillors and Officers from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and NBC work closely with town centre businesses around traffic and pedestrian movement throughout the redevelopment building projects in the town centre.

Recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1.25 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months’ time.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Oveview and Scrutiny

Report of Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:
- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community
 - To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
 - To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
 - To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives
- 1.2 A copy of the scope of the Review is attached at Appendix A.

2 Context and Background

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of the retail experience at Northampton. This was an issue that had been identified by a number of members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2012 and concluded in May 2013.
- 2.2 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Matt Lynch (Chair); Councillor Suresh Patel (Vice Chair); Councillors Tony Ansell, Sally Beardsworth, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith and Danielle Stone and Sheridan New, former Grosvenor Centre Manager, (Co-optee.)
- 2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Priority 1 – Northampton on track – a vibrant town.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
- Context:
 - Local statistics
 - Demographics – local and national
 - Baseline data:
 - National statistics
 - Definition of the Town Centre

➤ Vision for the Town Centre

- Synopses of various research documents and other published documents
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from residents
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from the Town Centre Challenge Event
- Best practice data
- Site visits
- Desktop research

3 Evidence Collection

3.1 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

Background data

3.2 Executive Summaries of various key documents

3.2.1 Précises of:

- The Portas Review
- The Right to Retail: Can Localism save Britain's small retailers
- Understanding High Street Performance
- Core Strategy – Northampton's Strategic Planning Policies
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Central Area Action Plan
- Northampton Town Centre Health Check 2009
- Northampton Town Centre Shopping Survey

3.2.2 Comprehensive details at Appendix B.

3.2.3 A policy briefing on high street and town centre regeneration, published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), copy at Appendix C.

Definition of the town centre of Northampton

3.3 The definition of the town centre of Northampton is the boundary which includes the commercial hub of the town centre inside the inner ring road comprising of Lower & Upper Mounts, York Road, Cheyne Walk, Victoria Promenade, St. Peter's way, Gas Street, Horsemarket Street, Broad Street and Campbell Street.

Vision for the town centre

- 3.4 At the time of this Review, the vision for town centre was in draft format: Northampton town centre to be recognised as the economic and cultural hub for Northamptonshire and the destination of choice for people within the county and beyond.

Population

- 3.5 In 2009 the town's population was c210, 000; by 2026 it is expected to grow to nearer 240,000.

Town Centre - General

- 3.6 The town centre encompasses a wide range of businesses. Alongside shops there are cafes, restaurants, leisure providers, and service industries. All of these make up the attractions to draw people into the town centre.
- 3.7 Specific events can bring a lot of people into the town centre. The safari event in 2010 attracted over 500,000 people in a very short period of time. There were visitors from overseas. The event was featured on news programmes, including Japanese television. Many people were made aware of the event through Facebook. There had been a lot of positive feedback.
- 3.8 Data for footfall indicates that there has been an on-going decline since 2008. Market Square numbers have also been declining, but to a lesser extent.
- 3.9 Over the past five years there has been a change in the demographics of the town. Some major employers have left the town centre, for example Barclaycard moved 3,000 office workers from the town centre.

3.10 Core Questions

- 3.10.1 The Scrutiny Panel devised a series of core questions that it put to its key witnesses over a series of meetings (Copy at Appendix B).
- 3.10.2 Key witnesses provided a response to these core questions at the meetings of the Scrutiny Panel held on 8 August 2012, 29 October, 5 December and 14 February 2013.
- 3.10.3 Salient points of evidence:

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and Cabinet Member for Environment

- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building project, in and

close by to the town centre, by ensuring information is available to any affected businesses as soon as possible. This was done in relation to the fire damage to Bridge Street. Residents affected by the building of student accommodation at St John's will receive information.

- Retail outlets, such as “pound shops”, fulfil a need in times of recession. In accordance with planning legislation there is no distinction between retail offers of stores.
- The Central Area Action Plan contains a shop front policy. Changes can only be implemented when properties become vacant, with the involvement of the shop owner.
- Very few retail properties are directly owned or controlled by NBC. There are none within the primary retail area.
- Work can be undertaken with developers regarding shop fronts. Possible monies may be available from Section 106 Agreements, but is dependent upon the timing of developments.
- NBC can make direct impact by improving the Public Realm.
- The purpose of the BID is to encourage the retail sector to access advice. The BID is still in its infancy but is developing connections with more retailers.
- Any traffic changes will be considered as part of the redevelopment of the town centre, beginning with the new bus interchange and associated works to the Grosvenor Centre.
- In excess of £100 million is being invested in Northampton through the delivery of Northampton Alive projects; funding attracted by other partners/developers.
- Elements that can be directly influenced by NBC include car parking, fees and usage. These are continually monitored. Other elements that can be offered are being investigated. Public Realm improvements are very important.
- Special events, such as Lady Godiva and the Olympic torch, brought many people into the town. Efforts will be made to attract and promote similar one off events.
- Independent retailers' strength can be in their ability to deliver tailor made customer service.
- It should not be assumed that property that is currently retail will remain as this, some could return to residential use.
- There has been a change to the planning process. It is anticipated that there will be some large planning applications submitted in the near future.
- The Cabinet Members confirmed that they had used the Internet to buy items from sites such as E-Bay. Generally, they use the Internet as a source of information, such as price comparisons. If items cannot be found locally, they would be more inclined to purchase them on the Internet.
- The Enterprise Loans Panel offers small loans to businesses. Work is on-going with the market to assist traders to improve customer service.

- There are difficulties in receiving sufficient information to obtain evidence regarding the cleanliness of the town centre. The public is encouraged to report incidents.
- A Community Toilet Scheme in operation.

Independent Business Owner and former Director of Northampton BID

- Developing Northampton as a market town is key to its growth.
- Small business units in the town centre and those located in Kettering Road and Wellingborough Road could be developed.
- It is unlikely many new shops will locate to the town centre. The Independent business owner could not foresee the economic downturn improving within the next five years.
- Village groups could be encouraged to visit the town centre, attracted by community events.
- Keeping traffic moving in the town centre, managing noise and pollution from traffic is helpful to businesses.
- Business rates are increasing. The impact of this is higher for businesses when car parking charges rise.
- Car parking issues and charges often mean that many people no longer travel from other places to shop in the town centre.
- Localised car parking should be investigated.
- Issues with the cleanliness the stairwells of some car parks, the Mayorhold and Grosvenor Centre, were reported to the Scrutiny Panel.
- Channels of communication between NBC and businesses has improved over the last year, which was welcomed.
- Olney and Market Harborough have created a pleasant and attractive environment. Northampton could develop the strengths of the traditional market.
- Town centres should not only be a retail experience but also cultural and leisure occurrences. There are opportunities for Northampton to make use of the market square, being one of the largest in Europe.
- The loss of some main employers that were located in the town centre has affected the viability of the town centre.
- Issues regarding safety and anti-social behaviour need to be addressed regularly.

University of Northampton

Impact of the recession on retailers

- Value retailers outperformed the market, growing by almost 6% in 2009 to achieve sales of £8.1 billion, with companies such as Primark and Matalan benefiting from the trading down trend.
- Over 20 clothing and footwear companies, accounting for over £2.9 billion of sales, have collapsed including Ethel Austin, Adams children's wear and Mosaic Fashions, but most occurred at the start of the recession. (Mintel June 2010)

Consumer spending patterns in 2009 and intentions for 2010

- Over half of the population did not reduce their spend on clothes in 2009 despite the recession. While more than four in ten adults spent less in 2009 than they usually would, they did not cease buying clothes altogether, indicating that while many people are being more cautious, they now consider buying clothes as a necessary spend.
- Some pent-up demand will be released this year as nearly one fifth of consumers plan to spend more on clothes in 2010, more than the one in ten who spent more in 2009. The year 2010 was, nevertheless, set to continue to be challenging for retailers, with one in three adults planning to spend less on clothing in the coming year. (Mintel June 2010)
- Research findings suggest that consumers are still spending, but perhaps not as much as they would like. With regards to shopping in the report (Mintel 2010):
 - Marks & Spencer is the most popular place to shop for clothes overall, in-store and online, and is used by over half of clothes buyers.
 - Value retailers and supermarkets have become the preferred places to buy clothes in-store and are both used by six in ten consumers.
 - Just under half of consumers currently shop at midmarket fashion stores. These retailers need to do more to target the fashion conscious 25-34s, which are set to increase by 11.4% by 2015.
 - Over four in ten consumers shop at Next in store and more than one in ten shop online.
- Department stores' sales have performed well during the recession, particularly John Lewis, as they benefit from a customer base that tends to be more affluent and were the big-spenders of 2009 and again in 2010. If Northampton wants to support the retail experience in the current climate a focus on the retailers that consumers are using would be beneficial.

- Northampton needs to try and attract consumers into High Street. If the multiple chains could focus on enhancing their current merchandise mix to try and target new markets then perhaps this could attract consumers who would normally go to Milton Keynes or London into the area. Independent retailers need to try and specialise, so by finding niche markets they could attract visitors. Perhaps programmes trying to attract specialists into the town centre would be advantageous, similar to the efforts in Leamington Spa.
- Over Christmas 2011, Corby enhanced the appeal of the town centre through free parking and an ice rink to attract visitors to shop in Corby. Northampton could use a similar approach this year by attracting consumers by providing Christmas entertainment. This could also be an opportunity to show new visitors the benefits of coming to Northampton.
- There have been a few events taking place in Northampton town centre that the representative became aware of by accident. There seems to be a lack of communication on events that are being hosted by the town. Some more communication is needed to attract consumers from villages on the outskirts of town could improve the appeal of the town.
- The need for easy parking and consideration to free parking at key times would influence consumers from further afield to come into town.
- The recent student lock in the Grosvenor Centre was an excellent idea, and the students at the university were very excited about the event, however, the University is not aware of the overall success of the event and whether it was worthwhile for the retailers.
- A retail forum is perhaps advisable where new legislation and new practise techniques could be discussed.
- The town centre needs to attract independents into the high street. If Northampton could differentiate itself from every other high street then a real advantage could be gained. Good eating and cafe facilities are needed to satisfy the experience for visitors. A cafe culture is certainly growing in the UK and the high street needs to embrace this consumer need.
- Easy access into the town is needed for retailers, and convenient parking facilities in order to compete with the out of town retail parks.
- Independent retailers need to compete with the larger multiples on the basis of addressing a niche market and providing better more personalised service to the consumer. Everyone needs to embrace the internet and independents need to use this technology to enhance their own offering. While there has been a significant growth in shopping on line, consumers still want the retail

experience, where shopping is seen as a leisure activity, therefore the additional facilities of cafes, restaurants and entertainment is essential to attract shoppers into Northampton.

- The representative suggested that she would like the town centre to include the following in five years' time:
 - Ease of parking and access to shops
 - A varied retailer selection from mainstream high street stores to more specialised retailers offering exclusivity, additional service and variety.
 - Good cafes and eating places.
 - Entertainment or Pop up markets to give variety to the town.
 - Limited number of mobile stores and charity shops
 - At the weekend shopping needs to be family orientated, with children's entertainment included.
 - A good modern department store with prestige brands on offer, as middle aged shoppers want to shop in department stores, but they also want a good variety of merchandise, from own brand through to designer options.
 - Northampton is directly competing with Milton Keynes and London. If you look at Milton Keynes, it has lots of parking, lots of entertainment nearby, so that shoppers can turn their trip into an all-day event. There are excellent facilities from baby facilities through to eating places. The centre of the Mall has a regular new themed event going on most months from Christmas experiences to arts exhibitions to summer time beach events. Northampton has to compete against this to attract the shoppers into Northampton rather than consumers travelling to Milton Keynes.
- The representative uses the Internet all the time, hardly ever shopping in the town or at a shopping centre because it is convenient.
- The representative enjoys the shopping experience but likes to combine it with other treats such as a nice lunch and a beauty treatment. These enhance the shopping experience.
- Retailers can also combine the internet type of technology with in-store experience and there are examples of high tech shopping experiences coming

forward, where consumers still go to the high street but have the option of using technology to browse and select merchandise and even virtually try on garments, prior to asking for the garments to be taken to traditional changing rooms.

- Consumers are more demanding and are looking for specialised retailers. If Northampton can entice these specialists into the town, new consumers will be attracted into the town time and time again.
- From the experiences had in Northampton, it is felt there are many retailers missing from Northampton town centre that would continually attract people into town.
- Northampton does not attract its fair share of shoppers in from the local geography. Many shoppers will choose to travel to other locations rather than come into town. This can only be addressed by changing the mix of retailers in the town and trying to attract specialists and niche retailers into Northampton. Supported by good facilities and attracting events and entertainment to enhance the shopping experience would give the retailers a better chance of being successful in the long term.

Chair of Northampton BID

Partnership Working

- Two Councillors are BID Directors, which provides a two way process.
- The Northampton Forum involves many partners including the Borough Council, Highways and the Police.
- BID is committed to Northampton Alive project.
- There is rigid adherence to planning policy, particularly in terms of use class designation. Possible change of use should be considered particularly in terms of potential short term uses.
- Enterprise's cleaning targets should be highlighted and cleaning standards consistently applied.
- Stagecoach is already involved as partners in publicising events on the buses and is keen to encourage more people into the town centre for its own commercial reasons.

Retail Issues, Marketing and Promotion

- There needs to be a focus of improvement and that should be on Abington Street and Market Square Area.
- Consideration could be given to providing Shop Front Improvement Grants- this was accomplished in Rugby on a match funding basis.

- Some work was undertaken in the Drapery on refurbishing street furniture, litter bins and sign posts. In 2013 BID will be doing some work on street clutter.
- Consideration should be given to putting distances on street signs.
- Traffic messaging signs could also be used to give information on events and parking availability. Signs should also give as full information as possible i.e. road closed until, which helps people to plan future journeys etc.
- One longer term aim could be the creation of specific "quarters" with arches over the road to announce them. There could also be signs to these quarters around the town. These would create a better sense of space.
- Encouraging longer shopping hours; particularly in the 5-7pm slot between work and theatre, entertainment etc.
- Parking costs are a perceived problem - free first hour parking and free parking after 3pm are promotions that have been introduced to try to overcome this. Extending the 1 hour bays to 2 hours would allow shoppers time to shop/browse and enjoy the town.
- Provision of street stages, particularly in Abington Street and Market Square.
- Parking Permits for town centre businesses are available, but they are not particularly well promoted and could be extended.
- More flexibility towards shop front vinyl advertising which could generate advertising revenue.
- Pop up shops should be encouraged. A "made in Northants shop" will be opening on St Giles Street.
- Street Lighting could be improved in certain areas.
- The Police and PCSO'S do a good job, but additional PCSO's would be welcomed.

The Internet

- The Internet should be seen as an opportunity to sell goods to a wider client group. High speed Internet should be encouraged. The free Wi-Fi available at the Market Square should be more widely promoted.
- "Love Northampton" website should be supported as a way of getting information about events and promotions to as wider group as possible.

Building Projects

- The BID embraces the projects unreservedly. Liaising with business is key to delivering successful projects, as much notice as possible is vital. It is also important to make sure that town centre users are aware of changes that might affect them such as parking restrictions or road closures.

5-Year Plan

- The BID has three remaining years to run. Its focus will be around the Abington Street Market Square area. It would like to see positive changes to the Market Square layout to make a central stage area and stands to allow events and performances to have a permanent space. Varied events programmes would increase footfall.

- It is also wishes to encourage the expansion of the retail day to 7pm, by encouraging town centre workers to stay after work and use the shops and facilities.
- BID itself has reorganised which has freed director time which will allow directors to go out to the local big companies and ask about their future programmes. These could then be co-ordinated with BID projects to maximise their effectiveness.

Neighbourhood Warden (Town Centre)

- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) can further develop partnership working with the town centre business community by continuing and improving on-going working through Town Centre Task Group, Town Centre Partnership and BID working groups. It can provide advice and information to businesses about steps that are required to comply with legislation and signpost to relevant sources of information e.g. plans are in hand to provide links from the NBC website to the [ERWIN](#) site which provides a one stop website for regulatory information for businesses.
- NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of major building projects by ensuring that accurate and timely information is provided to businesses regarding the impact of any works, road closures etc.
- Further town centre events to attract more people into the area, improved parking, including use of park and ride (this also has benefits in relation to air quality) would have a more positive impact on retailers.
- Action is taken to improve the appearance of the town centre by education and enforcement of littering legislation. Problems are experienced with commercial waste collections occurring at various times of day which lead to accumulations of materials which can result in litter etc. Possible solutions to this issue are being investigated.
- Personal observations from the team are that it would like to see a vibrant town centre with a good range of large multiples and independent retailers together with a range of eating and drinking places offering a welcoming and unique experience to visitors in five years' time.
- It is considered that communication channels are reasonably effective but that they could be improved.
- The Neighbourhood Warden has occasionally purchased items from Amazon and similar sites on the basis of price and ease of availability.

Community Safety Manager, Northampton Borough Council

- There are already good working links between Northampton Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the businesses in the town centre. Representatives from the Town Centre Partnership and the BID sit on the CSP Town Centre Task Group, which is made up of a range of agencies who look at a variety of issues around crime & disorder and community safety.
- The town centre also benefits from a retail and pub link radio system that links in directly with the CCTV control room. This contributes towards a speedy response to real time issues relating to crime and disorder
- NBC already link in closely with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, who works from the Planning Department one day per week. This ensures that careful consideration is given to all plans, providing the opportunity to highlight any potential crime & disorder issues, and providing expert advice and guidance.
- Effective marketing and promotion which would benefit the town's retail sector could include safer shopping, Safer car parks – promote positive aspects; promote Northampton retail crime initiative to shoppers as well as retailers.
- Activities that could have a more positive impact on retailers - encourage membership of the Retail Crime Initiative and the NBC Retail and Pub Radio Link. Partnership working with the Police to address issues around shop lifting, purse theft etc. and proactively address issues of crime and disorder. Strong regulation of charity collectors, promoters and street traders, who may cause harassment to shoppers and deter them from the town centre.

Asset Director, Enterprise Management Services (EMS)

- It is clear that there are a number of educational campaigns that must be undertaken to re-engage the public's emotional contract with the tidiness of the town.
- It is also clear that there is a substantial lack of enforcement which has led to complacency and a lack of any consequences for littering in our town centres.
- It is important that relationships are strengthened with partner organisations, alternative authority departments and businesses generally. Examples include smoking areas, independent food outlets and car parks.
- A consistency in approach is required so that the standards can be maintained and scopes of service fully understood. For example, there is

confusion around the responsibility for certain town centre car parks that do not form part of EMS' contract.

- Possibility exists of closer relationships with outreach centres that can help reduce the impacts of rough sleepers and vagrancy.
- A holistic approach to planning that gives opportunity for consultation with those responsible for maintenance. For example, removal of installations which give opportunities for graffiti. And the use of “buff” coloured slabs.
- Containerisation of waste from businesses should be on the agenda.
- The Cleaning Rota for the town centre is attached at Appendix D. Below is the sweeping schedule for the town centre:

	Monday - Friday (Market Sweep Tuesday - Friday only)		Saturday		Sunday
05:00	High Pressure Washing, Trunk road mechanical sweeping, Car Park Sweeping				
06:00			Early Morning Sweep (inc, Kettering Rd, W'boro Rd & St James)		Early Morning Sweep (inc, Kettering Rd, W'boro Rd & St James)
07:00					
08:00					
09:00					
10:00	Mechanical Sweeping				
11:00		Manual Sweeping			
12:00					
13:00				Town Centre Sweeping	
14:00					
15:00					
16:00					
17:00					
18:00					
19:00					
20:00					

Improvements:

1. Extended working days to cover peak shopping and home times which sees street sweeping delivered until 8pm (previously 3pm)
 2. Provide litter bin washing programme
 3. jet wash for urination hotspots every Monday morning
 4. Reintroduced barrow sweeping rounds around town centre residential areas for a more effective sweep.
 5. Provide additional services of abandoned shop front clean-up which we are looking to extend.
- The following are identified as hotspots from EMS' trend data in the town centre:

- EMS employees work with Wardens and liaise on a day to day basis to highlight and alert immediate issues across the town centre but with particular focus on these hotspots at certain times and days. For example Saturdays outside Fast food outlets and graffiti hotspots during school holidays and weekends.
- EMS responds to incidents within timescales that are strictly monitored and fall within the contract KPIs.
- Resource within the town centre is immediately diverted to problem areas when notified. However as issues become more prevalent and are not addressed by education or enforcement it is plain that the resources will be severely stretched and unable to fulfil many daily routine duties.

Hot spots - Litter from Food Outlets

1. The Drapery, MacDonald's (they clear the rubbish away)
2. The Ridings, Sports Direct
3. Gold street
4. Abington street - KFC

Hot spots - Leaflets from Pubs & Clubs

1. Bridge Street
2. Lady Lane, Roadmender

Hot spots - General

1. Mercers Row black bags
2. Gold Street black bags
3. The Drapery black bags
4. Market Square black bags
5. Abington Street black bags

Hot spots - Graffiti

1. Emporium Walk
2. Drum Lane
3. Swan Yard
4. Lady Lane, County Court Walkways
5. Jeyes Jetty

Assistant Director, Highways, Northamptonshire County Council

- Initial communication and consultation will commence with local County Councillors and appropriate stakeholders for larger and more contentious projects. Thereafter, communication is via BID and the local media for proposed highway changes that will affect town centre businesses. There are also letter drops to affected properties. For more routine matters, letter drops alone are deemed sufficient. In certain cases where there could be a significant impact, meetings are held in the affected area. A Forum meeting was held regarding the changes around the Plough Hotel.
- Significant changes to street furniture are planned. The most immediate being in the Bridge Street and the Drapery areas. Changes to street furniture in the Drapery will take place at the same time as the bus interchange works. Bridge Street area proposals were made as a result of consultation with several partners, with the aim of improving the Public Realm perception in that area and delivering a quality product to try and make the whole area more user friendly, in particular for pedestrians and significantly to improve the public realm and aesthetic appearance of the area.
- There are proposals to provide landscaping enhancements in the Castle Station Black Lion Hill area to coincide with the works at the station. A key aim being to help to make this area feel more central. Enhancements are also being proposed for the Beckett's Park/Promenade area. In addition other enhancements in and around the town centre are being explored to assist in general improvements and specifically to reflect the local heritage and this is being carried out in partnership with Northampton Borough Council.
- The major issue over the next year or two will be keeping the traffic and pedestrian movements flowing, whilst the developments are taking place. Communication will be crucial.
- Communication with partners is vital. The Assistant Director, Highways, attends many meetings of local organisations, including the Town Centre BID, and such forums help to build better understanding between partners. Communications between partners has improved greatly over the past two to three years.
- Processes should be simplified where possible. It would be helpful if there could be more compromise and consensus between partners.
- Northampton has some attractive architecture which is not promoted to its full advantage.
- In order to compete effectively, Northampton should better promote what it has on offer. Too often it under-sells itself and all parties need to address this issue.
- There are a lot of positive features that are taking place in Northampton. It is vital for all partners to adopt a united purpose and focus on sending that positive message out to the public.
- A team is investigating a range of initiatives in promoting and introducing sustainable transport. This includes smart bikes, cycle and pedestrian walkways and Infrastructure improvements. Work is underway examining potential cycle routes from the railway station, the University and Brackmills as well as other potential key routes in and around Northampton.

- Reduction of signage work is on-going and is a key initiative not only within Northampton but across the county.

Northampton Federation of Residents' Associations

- Reduction in car parking income, indicating potential reduction in visitors to the town
- Number of vacant retail units and office units in the town, and over-provision of bookmakers and pawnbrokers
- Need for more premium retail outlets
- Concerns regarding the approaches to the town centre
- The market was once the pride of the town centre
- The town could become a centre for culture, catering for everyone's taste, including art, music and learning

Director, Association of Town Centre Managers (ACTM)

The Director, ACTM, provided some documents that he felt would be useful background information for the Panel. This information was provided instead of a formal response from ACTM to the Panel's core questions.

The documents provided:-

- 100 ways to help the High Street – A Toolkit for Town Centres
- Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

100 Ways to help the High Street

The Toolkit comprises eight key sections:

- Building a Sustainable Partnership
- Accessing the High Street
- Enhancing the Streetscape
- Place Identify, Branding and Experience
- Attracting New People and Businesses to High Street and Keeping the Old Ones
- The Safe and Secure High Street
- The Evening and Night-time Economy
- Training, Development and Accreditation

Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

The reported purpose of the Guide is around setting up and evaluating town

centre management initiative. The Guide is set out in two sections:

An outline of set up and evaluation – A brief description of the core elements in the life cycle of a successful town centre management initiative, an explanation of the set up and evaluation process, and guidance on when, why, how and by whom the process should be undertaken.

Implementing set up and validation – Examples of good practice are provided and detailed checklists for setting up and validating each of the core elements of successful town centre management initiatives:

Strategy and vision
Partnership and structure
Business and Action Plans
Funding
Key Performance Indicators

Comprehensive details at Appendix E.

Northants Police

- Without specific details regarding footfall to the town centre it is not possible to ascertain whether crime has an effect. It is thought that crime does not affect footfall, with the possible exception of any high profile cases of crime which may cause short term concerns. The environment in which someone is looking to shop is more likely to affect footfall. The places to park, the cleanliness, the availability of a selection of shops will affect whether someone decides to visit the town centre or to shop elsewhere.
- Antisocial behaviour, perceived or otherwise, such as young people 'hanging about', incivilities, drinking in the street and environmental crime provide for an unwelcoming environment.
- Resources should be invested in ensuring the cleanliness of the town; reducing the signs of spiral of decline and "broken window syndrome". By ensuring general cleanliness is maintained, broken pavements mended, streets cleaned of rubbish and graffiti, chewing gum removed, soft landscaping maintained visitors will be presented with a positive impression of Northampton town, and shown an environment where they will want to visit and shop. When left unaddressed all those maintenance tasks collectively present an uncared for town, and can create an environment for misuse and anti-social behaviour to flourish.

- An increase uniformed presence should be encouraged by partners, alongside the use of powers of partners in seizure of alcohol.
- Partnership campaigns such as the 'kill with kindness campaign' promoting the support of charities should be continued to help break the cycle of homelessness.
- Retailers need to be encouraged into the town, potentially through grants or reduced rates. For those empty retail outlets to be presented in a manner which look occupied / cared for.
- Without specific details relating to footfall to the town centre it is not possible to answer as no correlation between anti-social behaviour (ASB) and footfall can be drawn. However, in the absence of any data it is felt that ASB may have an impact on whether persons will visit the town centre. It is believed that street drinking and begging may impact on visitors who would rather shop in what they consider to be a safe environment. What is important to note however, ASB is not solely due to drinking or begging and may be shown in other forms which could equally impact on whether a person chooses to visit the town.
- In 2011 there were 497 arrests countywide for Drunk and Disorderly and 19 arrests for Begging/Vagrancy. This compares to 438 arrests for Drunk and Disorderly and 34 arrests for Begging/Vagrancy in 2012.
- The levels of ASB for the Northampton Central Area shows the number of recorded ASB incidents for begging/ vagrancy has risen from 52 in 2011 to 61 in 2012. In 2011 there were 37 incidents of street drinking, however these figures cannot be compared as street drinking ceased to be a specific type of ASB in 2011.
- Between July and November 2012 there were 447 seizures of alcohol undertaken within the Central Sector (relating to police data only).

Northampton Community Forums

Members of the Panel attended various meetings of the Northampton Community Forums and ask attendees for their responses to the Panel's core questions. Key points:

- One Forum felt that the bus interchange would increase the amount of footfall in the town centre which in turn would increase the use of the market.

- It was noted that the Business Improvement District (BID) was developing ways forward by looking at a variety of options to improve and attract new business to the area.
- Improved signage was suggested as was the introduction of more maps or audio-visual devices to assist shoppers.
- A number of Forum members used the town centre for clothes shopping and buying goods from the independent stores. Buying from the Internet was also popular.
- A number of respondents supported the independent stores, particularly those located in St Giles Street.
- A number of Forum members use the market.
- The LGBT and Q Forum suggested that local artists could create artwork on display boards outside buildings
- The rise of the supermarkets had led to the deterioration of town centres. It is convenient to be able to buy goods from the same shop.
- Parking facilities was referred to and the suggestion of a park and ride scheme was proposed. There are three car parks within the town centre where charges are not applicable for the first hour, which is of great benefit for people coming in to the town to shop.
- In general, communication with the Borough Council via the Forums was felt to be good but communication with visitors could be improved.
- The Love Northampton website was supported as was the recent Pride of Lions display.
- Northampton's heritage should be celebrated.

3.11 Northampton Youth Forum

- 3.11.1 The Youth Forum put the Panel's core questions to its members and various connections over the summer period but unfortunately received no responses. Therefore the survey was re submitted in September 2012, ending on 31 October 2012 and it was also listed on the consultation page of the Council's website
- 3.11.2 Six individuals responded to the Youth Forum's survey and their comments included celebrating the rich sporting suggestions for the introduction of more free periods of parking and more on street parking facilities, support

for the independent stores was given. The respondents suggested regular litter picking and jet washing of the footpaths would be useful. The streets art projects were supported. Comments advised that good information was available on line but it would be useful for there to be other communication methods. A number of respondents shopped on line mainly due to the cost and convenience.

3.12 Ward Councillors

3.12.1 All Councillors were contacted and invited to provide details of their experiences of shopping within Northampton. Three responses were received.

Key points:

- Comments received about the shopping experience in Northampton suggested that more events and entertainment would also attract more visitors to shop. Cleanliness of the town, anti-social behaviour and the need for more chain and departmental stores was referred to.
- Councillors felt that in order to enhance the shopping experience at Northampton, there was a need to increase the offer of the shops both in terms of departmental stores and independent traders. One Councillor advised on the need for premium brand stores too. More entertainment was suggested, with the aim of attracting more visitors and more places to eat.
- The three Councillors advised that they would like to see a vibrant, cultural, buzzing and extremely clean town centre with a diverse retail offer in five years' time.
- The three Councillors use of Internet shopping was mixed with varying reasons from ease of purchase, cheaper goods, to only using when goods are not available to buy in Northampton.
- One Councillor suggested how the aesthetics of the Weston Favell shopping area could be improved by way of a feature wall.

3.13 Skillsmart Seminar

3.13.1 Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel attended the Skillsmart Seminar: The Town Centre Challenge.

3.13.2 Skillsmart Retail is the Sector Skills Council for retail. It reports that it acts as a catalyst to increase investment in skills to improve productivity and profitability, sets industry-wide standards for retail skills and career paths to enhance the reputation of retail careers, delivers products and services

which are fit for purpose and accessible to all and operates a sustainable business that promotes continuous professional development in retail.

3.13.3 Aims of the Seminar:

- Introduce how Skillsmart Retail can help towns and cities build a more profitable and thriving retail sector
- Emphasise the need for partnership working between stakeholders
- Launch Skillsmart Retail's new Retail Apprenticeship Training Agency

3.13.4 Key facts and statistics:

- Retail continues to be the UK's largest private sector employer with 2.77 million employees
- The UK's top 75 retailers employ 2/3 of the total workforce
- The turnover of the retail sector in 2011 was £343 billion, equating to 8% of UKS GVA
- 188,000 retail enterprises, operating in around 286,000 retail establishments in the UK

3.13.5 Current challenges:

- Shop vacancy rates 14.6%
- Independent retailers struggling
- Low skill levels in retail
- High youth unemployment

3.13.6 The Seminar received a presentation from the Head of Economic Regeneration, London Borough of Newham around "Why shopping centre doesn't have to mean the decline of the town centre".

3.13.7 A presentation from the National Skills Academy for Retail, The Learning Shop, Bluewater on "The Y Factor: Keeping Young People in your area" was given.

3.13.8 Key points:

- Work based training programmes designed around the needs of employers, which lead to nationally recognised qualifications
- Designed to attract 16-18 year olds

- Can be used to train new and existing staff
- Retailers provide one year, full time job placement
- Effective way to attract and keep people in employment
- Economic benefits
- The number of retail apprenticeships over the past five years has increased by 190%
- The majority of retail apprenticeships are currently via larger retailers
- The Retail Apprenticeship Training Agency helps to resolve issues such as independent retailers offering apprenticeships

3.13.9 The value of retail:

- Over 8% of UK Gross Value added
- 28% of UK business rates are paid by retailers
- Over 150,000 sole traders in the sector
- A third of the workforce are under 25 and a quarter are 50+

3.13.10 Reported key facts around Town Centre Management: *A tried and tested formula....*” :

- The right people around the table
- A shared vision for the future
- The Plan
- Actions (not just words)
- Sustainability
- Communicating success

3.14 Site Visits

3.14.1 Three Site Visits took places. The purpose of which was to make a comparison with other town centres against that of Northampton.

Norwich

3.14.2 The Chair of the Panel visited Norwich on 10 August 2013. Key points:

- Norwich is a pleasant city to visit. The entrances to the city centre are tree lined roads with very attractive hanging baskets.
- Parking is not so easy and there appears to be a lack of parking near the city centre. There is no park and ride system.
- The streets around the city centre are very clean, as are the shop fronts.

- No beggars or “chuggers” visible.
- Some street entertainers were observed which gave the centre a nice atmosphere for shopping.
- Norwich City Council has a Litter Warden who hands out tickets to anyone who he sees dropping litter.
- The Chair of Panel revisited the city centre in the evening and spoke with some local residents. They advised that the roads around the centre are cleaned every morning. Litter picking takes place every day around the city centre.

Peterborough

3.14.3 Representatives of the Panel visited Peterborough on 11 October 2012. Key findings:

- The bus interchange is a reasonable sized area with the feel of a street but it was completely under cover. The sides were all clear panels with closing doors leading to the bus bay on both sides. Entrance was achievable both from the street and the main shopping centre, Queensgate. The facilities included a news kiosk and toilets as well as area to sit. The clear sides and roof gave an overall bright feel to the interchange and the area was kept very clean with bins provided.
- Queensgate is a large shopping centre owned by a company who also own other centres including the Bull Ring in Birmingham. John Lewis is the primary shop and a large Primark is in the process of being fitted, making this one of the very few shopping centres in the country to have both stores. There are very few units empty at this time and there is a high success with short term renting. There is a large range of different types of stores including fashion, jewellery, computing and grocers, as well as Price Range, New Look, Poundland, M&S, Waitrose. There are also retail merchandise units, promoted as a shop with no walls, offering all the facilities you would expect within a retail mall unit. Organisations operating in this way include Sky and the Nut Hut.
- A reasonable number of people were using the centre on a weekday just before lunch. There is a wide range of eating areas but most are within large shops rather than restaurants and café. The main downside is that signs are not very visible. It was not easy to see if there were any toilets nearby or where exits were or where to pay for parking. Signs are in the process of being replaced to address this issue.

- The centre has a large car park over many floors but each floor is very narrow with small spaces making parking rather difficult.
- Footfall is reported to be on average around 300,000 visitors per week. Average dwell time is 81 minutes and visitors within the top five MOSAIC is 56%.
- As well as the bus interchange, Peterborough has a train station and large number of car parks across the city centre making it visitor friendly with good driving access. With a mix of old, Cathedral and Church, and new buildings working well together.
- It is a very pretty and lively centre. Great care is taken over the city centre as litter and graffiti were not visible on our trip and a large number of bins provided.
- A disadvantage was the large number of people on the street collecting for regular charity donations.
- The signing was clear, visible and placed at many locations making navigating around the city easier.
- The street had many seating areas and was decorated with trees giving a friendlier atmosphere.
- Few shops were empty and there seemed to be a large number of people in the centre.
- The tourist information was located near the Cathedral and was fully staffed with helpful employees. It was set out in a shop selling souvenirs and books about Peterborough.
- There were a number of hotels and pubs but not so many that they dominated the city centre.

Market Harborough

3.14.4 A member of the Panel visited Market Harborough on 15 October 2012. Key findings:

- An extensive and varied range of independent retailers on offer.
- The cobbled streets and pretty Georgian buildings made it a good shopping experience.
- Bennett's Court Place also comprises a number of independent retailers and has the provision of free parking for up to two hours.
- There are three travel agents located within the town centre.
- The retail market is held within the Market Hall with a total of 87 stalls which includes a food hall. It is open three days a week, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, between the hours of 8am and 4pm. An Antiques and Collectables Market is held on Sundays.

- There is a further shopping area – St Mary’s Place which includes stores such as Waitrose, Lidl, Aldi, Sainsbury’s Homebase and Brantano’s. A large car park is located near to St Mary’s Place with a number of spaces painted red and situated close to the shop fronts where shoppers can park up to half an hour without the need for a ticket.
- There were no vacant shops visible and no beggars or street drinkers were seen.
- Signs regarding the restrictions of alcohol are clear and prominent.
- The town is very clean with strategically placed flower beds and pots which are sponsored by local businesses.

Milton Keynes

3.14.5 A member of the Panel visited Milton Keynes in October 2012. Key points:

- Milton Keynes is very easy to travel to, with good public transport connections.
- A wide variety of eating establishments and plenty of facilities are available.
- It is very big shopping centre. It reflects the fact that it was built as a shopping centre and as such it lacks atmosphere.

Southall, Greater London

3.14.6 A member of the Panel visited Southall, Greater London in October 2012. Key findings:

- Southall is clean. Rubbish is continually cleared so there is no unsightly build up.
- Shops are open later and there is a good retail offer.
- The railings in the town centre have been painted black, which adds to the aesthetics of the town centre.

Grosvenor Centre, Northampton

3.1.4.7 A member of the Panel visited the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton, in February 2013. Key findings:

- The Grosvenor Centre is generally clean, open and airy with a nice ambiance. Although a little dated a pleasant shopping experience was created. Seating areas are in situ in both the upper and lower malls. The Centre Manager advised that he was in discussions regarding a possible refresh of the malls to make the Centre more contemporary and sustainable.
- There were a number of rubbish bins available for shoppers' use. Mats are available at each entrance but it was noticed that the tiled flooring did become slippery.
- Upon arrival there were not many shoppers around but this was expected as it was a snowy Monday morning. Towards the end of the site visit there were a lot more people present.
- Security staff, wearing smart uniforms, are visible with the Centre. The site visit observed cleaning of the centre being carried out, both on the upper and lower malls. The Grosvenor Centre Manager advised that he encourages staff to extend cleaning outside the centre, under the canopy area onto Abington Street (that is not owned by the Centre).
- Children's rides were available on the lower mall and these were being used.
- The Grosvenor Centre has its own [webpage](#) , which includes details of:
 - Shops
 - Location map
 - Events
 - News
- A number of vacant retail units were seen within the Grosvenor Centre, but the Centre Manager advised that some new lettings were likely to be completed shortly.
- The range of retail units within the Grosvenor Centre include:
 - Boots
 - HMV
 - Disney Store
 - Sainsbury's
 - New Look
 - WH Smith
 - I Store
 - Pandora
 - Body Shop
 - Nationwide Building Society
 - Superdrug
 - Monsoon
 - House of Frazer

- BHS
 - H Samuel
 - Superdry
 - Millie's Cookies
 - Michael Jones Jewellers
 - Warren James
 - Diechmann Shoes
 - Vision Express
 - Costa Coffee
 - McDonalds
 - Ernest Jones
 - Card Factory
 - Burton's
 - Poundworld
 - Kiss Cards
 - Costa Coffee
 - Claire's Accessories
 - Mr Simms Sweet Shop
 - The Perfume Shop
-
- Organisations have to adhere to strict criteria should they want to promote their services within the Grosvenor Centre.
 - The toilet area is clean and easily accessible.

 - Clear signage was in place in the Grosvenor Centre.
 - The Centre Manager liaises with Northampton Borough Council regarding events and potential events to ensure there is no duplication and whether work can be done together on certain events. Staff at the Grosvenor Centre have a dialogue with the University of Northampton regarding fashion presence.

 - Initiatives to enhance the retail experience take place, for example a local jeweller took part in a recent "red rose" promotion.
 - Prior to the festive season, space is made available in the Grosvenor Centre for the Christmas present wrapping charity event.

 - Annual footfall is 11.5 million. Footfall on Sundays had increased with the offer of free Parking on Sundays. The street fair that took place in October 2012 had a positive impact on footfall, but not all retailers outside the Centre had co-ordinated opening times to take advantage of that.

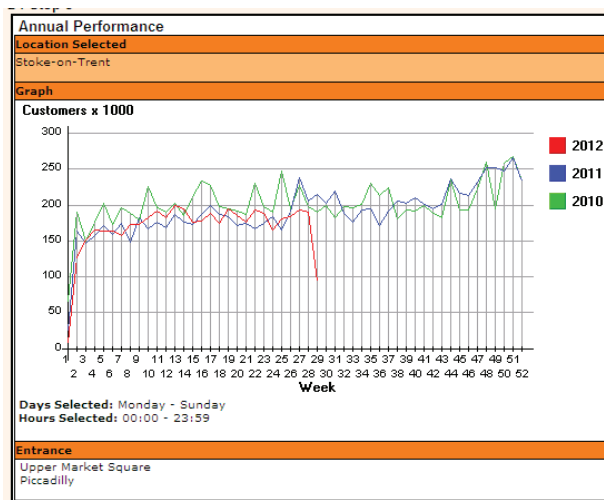
 - The car park is owned and maintained by the Council. Major renewal work to the car park, including re-waterproofing and resurfacing was carried out approximately 18 months ago. More recently there have been lighting upgrade works.

3.15 Desktop Research

3.15.1 As part of its evidence gathering process that desktop research would be undertaken regarding the offer, profile, image and catchment of Stoke and Walsall and Metropolitan Borough of Walsall.

Stoke on Trent

- Population figures for Stoke on Trent are approximately 250,000.
- Footfall figures, month by month, 2010 – 2012:



- Stoke on Trent is made up of six towns Hanley, Stoke, Burslem, Longton, Fenton and Tunstall. Hanley is classed as the City Centre of Stoke on Trent which is what this information is based on.
- All large retailers are located within the shopping centre. Outside the shopping centre, there are about 50% independent 50% large retailers.
- The Cultural Quarter is reported as a hub of creative and entertainment venues in the City Centre. There are two main theatres: The Regent Theatre and Victoria Hall. The Cultural Quarter is noted as having a more relaxed atmosphere than a typical high street, with a number of cafes and a variety of restaurants.

Further visitor attractions in Stoke on Trent include the Potteries Museum and the Art Gallery which is reported to host the world's best collection of Staffordshire ceramics and host to the Staffordshire Hoard. Emma Bridgewater Limited, a pottery manufacturer, with visitor attractions including a pottery factory shop, pottery café and factory tours. Other attractions include Dudson Museum, the Regent Theatre and the Victoria Hall and the Mitchell Arts Centre.

- The offer of shopping comprises a number of well-known high street names. There are also a number of independent retailers such as:
- The city centre also has an indoor market consisting of around 130 stalls. A Sunday market and car boot sale takes place attracting around 40 stalls.
- The catchment area to the shopping centre is reported as a one hour's drive time.
- There is not currently a BID for Stoke on Trent. The Stoke on Trent City Centre Partnership is in existence and is made up of 40 businesses from the city centre. This Partnership has been in place in one form or another for the past 15 years.
- Like a lot of cities, Stoke on Trent has a lot of vacant shops and businesses have suffered. Regeneration of the city centre is underway. The city has a brand new bus station that is due to open early 2013, a new shopping centre – "City Sentral" due for completion 2015, Central Business District and re-development at the Potteries Shopping Centre that will include six new restaurants and a cinema. Public Realm works of the main pedestrian area are under way.

Metropolitan Borough of Walsall

- The population of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall is approximately 178,853.
- Footfall statistics gathered from the shopping centres are confidential. Walsall Council is currently investigating funding streams so that it can gather footfall figures for the town centre.
- An Art Gallery is located within the town centre, within close proximity to the Park Place shopping center and the railway station, also nearby is the Walsall Canal Basin.
- Walsall town centre comprises over 300 retail stores with a broad range of shops from independents to national retailers. It also has a wide selection of pubs and restaurants. The centre has been a focal point in Walsall for over forty years and well known retailers.
- Located within the town centre is the Old Square Shopping Centre. The Old Square Shopping Centre is home to a diverse range of stores. An £11 million retail-led regeneration project at Walsall's Old Square Shopping Centre is set to revitalise the town, attracting further investment, and creating hundreds of jobs. Three new retail units will be created, including a new 30,000sq ft two-storey Primark on Digbeth that will recruit around 100 people. A four-storey building will be occupied by Mid Counties Co-op, creating around 60 jobs, and this will also include commercial space above. A third retail unit inside Old Square Shopping Centre will also be delivered.

There has been an increase in enquiries from independent retailers regarding retail space at the Old Square Shopping Centre. A market takes place five days a week close to the Old Square Shopping Centre. The market operates every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and trades between 8.30am and 5.00pm. Walsall Council regards its Walsall Market as the traditional heart of the town. It has been in existence since 1219. It is reported that the market has a fantastic reputation throughout the West Midlands and has an excellent choice of stalls. The market comprises 100 stalls, which measure 3m (10ft) x 2.5m (8ft), with counter boards provided for traders.

- Park Place Shopping Centre is well served by local public transport routes with the bus and train station situated close to Park Place and various car parks are also within easy walking distance.
- Park Place Shopping Centre is situated in the centre of Walsall, close to the Art Gallery and Crown Wharf. The centre fronts Park Street which is the main shopping street in Walsall, West Midlands. Some independent retailers are located in Park Place Shopping Centre
- Free face painting and balloon modeling is offered every second Saturday of the month.
- There are a number of retailers located around the town centre
- There is no BID for Walsall. A Town Team has been in operation for the past 21 months, which comprises the Council and a number of local businesses. Town Team has produced an Action Plan and each member has its own theme such as events, business support, crime and disorder.

4 Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council's statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny Reports/agendas/minutes and other such documents. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny/Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e. on the Council's website, copies issued to the local media and paper copies available in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Panel was mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it made could identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This was borne in mind as the Scrutiny Review progressed and evidence gathered.
- 4.3 Any possible recommended changes may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects for all diversity groups.
- 4.4 In order that the Scrutiny Panel obtains a variety of views, a number of key witnesses provided evidence as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 4.5 Details of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken can be obtained from the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#).

5

Conclusions and Key Findings

5.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

5.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that evidence from both the Policy Briefing produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) that as the recession continues, the health and vitality of local high streets is likely to be an issue which scrutiny will wish to investigate. One of the approaches suggested by the Policy Briefing that Scrutiny may wish to look at is local issues. This was the approach that this Scrutiny Review concentrated on – looking at Northampton town centre and focusing on a range of key issues.

5.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the Central Area Action regarding town centre regeneration, in particular the section “Delivering a Vibrant Retail Centre:

Defining and strengthening Northampton’s Primary Shopping Area (as shown on the ‘Proposals Map’) is vital if the Central Area is to fulfil its role as a town centre (as defined by PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) and the principal shopping centre for Northamptonshire. To show the distinction between the types of use classes within Northampton Central Area, the Primary Shopping Area has been broken down into Primary and Secondary Frontages :

- Primary Frontages are the focus for retail uses
- Secondary Frontages will have a retail focus but provide opportunities for a greater diversity of uses away from retailing, such as financial services, restaurants and drinking establishments “

5.1.3 It was realised that creating better shop fronts may be an expense that cannot be afforded for some small retailers, it might therefore be necessary to decide which should be given priority getting a shop back into use or having an improved shop front.

5.1.4 Evidence collated indicated the need for more to be done to make the town centre a more visually attractive place. The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that de-cluttering of street furniture/signage was very important and gave a much better perception if the street scene was cleared. The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the announcement that was made during the evidence gathering of this Review that the Council was making £50,000 available for a town centre face lift. This funding will be spent on a general upgrade of street furniture.

5.1.5 The Scrutiny Panel felt that it was very important to encourage a much wider town centre experience, rather than just concentrate on the retail offer. It is important to promote a sense of place and having specific events helped to do this. There could also be a wider tie in to National and International events or “days”.

- 5.1.6 The Scrutiny Panel felt that it was very important to raise the profile of retailing as a career and that it should not be seen as a job of last resort. They referred to the presentation that they had received from Skillsmart who provide retail training opportunities. Since this presentation, Skillsmart confirmed that it would liaise with Northampton BID to see how retail training could be promoted within Northampton.
- 5.1.7 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the introduction of “pop up shops”, acknowledging that “pop up shops” are relatively low cost short term leases to get a retail property back into use. The Scrutiny Panel felt that it would be beneficial for services, such as the voluntary sector, to be signposted to the opportunity for pop-up campaigns.
- 5.1.8 During one of its meetings, the Scrutiny Panel heard of the town rangers that Rugby Town Centre BID had introduced. The Town Rangers were felt to be a very positive feature.
- 5.1.9 The Council’s good communication methods were acknowledged. It was felt that there was a dynamic relationship with the media, with the Council being proactive in media on Northampton Alive.
- 5.1.10 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that free parking is having an impact on the numbers of people using the town. Every survey that has been conducted by the town centre management has referred to the perception that parking is expensive. Often this is not the case and parking in several other towns is more expensive than Northampton.
- 5.1.11 It was emphasised that more needs to be done with partnerships. The Police is a key partner in controlling anti-social behaviour in the town centre. The Scrutiny Panel noted the responses from Northants Police that a cared for town centre can alleviate misuse of the environment and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.1.12 The Scrutiny Panel recognised that it is important that any negative perceptions of the town centre are dealt with, but at the same time everyone should be made to feel welcome in the town centre area, it was particularly encouraging to see activities such as the Northampton by the Sea event which had been held in summer 2011 as it encouraged families into the town centre. Northampton had used an approach to attract consumers to the town during the Christmas shopping period 2012 by providing Christmas entertainment, such as the ice rink. The benefit of this initiative was welcomed by the Scrutiny Panel.
- 5.1.13 Town Centre events have an impact of increased footfall.
- 5.1.14 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the enthusiasm of students of the recent student lock in at the Grosvenor Centre and noted from the evidence received that should future events be held that the overall success of such events be promoted.
- 5.1.15 The evidence collated alluded that people would like a vibrant town centre comprising both chain stores and independent traders, with a variety of good eating and drinking venues and is family orientated at the weekends. A number of respondents made

reference to the town becoming a centre for culture.

- 5.1.16 Northampton has some attractive architecture and should be promoted to its full advantage.
- 5.1.17 Like a number of towns and cities, Northampton has a number of vacant shops.
- 5.1.18 Evidence received suggested the erection of artwork, created by local artists, on display boards, would enhance the aesthetics of the town centre.
- 5.1.19 From the evidence collated, the Scrutiny Panel is aware of the threats to traditional retailing that has already come from the expansion of the Internet for shopping. It was realised that there could be further threats due to forthcoming changes in technology.
- 5.1.20 It is highlighted that street entertainers in Norwich gave a nice atmosphere to the shopping experience and the Scrutiny Panel felt that this could be investigated for Northampton.
- 5.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel supported the provision of Litter Wardens that were employed in Norwich.
- 5.1.22 During the visit to the car park area at the Grosvenor Centre, it was noted that some lights were not working. A boarded up window was observed, as was an out of date maintenance sign. The advertising boards inside the lifts were empty. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the area around the lifts could benefit from a deep clean.
- 5.1.23 The evidence obtained from the site visits that the Scrutiny Panel undertook determined that a number of town centres visited had good signage in situ. The signage in the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton, was felt to be very good. Initiatives to enhance the retail experience that take place in the Grosvenor Centre were supported.
- 5.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that the public is encouraged to report incidents in relation to street cleansing.
- 5.1.25 The Scrutiny Panel noted that reduction of signage work is on-going and is a key initiative not only within Northampton but across the county.
- 5.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the experience gained from the witnesses and the co-optee to this Review, particularly the wealth of knowledge and experience of the retail sector. It was recognised that it would be useful to continue this invaluable relationship to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of this Review.

6.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc.)
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

Scrutiny Panel 2 recommends to Cabinet that:

Retail Experience

- 6.1.1 The wider town centre experience is promoted and includes retail, leisure, culture, events and eating out.
- 6.1.2 Improved promotion of National and International events/activities.
- 6.1.3 Improved marketing of Northampton in relation to events held in the town centre.
- 6.1.4 Review the possibility of street entertainment (buskers) in the town centre.
- 6.1.5 Ensure town centre retailers and residents are informed on any proposed major developments/building projects in the town centre
- 6.1.6 Actively promote the hour's free parking and free parking on Sundays to Community Groups and Residents' Associations.
- 6.1.7 Investigate the opportunity to display local artists' artwork in vacant shop front windows in the town centre.
- 6.1.8 Promote the Enterprise Loan Panel to the retail sector, Northampton BID and the University of Northampton.
- 6.1.9 Review Planning Policies with a particular focus on restricting changes of use from retail to other use particularly where there is saturation.

- 6.1.10 The success of the current Pop-up Shops is widely advertised and further promoted. It is also promoted to the Voluntary Sector so that it can run short-term campaigns using the Pop-up model.
- 6.1.11 A Town Centre Czar is appointed, in an advisory capacity.

Cleansing

- 6.1.12 The standard of street cleansing is maintained at a consistent level across the town centre.
- 6.1.13 Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the street cleansing contract.
- 6.1.14 Enterprise Management Services (EMS) works closely with partners (i.e. Town Centre BID) to improve engagement and understanding of partners' needs.
- 6.1.15 NBC works with town centre businesses around trade waste and where necessary takes the appropriate enforcement action.
- 6.1.16 Any cleaning matters be reported immediately to EMS to ensure a swift response is delivered.
- 6.1.17 An additional Town Centre Ranger is employed with a particular focus on litter. The Town Ranger is issued with a smart, clearly identifiable uniform and where possible existing Rangers are also issued with smart, clearly identifiable uniforms.
- 6.1.18 The "Report It" App is promoted to the wider community.
- 6.1.19 Northampton Borough Council has dialogue with retailers regarding the cleanliness of their forecourts.
- 6.1.20 The current status of Byelaws in relation to cleansing is investigated and enforced as appropriate or where Byelaws do not exist, consideration is given to the implementation of suitable Byelaws.

Partnership Working

- 6.1.21 NBC works closely with the Town Centre BID regarding any new business initiatives/opportunities.
- 6.1.22 NBC continues to work closely with all partners.
- 6.1.23 NBC develops an education package for primary schools around the importance of recycling and the prevention of littering.

- 6.1.24 Councillors and Officers from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and NBC work closely with town centre businesses around traffic and pedestrian movement throughout the redevelopment building projects in the town centre.

Recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1.25 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.

Appendices



Appendix A

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community.
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc).
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

2. Outcomes Required

- To enhance the retail experience to attract new visitors / shoppers and increase the number of return visits to the town centre
- To provide short, medium and long term recommendations, which supports and develops the retail experience.

3. Information Required

- Context:
 - Local statistics
 - Demographics – local and national
- Baseline data:
 - National statistics
 - Definition of the Town Centre
 - Vision for the Town Centre

- Synopses of various research documents and other published documents
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Evidence from residents
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Best practice data
- Site visits
- Desktop research

4. Format of Information

- Officer reports/presentations
- Baseline data such as:
 - Performance data - town centre footfall
 - Vacancy rates
 - Numbers and types of retail within the town
 - Car park usage
- Published reports (precis's) such as:
 - The Portas Review
 - The Right to Retail: Can Localism save Britain's small retailers
 - Understanding High Street Performance
 - Core Strategy – Northampton's Strategic Planning Policies
 - Sustainable Community Strategy
- NBC – Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise) evidence
- NBC – Cabinet Member (Environment)
- Evidence from Northampton BID
- Evidence from Mr Everall, former Director, Northampton BID
- Evidence from various local businesses and retailers
- Evidence from NCC - Highways
- Evidence from Northampton Community Forums
- Evidence from Enterprise Management Services
- Evident from Northants Police
- Evidence from Neighbourhood Warden (town centre), NBC
- Evidence from ACTM
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from the Chair, of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association
- Evidence from the Community Safety Manager, NBC
- Evidence from University of Northampton
- Expert advice
- Best practice
- Witness interviews/evidence

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site Visits (if applicable)
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-
 - Key Partners as detailed in section 4 of this scope
 - Northampton Town Centre BID
 - Northampton Chamber of Commerce
 - Key Officers – Northampton Borough Council
 - Key Officers – Northamptonshire County Council
 - Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise) – Northampton Borough Council
 - Cabinet Member (Environment) – Northampton Borough Council
 - Surveyors/Valuers
 - Director, EMS

6. Co-Options to the Review

- Sheridan New, former Manager, Grosvenor Centre, and Simon Rushden, Legal and General to be approached suggesting that she is co opted to this Review for its life.

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- An Equality Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

April 2012 to April 2013

- 25 April 2012 - Scoping Meeting
- 27 June – Evidence gathering
- 5 July - Evidence gathering
- 8 August – Evidence gathering
- 18 October – Evidence gathering
- 5 December – Evidence gathering

- 14 February 2013 – Evidence gathering (if required)
- 24 April – Approval of final report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

7. Responsible Officers

Lead Officer Marion Goodman, Head of Customer and Cultural Services

Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

8. Resources and Budgets

Marion Goodman, Head of Customer and Cultural Services, to provide internal advice.

9 Final report presented by:

Completed by 24 April 2013. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

10 Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (January/February 2013)

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Appendix B



Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

Executive Summaries of published documents

1 Background

1.1 At its inaugural meeting the Scrutiny Panel agreed that as part of its evidence gathering process summaries of various published documents would be provided to the Panel:

- The Portas Review
- The Right to Retail: Can Localism save Britain's small retailers
- Understanding High Street Performance
- Core Strategy – Northampton's Strategic Planning Policies
- Sustainable Community Strategy

2 Information

2.1 Detailed below are the summaries of the above reports for the Scrutiny Panel's information:

2.2 The Portas Review

2.3 Summary

2.3.1 The decline of the local high street was reviewed by Mary Portas in 2011.

2.3.2 The overarching principle of the Review was the need to renew the high street and town centre as social as well as economic spaces. The Review states "they should become places where we go to engage with other people in our communities where shopping is just one small part of a rich mix of activities". The Review set out concerns about the character of high streets and with the way that money is kept within the local economy in order to maximise the benefit to town centres.

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2.3.4 In response to the increase in out of town shopping, the Review stated “the sheer sophistication, speed and scale of both the web and major supermarkets ... pushing new boundaries (meaning independent retailers) will never be able to compete sustainably on price”. The Review went on to note that the decline cannot be blamed on external factors alone, but also on high streets failing to meet consumer needs for convenience, service and entertainment, whilst failing to play to their strengths as physical and social points for a town or area.

2.3.5 The Review comprised twenty eight recommendations on how to reverse the decline of high streets and town centres as drivers of economic growth and social capital. The main focus of the recommendations:

- Regulation
- Planning
- Influencing landlords
- Involving local communities in decision making

2.3.6 Summary of the 28 recommendations:

1. Put in place a “Town Team”: a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets
2. Empower successful Business Improvement Districts to take on more responsibilities and powers and become “Super-BIDs”
3. Legislate to allow landlords to become high street investors by contributing to their Business Improvement District
4. Establish a new “National Market Day” where budding shopkeepers can try their hand at operating a low-cost retail business
5. Make it easier for people to become market traders by removing unnecessary regulations so that anyone can trade on the high street unless there is a valid reason why not
6. Government should consider whether business rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers
7. Local authorities should use their new discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses
8. Make business rates work for business by reviewing the use of the RPI with a view to changing the calculation to CPI

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9. Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table
10. Town Teams should focus on making high streets accessible, attractive and safe
11. Government should include high street deregulation as part of their ongoing work on freeing up red tape
12. Address the restrictive aspects of the 'Use Class' system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street
13. Put betting shops into a separate 'Use Class' of their own
14. Make explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework
15. Introduce Secretary of State "exceptional sign off" for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an "affordable shops" quota
16. Large retailers should support and mentor local businesses and independent retailers
17. Retailers should report on their support of local high streets in their annual report
18. Encourage a contract of care between landlords and their commercial tenants by promoting the leasing code and supporting the use of lease structures other than upward only rent reviews, especially for small businesses
19. Explore further disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant
20. Banks who own empty property on the high street should either administer these assets well or be required to sell them
21. Local authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street retail space
22. Empower local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent with new "Empty Shop Management Orders"
23. Introduce a public register of high street landlords

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24. Run a high profile campaign to get people involved in Neighbourhood Plans
25. Promote the inclusion of the High Street in Neighbourhood Plans
26. Developers should make a financial contribution to ensure that the local community has a strong voice in the planning system
27. Support imaginative community use of empty properties through Community Right to Buy, Meanwhile Use and a new "Community Right to Try"
28. Run a number of High Street Pilots to test proof of concept

2.3.7 In February 2012, the Government accepted two of the recommendations to set up Town Teams and give communities the opportunity to pilot the creative plans they have for the future of their high streets. Each of the "Portas Pilot" towns selected will receive a share of £1million and receive support from the Government and Mary Portas.

2.3.8 The Government then formally responded to the Portas Review, accepting virtually all of the 28 recommendations; Grant Shapps, Minister for Housing, reported in March 2012 "Today, I'm accepting virtually all of the recommendations from Mary Portas's review... Her report has provided the catalyst for change that many towns have been craving. I now want to see people coming together to form their own town teams and turning their creative ideas into reality to ensure their high streets thrive long into the future".

2.3.9 The first 12 Portas Pilot towns, together with reported purpose, are:

Bedford, Bedfordshire - offering mentoring support for High Street businesses and community use of empty properties.

Croydon, Greater London - transforming the riot-stricken area's historic Old Town market into a thriving market, food and cultural quarter.

Dartford, Kent - opening up central spaces for use by classes and clubs, from the Scouts to Slimming World and starting a 'school for shopkeepers'.

Bedminster, Bristol - putting Bedminster on the map for Street Art and Street Theatre. A bicycle rickshaw service and a review of parking will also tackle the traffic environment.

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Liskeard, Cornwall - competing against the edge of town supermarket with a vibrant arts scene, guerrilla gardening and yarn bombing to inject fun back into the town centre.

Margate, Kent - putting education and enjoyment at the heart of the town centre's transformation with courses, 'job club' services and pop up shops.

Market Rasen, Lincolnshire - drawing customers in by restoring the market town look and feel, advertising free parking and mentoring new businesses.

Nelson, Lancashire - attracting local students with a young persons café, sports activities, and a new art and vintage market.

Newbiggin by the Sea, Northumberland - better branding of the town to draw people in, improving local transport and hosting pop up shops.

Stockport, Greater Manchester - realising the character and potential of the Markets and Underbanks area with a creative arts complex, outdoor screenings, a new parking strategy and street champions.

Stockton on Tees, Teesside - live entertainment at the Globe Theatre to boost the evening leisure economy alongside specialist High Street and evening markets.

Wolverhampton, West Midlands - bringing the city will to life with modern day town criers and on-street performers and a 'dragon's den' style competition to support local entrepreneurs.

2.4 The Right to Retail: Can Localism save Britain's small retailers

2.4.1 In 2011, ResPublica published its report "Right to Retail." The report considered the problems faced by high streets. It referred to vacancy rates are rising, the superstores are growing their market share, customers have less money to spend and the cost of regulation is rising. The report details changes to the retail economy, highlighting the power shifts from independent retailers. It reports that the number of larger stores located out of town increased from just under 300 in 1980 to more than 700 by 1990 and just under 1,500 in 2007 and over the same period the number of specialist grocery stores has declined significantly. It provided an example of the reduction of fishmongers from approximately 10,000 in the 1950's to around 2,000 in 2000. Currently over 97% of total grocery sales takes place at the 8,151 supermarkets

2.4.2 ResPublic reports that its recommendations reflect both the Government's wider commitment to local and civic empowerment and the specific commitment to receive the National Planning Policy Framework in order to make it "localist in its approach, handing power back to local communities to decide what is right for them". It goes on

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to say that its recommendations aim to make explicit that a successful localist agenda would be one which not only gave communities and individuals the power to shape to their physical environment, but also, crucially, their local economy.

2.4.3 Summary of local and civic recommendations :

Recommendation 1 – Allow Communities to Designate Retail Mix in Neighbourhood Plans

Recommendation 2 – A Community Right to Appeal

Recommendation 3 – Treat Shops as Local Assets

Recommendation 4 – Business Rate Reduction for Designated Retailers

Recommendation 5 – A Community Right to Buy

Recommendation 6 – A Community Right to Try

Recommendation 7: Embed Small and Medium Owners in Local Enterprise Partnerships

2.4.4 Summary of national recommendations:

Recommendation 8 – A community Interest Clause In Competition Law

Recommendation 9 – An Annual National Report on “buying power” and “price flexing”

2.4.4 Summary of recommendations for a joined up economy:

Recommendation 10 – Encourage Mutual Retail Models

Recommendation 11 – Encourage Community Run Retailers

2.5 Understanding High Street Performance

2.5.1 The Department for Business and Innovation and Skills published a report in December 2011 entitled “Understanding High Street Performance.” The Report looks at a number of factors impacting on the economic and social performance of town centres and High Streets. The purpose of the report was to help inform Government and local authority decision-making regarding town centres, high streets and local economic growth. It also provided input to the Portas Review.

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2.5.2 The framework of the report centered on the following areas:

Externalities – high streets are influenced by externalities that are generally outside user/occupier control.

Spatial and physical factors – high street performance is affected by factors such as the development of new residential areas or demographic changes; changes in the physical environment; accessibility related to car access and car parking and cycle/walking friendliness; amenity in terms of streetscape, public space and private/public space;

Market forces and competition – the development of the high street is undoubtedly affected by the emergence/presence of competitive alternatives to the high street, through a range of channels;

Demographics – changing demographic trends are likely to have important implications for our high streets. There are implications related to the impact of factors such as: ageing populations; transient populations such as students/immigrants; and the socio-economic catchment/level of disposable income that influence the face of high streets;

Regulation and legislation – a range of regulatory and legislative policy initiatives have impacted on high streets including planning policy and licensing legislation and the introduction of financial incentives;

Management - the management of high streets has the potential to affect change and can contribute to the differential impact of certain factors or events.

2.5.4 The study defined high street for its purposes as:

high streets in multi-dimensional town centres serving primarily sub-regional markets and driven by catchment and geography. These offer functions such as the provision of labour, a location for business, and an environmental asset;

high streets in 'destination' town centres, where the driver of use can be considered to be a specialist appeal or a particular product and where retail and service provision predominates over the functional roles;

service centre high streets in suburban districts that are serving more localised residential catchments.

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2.7 Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton 2008 – 2011

2.7.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton covers to the period 2008-2011. It is reported that it outlines the vision up to 2031 and how it will be aimed to achieve this. The Strategy will be refreshed periodically to reflect changes and progress. The Plan focuses on activity that will take place during the first phase of the vision, up to 2011.

2.8 Central Area Action Plan

2.8.1 Extracts from the sections in relation to retail are detailed below

Definition of the 'Town Centre'

To be consistent with PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, the 'Proposals Map' identifies the extent of the town centre and Primary Shopping Area. In sequential planning terms, the Primary Shopping Area is the preferred location for retail development, with the town centre being the preferred location for other 'main town centre uses'. Given the current imbalance and harm that is being caused by competition from out-of-centre developments, and other large district centres, the Plan seeks to ensure that an impact assessment is undertaken to developments proposing 1,000 square meters gross or more of main town centre uses. This will assist in controlling the extent to which additional developments outside the Central Area will continue to grow and compete with the town centre with regard to the variety of main town centre uses.

Policy 11

Town Centre Boundary

The 'town centre' boundary as defined on the 'Proposals Map' will, for the purposes of sequential testing, be the preferred location for main town centre uses, with the exception of retailing where the Primary Shopping Area will prevail, followed by edge of town centre sites.

Developments of main town centres uses of more than 1,000 square metres gross proposed outside the town centre boundary will be subject to impact assessment.

Delivering a Vibrant Retail Centre

Defining and strengthening Northampton's Primary Shopping Area (as shown on the 'Proposals Map') is vital if the Central Area is to fulfil its role as a town centre (as defined by PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) and the principal shopping centre for Northamptonshire. To show the distinction

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between the types of use classes within Northampton Central Area, the Primary Shopping Area has been broken down into Primary and Secondary Frontages:

- Primary Frontages are the focus for retail uses
 - Secondary Frontages will have a retail focus but provide opportunities for a greater diversity of uses away from retailing, such as financial services, restaurants and drinking establishments

The Council aims to develop a compact and quality retail centre by classifying the frontages and defining a Primary Shopping Area. The Council will also develop a robust retail circuit, which will create a more legible retail centre and strengthen the role of key retailing streets of Abington Street, Fish Street and St Giles Street. The retail circuit will seek to increase the vitality and viability of the town by promoting a range of quality retailing experiences for visitors. This range will include large-scale national stores that will locate in the Grosvenor Centre and its extension, through to smaller-scale individual specialist retailers in St Giles Street. Providing active building frontage on to streets throughout the Central Area and improving the design of shop frontages will be central to developing an effective retail circuit and increasing vitality, together with the increased perception of quality.

A substantial increase in high quality floor space that meets the needs of modern town centre retailers will be required to meet the Central Area's role as a town centre. Therefore, the Council has identified future extensions to the Primary Shopping Area. These extensions include the planned extension to the Grosvenor Centre (Policy 17 'Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment') and the redevelopment of the former Fish Market (Policy 19 'Former Fish Market and Adjoining Buildings').

Policy 12

Definition of the Primary Shopping Area

Northampton Primary Shopping Area will become the main focus for shopping activity within the Borough. Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area as defined on the 'Proposals Map'.

The Primary Shopping Area will be extended as shown on the 'Proposals Map' by the proposed Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment (as defined in Policy 17 'Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment'), the redevelopment of the former Fish Market and adjacent area (as defined in Policy 18 'Former Fish Market and Adjoining Buildings') and the Drapery (as defined in Policy 32 'Drapery').

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Policy 13

Improving the Retail Offer

Within the Primary Frontages: 'The Character of Shopping Frontages'), the change of use from retail (Class A1) will be allowed where it will not result in:

- A significant decline in the total length of the identified retail frontage below 80%, or, where this is already below 80% reduce further retail frontage, and
- Two or more adjoining premises being used other than for retail

Within the Secondary Frontages 'The Character of Shopping Frontages'), the change of use from retail (Class A1) will be allowed where it will not result in a significant decline in the total length of identified retail frontage below 60%, or, where this is already below 60% reduce further retail frontage.

In addition, development at ground floor level within the Central Area will be expected to:

- Positively contribute to the character and function of a frontage (for primary and secondary frontages a brief assessment of the current and desired future character and function are set out in Appendix F: 'The Character of Shopping Frontages') and be compatible with adjoining uses
- Provide high quality shop fronts which will be consistent with the Shop Front Design Guide
- In the case of non-retail uses, to provide an active frontage with views into the unit or, if this cannot be achieved a high quality window display

Market Square

The Market Square is a destination in its own right through its function as a market and event space. It is a major historical landmark and area of public space. It provides a unique opportunity for Northampton to differentiate its retail and leisure experience from competing out-of-town retail parks and other retail centres. Recent investment in the public realm and a programme of events at the Market Square should be used as a starting point for future improvement and investment. In terms of role and function, the Borough Council intends to maximise the potential offered by this asset, by encouraging more restaurants and cafés to invest in the properties fronting the Square.

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Policy 31

Market Square

The Council will seek to establish leisure uses within the Market Square and enhance its function and appearance by:

- Allowing more restaurants (A3) within the Market Square's Secondary Frontages
- Not allowing the loss of restaurants (A3), unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal will meet the Council's strategic objective for the Market Square
- Ensuring that proposals will complement and improve the quality of the public realm in line with Policy-4 3 'Public Realm'
- Ensure proposals respect or enhance the building design and character of the Market Square in line with Policy 2-1 'Promoting Design Excellence'
- Working with property owners and occupiers to improve the fabric and appearance of buildings
- Seeking to sustain and enhance the Market Square as a venue for the market and as an event space

Drapery

This site is bounded by Bradshaw Street and King Street on the north, St. Katherine's gardens on the west, Drapery on the east and Jeyes Jetty on the south. It is bisected by College Street. It currently accommodates the Debenhams department store, associated car parking/ service area and other smaller retail, service, public house and eating and drinking establishments.

There is a strong likelihood that some of the current occupiers of this area, Debenhams in particular, will relocate into the redeveloped Grosvenor Centre. This will provide an opportunity for the area to be the redeveloped for additional comparison retailing floorspace of approximately 17,000 square metres after the opening of the Grosvenor Centre extension. This floorspace will be more suited to retailers' requirements, provide an extension to the primary shopping area and enhance the role of the Drapery as a primary shopping frontage. It can also create a better connection to and setting for the St. Katherine's Gardens and the listed College Street Church.

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Policy 32

Drapery

The Drapery will be regenerated in a manner consistent with the development principles contained within Figure 6.14 of the CAA 'Policy 32: Drapery Development Principles'. It will:

- Provide an extension to the Primary Shopping Area
 - Provide up to 17,000 square metres of comparison retail floorspace, together with associated eating establishments
 - Positively address and enhance the setting and use of St Katherine's Gardens through appropriate uses and active frontages on the west of the development site
 - Reuse and restore historic buildings wherever possible and enhance the setting and make a feature of the listed College Street Church and also 41 Drapery
 - Have strong connections that promote movement to and from the Former Fish Market and Adjoining Buildings site in their role as extensions to the Primary Shopping Area
 - Enhance Swan Yard and Jeyes Jetty through respecting their historic character whilst seeking to provide attractive and safe links between Drapery and College Street

Meeting Retail Capacity

The Council is confident that a substantial extension to the Grosvenor Centre will be delivered, following the signing of a Development Agreement with Legal and General. As a logical extension to the Primary Shopping Area and the town's premier shopping destination, the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment proposal is the key to increasing and enhancing both the supply and quality of retail development for Northampton. It is anticipated that it will fulfil a substantial part of the identified retail capacity in the period to 2021.

It is anticipated that the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment will accommodate between 32,000–37,000 square metres (gross) of comparison floorspace. The Town Centre Health Check identifies the potential for a further 19,000–23,000 square metres (gross) of comparison goods floorspace to be accommodated within the town centre by 2026. The West Northamptonshire Retail Study indicates a potential for Northampton town centre to accommodate 4,500 square metres (net) of convenience floor space by 2021. The actual retail capacity within the Grosvenor Centre development will be determined through the detailed design of the scheme.

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The Council has identified two further sites for retail development that have good prospects for delivery. These will help to meet identified retail capacity in the period to 2026. The sites are:

- Abington Street East
- Drapery and land on College Street

Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment

The Grosvenor Centre constitutes a significant part of the retail frontage within the Central Area. The site includes a purpose built shopping centre, the Greyfriars bus station with offices above, the vacant land to the west and east, the Mayorhold multi-storey car park together with associated land including subways and the Upper Mounts surface level car park on Victoria Street. It is one of the biggest and most important development sites within and adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area of the Central Area.

²The present development, which took place in the 1970s and 80s, whilst still functional and to a certain extent commercially successful, overall does not constitute an attractive environment. It also has a poor relationship with the rest of the historic environment that surrounds it. The buildings are bulky, monolithic and devoid of architectural interest and visual stimulation. Overall it does not form an attractive pedestrian environment as it is heavily trafficked and there is extremely limited pedestrian movement between the north and south in the daytime. The situation becomes worse in the evenings as it is very isolated when the buildings are closed.

Despite some recent investment it is now beginning to show its age. Its design and layout cannot be easily adapted to accommodate the needs of modern retailers and the demand for new retail premises in the town centre.

The bus station is an important building in terms of its function as a bus interchange and hub for bus services within Northampton as set out in Chapter 5. 'Accessibility and Movement'. The building itself is of its time and whilst warm and dry, is dark and can at times, particularly in the evenings, feel like an intimidating environment. It has a substantial amount (approx 14,000 square metres) of obsolete vacant office floor space and car parking above.

The Grosvenor Centre site redevelopment provides an opportunity for a logical extension and remodelling of the principal purpose built shopping centre within Northampton's centre. This will reinforce the existing primary shopping frontages and cater for longer-term retailer demand. This redevelopment is critical to sustaining Northampton centre's competitiveness as a retail destination and in delivering the Central Area vision. It should also provide the opportunity to accommodate a range of other town centre uses to reinforce the role of the Central Area and provide potential for significant improvements to the townscape.

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Policy 17

Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment

The Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment will be in a manner consistent with the development principles set out in Figure 6.1 'Policy 17: Grosvenor Centre Redevelopment Development Principles'. It will:

- Provide up to an additional 37,000 square metres gross internal retail floor space plus ancillary uses including restaurant / leisure floor space as an extension to the existing Primary Shopping Area:
 - Provide a suitable long term, and if necessary interim, replacement for the bus station consistent with the criteria set out in Bus Interchange
 - Make the most effective use of the site reflective of its central location to accommodate a mixture of other main town centre uses, such as offices, leisure and entertainment, hotel and also residential development
 - Provide a new pedestrian route, which should be open and feel safe 24-hours a day, between the Market Square and Lady's Lane through to Newlands; and also a pedestrian route between Abington Street and Lady's Lane through to Victoria Street
 - Retain the existing amount of convenience floor space within the Grosvenor Centre and explore all possibilities of accommodating additional convenience floor space to meet identified available capacity
 - Provide sympathetic design of an appropriate scale taking into account the historic character of Sheep Street together with improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity north/ south and reinstate a building line in the missing gap to the north of Lady's Lane and to the south of Greyfriars
 - Be outward looking maximising external active frontages particularly at ground floor level
 - Ensure that new development is well related and sympathetic to the characterisation of the surrounding areas and in particular improves the appearance of all the facade on the Market Square and the setting of Welsh House
 - Provide appropriate public realm that is consistent with the ambitions of the Public Realm Implementation Framework and changes in the character of the highway particularly along Lady's Lane, Sheep Street, Greyfriars, Mayorhold, Victoria Street, Wellington Street, Abington Street and Market Square
 - In recognition of its identified designation as a proposed extension to the Primary Shopping Area (Policy 12 'Definition of the Primary Shopping Area') ensure that the development positively addresses the other sites proposed as extensions to the Primary Shopping Area (Policy 18 'Abington Street East) and also Drapery (Policy 32) to enhance their prospects of delivery
 - Include provision of secure cycle storage facilities: long stay

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cycle parking for employees and for short stay shoppers, in accordance with the Standards set out in Appendix: E. 'Parking Standards: Central Area Zones'

- Have appropriate parking management measures consistent with Policy 10 'Parking'
- Remove the Greyfriars, Lady's Lane and Wellington Street subways whilst ensuring that pedestrian connectivity is not comprised

2.9 Northampton Town Centre Health Check 2009

2.9.1 The Northampton Borough Council Town Centre Health Check was published in October 2009. Roger Tym and Partners had been commissioned to undertake a comprehensive healthcheck of Northampton town centre. The objective of the study was to present a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the Northampton Central Area to inform the emerging Area Action.

2.9.2 Some key reported facts from the Health Check:

Northampton is tied with Peterborough. Amongst the comparator cities only Leicester and Milton Keynes rank higher:

Retail Rankings

Venue	2003/04 Ranking	2008 Rank	Change 2004-2008
Northampton	43	43	0
Peterborough	46	43	-3
Milton Keynes	29	30	1
Leicester	10	14	4
Oxford	44	45	1
Coventry	41	60	19

There were 97 vacant units in Northampton at the time of the Goad Survey (2008) which equates to a vacancy rate of 15% and is above the GB average of vacancy rate of 12%. The vacancy units are spread evenly throughout the centre. The vast majority being A1 use class. Two vacant banks, 8 vacant restaurants and 1 vacant public house. The remaining six units were being redeveloped at the time of the Goad Survey. There were no vacant office units.

In May 2009 there were changes to the vacancy rates. In addition to the 97 identified in the Goad survey, there were 22 more, an increase of 23% in seven months. It was stated that this was probably due to the state of the economy at that time.

The Healthcheck identified that there is a good mix of multiples and

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independents. Compared with nearby town centres, the town is performing well – it has the same proportion of multiples as Leicester and Coventry:

Percentage of top 20 retailers

Centre	Percentage of top 20 retailers
Northampton	85
Oxford	75
Peterborough	80
Leicester	85
Coventry	85
Milton Keynes	70

Source: www.focusnet.co.uk

Northampton has very few high profile fashion multiples.

In terms of mix, Northampton is most like Coventry. Milton Keynes has a relatively high proportion of its retail in upper-middle markets. Only Oxford has a notable proportion of its retail offering in upper market shops (5%).

The Healthcheck went on to report that Northampton would clearly benefit from the addition of further mid-end and higher-end fashion retailers, which would bolster the quality and variety of the town centre's shopping offer and enable the town to better compete with neighbouring town centres.

It was reported that Zone A rents in Northampton average £1,507 per sq m in 2007. The rent was lower than all comparator centres: Oxford and Milton Keynes are approximately twice that of Northampton's.

In respect of retail yields, between 2000 and 2008 Northampton's yield has strengthened considerably. In October 2000 Northampton's yield was the strongest of all the comparators, but at the time of the Healthcheck it ranked third and stood at 7.25. The Healthcheck highlighted that yields in Northampton had weakened due to the recession.

The Healthcheck commented that Northampton town centre looked tired and the shop fronts and facades throughout the town were slightly run down with the notable exceptions of the Morrisons area, Fish Street and Marefair. The Grosvenor Centre was reported as dated and the Peacock Place mall described as more modern but many of the shops had closed down and had not been re occupied.

The Healthcheck included a survey with a random sample of visitors to Northampton in May 2009. 204 individuals completed a face to face

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interview. The surveys were taken on different days of the week. The purpose was to ascertain the respondents' reason for visiting the centre and ascertain their views and comments. In brief, some key facts from the survey:

- The majority travelled to the Northampton by car/van as the driver
- The main reason for the visit was to buy non food items
- Secondary reason for the visit was to buy non food items
- When asked why they would not be visiting an eating/drinking establishment, the majority of respondents indicated it was due to a poor selection/don't like
- In respect of likes and dislikes of the market area, the main positive comment was in respect of independent stalls
- The main dislike in terms of Northampton was the cleanliness and the main positive was eating and drinking closely followed by pedestrianised streets

A telephone survey with 400 households was undertaken in May 2009 in two Zones. Zone one from Moulton to Weston Favell areas and Zone two from New Duston to Collingtree. Respondents were asked about the most popular food and grocery shopping over the previous six months and in which centre they had spent most money on clothes and shoes in past six months:

Zone 1

Tesco Extra Mereway (26%)
Sainsburys Sixfields (20%)
Northampton (49%)
Milton Keynes (22%)

Zone 2

Morrisons, Kettering Road (29%)
Tesco Extra, Weston Favell (28%)
Northampton (45%)
Milton Keynes (16%)

The Market Square is popular with people visiting the town centre but is not very well used by residents overall.

The summary contained with the Healthcheck:

- The town centre has an average proportion of comparison floorspace but a below average proportion of convenience floorspace, with Sainsbury's at the Grosvenor Centre being the only large foodstore.
- Services as a whole are over represented, but restaurants, cafes and fast food are under represented. This is despite high per capita spend compared to nearby city/town centres and a high population

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within 15 minutes drive time.

- The town centre has 26 of the 31 Goad key multiples, on a par with Leicester and Coventry. It has a “middle” fashion ranking from Management Horizons Europe and is ranked below Milton Keynes and Leicester but at a similar level to the other comparator centres.
- However, occupier demand is low compared to the other centres, where high quality comparison and restaurant operators are seeking space. This is perhaps because of poor perceptions of the town and the lack of clusters of particular types of outlet (e.g. premium retailers or family restaurants).
- Vacancy is very high and as would be expected, this has worsened since the start of the recession. But, because vacancy has always been high compared to other centres, the losses suffered have not been as severe as in other areas.
- Prime Zone A retail rents are low in Northampton, presenting an opportunity for new retailers. Retail yields are strong – on a par with Milton Keynes – and have strengthened over the past decade, perhaps due to improvements to the public realm.
- Crime is recognised as an issue and there are schemes in place to target crime and improve perceptions of safety.
- The public realm is pleasant if somewhat tatty, for example with damaged street furniture. Much of the town centre is pedestrianised. There is generally good signage, although minimal signage from the station. Investment in the public realm has already taken place along Black Lion Hill and further work along Gold Street is due to be completed at the end of July.
- Pedestrian access to and through the centre is good, although the centre is spread out so it takes time to walk from one end to the other. Abington Street is the busiest location, with the Drapery and Gold Street also busy. Only around half of people visiting St. Peters Square, and hardly anyone visiting Morrisons, walk to the rest of the centre.
- Access by car is reasonable. There is less parking than in Leicester and Milton Keynes, but parking is cheaper than in the comparator centres.
- Train and bus links are good but the stations are peripheral and in poor condition. The visitor survey found that most people travel in by either car or bus.
- The town centre has a fairly local catchment – if another centre is either closer or the same distance away, it seems that people will visit that instead.
- Most people visit Northampton only once per month or fortnight, suggesting that they shop in other centres as well.
- Non food shopping is the most popular reason for visiting the centre, which accords with the fact that over half the floorspace is

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comparison goods. Eating out is a secondary reason for some visitors, although people do not seem to see the town centre as a restaurant destination.

- The market is popular with visitors and they like the independent stalls although feel that there is a lack of choice.
- Overall visitors rate the town centre poorly, in particular for environmental factors including cleanliness, safety and character (although pedestrianised streets are liked).
- Around half of residents surveyed stated that Northampton town centre is their main comparison shopping destination. This accords with the findings of previous studies but is low compared to the situation in, for example, Milton Keynes.
- A low proportion of residents use the Sainsbury's store, stating that supermarkets outside the town centre are easier to get to and easier to park at.
- Reasons for not using Northampton are that it has a poor range of multiples and is difficult to park in. As discussed, there are actually quite a high proportion of multiples, although it is true that the centre lacks premium outlets. There is also reasonable parking provision as compared to surrounding centres.
- With regard to leisure, restaurants are a popular activity and the town centre is reasonably popular – although most people visit their local restaurants. Safety concerns were the most cited reason for not eating out in the town centre.
- Cinema and theatre are also popular – and town center provision for both is good.

2.9.3 Detailed below is the relevant section from the CAA in relation to the Health Check 2009.

“However, the Town Centre Health Check¹⁰ identified that the appearance of much of the public realm is tired and has not had sustained investment over a substantial period. The opportunity exists to address some of these poorer areas, particularly the main shopping street - Abington Street - through redevelopment, together with related improvements and investments in transport and general improvements, through the policies and regeneration sites identified within the Plan. “

10 Roger Tym & Partners, Northampton Town Centre Healthcheck (2009)

2.10 Northampton Town Centre Shopping Survey June 2010

2.10.1 The Town Centre Survey was undertaken using a framework as set out in the Northampton Town Shopping Survey, January 2005.

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Street Name	N ^o of Vacant Units	% of Vacant Units	N ^o Occupied A1 Units	% of Occupied A1 Units	Total N ^o of Units
<i>Wellingborough Road - South(16-68)</i>	5	29%	6	35%	17
<i>Kettering Road - North (5-55)</i>	5	27%	9	50%	18
<i>Abington Square - South</i>	4	18%	9	56%	17
<i>Abington Square - North</i>	1	6%	8	50%	16
<i>York Road - East (27-37)</i>	2	16%	5	46%	11
<i>York Road – West (15 – 25)</i>	4	36%	0	0	10
<i>Abington Street - South</i>	5	4%	26	53%	49
<i>Abington Street – North</i>	7	15%	29	59%	48
<i>Peacock Place</i>	12	41%	13	45%	29
<i>Grovesnor Centre</i>	5	7%	62	86%	66
<i>The Parade</i>	1	11%	6	67%	9
<i>Market Square – South, West & East</i>	4	17%	8	30%	23
<i>Sheep Street – West (5-15)</i>	1	16%	1	16%	6
<i>Sheep Street – East (2-20)</i>	2	20%	4	40%	10
<i>Drapery - East</i>	4	25%	4	25%	16
<i>Drapery - West</i>	5	24%	10	48%	21
<i>Bradshaw Street</i>	2	33%	1	16%	6
<i>College Street Mews</i>	0	n/a	5	83%	6
<i>Gold Street - South</i>	4	22%	8	44%	18
<i>Gold Street – North</i>	2	13%	13	50%	26
<i>Gold Street Mews</i>	0	n/a	8	80%	10
<i>Marefair – South (7-21)</i>	1	10%	4	40%	10
<i>St Peters Walk East</i>	1	11%	7	77%	9
<i>St Peters Walk West</i>	1	n/a	5	83%	6
<i>St Peters Square</i>	2	18%	8	72%	11

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Bridge Street - West	3	11%	4	14%	28
Bridge Street - East	3	20%	3	20%	15
Mercers Row	0	n/a	6	60%	10
George Row	1	16%	1	16%	8
Wood Hill	0	n/a	2	40%	5
Derngate – North (1-23)	2	12%	5	33%	12
Derngate – South (2-8)	0	n/a	2	33%	6
St Giles Street – South (2-72)	5	18%	16	59%	27
St Giles Street – North (1-79 and Riding Arcade)	1	7%	22	58%	38
Fish Street – East	1	10%	1	10%	10
Fish Street - West	0	n/a	3	27%	11

Total N^o of Units = 638 Total N^o of Occupied A1 Units = 324 (50.5%)

Total N^o of Vacant Units = 97 (14%)

A1 Shop Fronts

Street Name	Total Shop Frontage (Metres)	Total A1 Shop Frontage Occupied or Vacant (Metres)	% A1 Shop Frontage
Abington Square – South (2-30)	77	57	74%
Abington Street - South	438	302	69%
Abington Street – North	428	276	65%
Peacock Place	374	353	94%
Grovesnor Centre	731	713	97%
The Parade	113	82	73%
Market Square – South	55	17	30%
Market Square - West	94	23	25%
Market Square – East	39	32	82%
Sheep Street –	58	31	53%

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<i>East (2-20)</i>			
<i>Drapery - East</i>	130	52	40%
<i>Drapery - West</i>	178	106	59%
<i>Gold Street - South</i>	182	102	56%
<i>Gold Street – North</i>	239	100	41%
<i>Mercers Row</i>	73	40	55%
<i>Wood Hill</i>	52	21	40%
<i>St Giles Street – South (2-72)</i>	190	145	76%
<i>St Giles Street – North (1-65)</i>	122	53	47%
<i>Fish Street – East</i>	88	11	13%
<i>Fish Street - West</i>	78	7	8%

High street and town centre regeneration



Policy Briefing 21

October 2012

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This briefing, the twenty-first in our policy briefings series, looks at town centre regeneration.

Since 2010 the Coalition Government has developed a number of policies to assist in regeneration and economic development, cutting across the responsibilities (principally) of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and other departments. Some of these have been at regional, and sub-regional level – the abolition of the RDAs and the establishment of LEPs, for example.

However, there has equally been significant work on local and district centres – both through the National Planning Policy Framework, the new powers in the Localism Act and other means, such as the Portas Review. These developments sit at the end of a fast-moving policy landscape that has been evolving for some years, and which presents different views and approaches of the solutions that authorities and their partners can take to what are uniquely local, and wide-ranging, problems.

As the recession continues, the health and vitality of local high streets is likely to be an issue which scrutiny will wish to investigate – scrutiny of economic development and regeneration plans, both specific to specific areas and council-wide, have proven especially popular with councillors over the past few years.

This policy briefing will explore the national context behind measures to push forward local regeneration, and examine ways in which scrutiny can use this evidence to support work at local level.

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1. **Background: Councils’ responsibilities for regeneration and economic development**

- 1.1 Councils’ responsibilities in this area are probably best divided into three categories – **planning, licensing and wider strategic issues** such as economic development and regeneration, community safety, health, education and other policy areas. A comprehensive review of policy in this area would look at all of these factors, and how they intersect with one another – as well as considering the extent to which the public, and businesses, in a given area have an opportunity to influence policy. This would obviously be a huge undertaking, and later in this report we suggest ways in which overview and scrutiny can sensibly disaggregate such a large and interconnected web of policy issues. This section, however, will set out the general context of where councils’ responsibilities lie at the moment.

Strategic duties

- 1.2 Prior to the Local Government Finance Act 1989, local authorities had the responsibility for collecting the domestic, and non-domestic, rates in their area, and using those rates to finance council expenditure. This was seen as providing an impetus for local authorities to take action to promote the economic development of their areas. The 1989 Act created a national system for business rates, keeping collection local, but requiring all rates to be paid into a national pot, from which they were redistributed. Recently, the Government has taken steps¹ to alter the rules around business rate (NNDR) relief, giving local authorities the power to fund their own discount schemes for NNDR, and around

¹ <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1086075746&type=RESOURCES>

business rate deferral. At the same time, the relief available for small businesses has doubled, from 50% to 100%². Government has also introduced a business rate retention regime, to encourage local authorities to do more to build up their receipts from rates³. Under business rate retention, the effects of localisation are dampened by some authorities being classified as “tariff” authorities (ie they pay more into the national system than they get out) and “top up” authorities (which get out more from the national system than they put in)⁴.

- 1.3 Despite the removal of the local element of rating, councils retained their general duties of promoting local business and the economy, placed on a statutory footing most recently by the Local Government Act 2000⁵, and supplemented by the general powers given by the Localism Act 2011⁶.
- 1.4 Most councils aim to deliver these duties, at least in part, through the Local Development Framework (LDF)⁷. However, the strategic context will often be provided through an economic development strategy. This document would previously have been developed with regard to the strategy of the Regional Development Agency, but since the abolition of RDAs⁸, councils’ work on economic development will be tied to the agenda of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). We produced a policy briefing on LEPs in 2010⁹. LEPs are partnerships of business and local government (and other partners) and can be seen as providing the strategic framework for individual councils’ approaches to economic development, and development and regeneration plans for specific areas, including town centres.
- 1.5 Most councils’ economic development strategies focus on the need for joint working to achieve their ends, and recognise the limitations of trying to predict and plan for the economic position of a given geographical area over a five or ten year period. As such, strategies tend to rely on an extremely robust evidence base – usually an

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/1972672> - see also DCLG Statistical Release, 15 August 2012, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/2198849.pdf>

³ “The business rates retention scheme: the economic benefits of local business rate retention”, (DCLG 2012), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/2146726.pdf>

⁴ “Local government resource review: proposals for business rate retention – technical paper 5, tariff, top up and levy options” (DCLG, 2011)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/19695901.pdf>

⁵ Section 2, 2000 Act. See “The role of local government in promoting wellbeing”, (LGA / NEF, 2011), http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=867e0406-35a5-4e91-910d-6b13305d2319&groupId=10171 for a consideration of the wider context of wellbeing, particularly seen in the context of health inequalities and other social and economic determinants of health.

⁶ The “general power of competence” in section 1 of the 2011 Act can be taken as bolstering councils’ responsibilities for place-shaping in their local area.

⁷ Which councils are obliged to produce under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (referred hereafter as “2004 Regulations”).

⁸ Carried out by central Government in 2010, and also involving the closure of the regional Government Offices, following an earlier review of sub-national structures in 2009 which resulted in the closure of Regional Assemblies.

⁹ “Policy briefing 6: local enterprise partnerships” (CfPS, 2010), www.cfps.org.uk/policy-briefings

economic assessment of some kind, sometimes but not always commissioned from a consultant. Kent is an example of an authority that has taken this approach¹⁰.

Planning and licensing

- 1.6 The Local Development Framework - Councils are now required to put together a Local Development Framework (LDF), which is made up of a number of Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), covering a wide range of geographical areas and planning policy issues¹¹. Since 2006/07, planning authorities have been building their LDFs, a process which has been taking some time¹² owing in part to the long lead times involved in consulting on new planning policies.
- 1.7 The basis of the LDF is the Core Strategy, which often closely aligns to a council's economic development strategy¹³. It sets out major development and regeneration opportunities and the council's key planning priorities and policies. It provides the context for the DPDs and SPDs who sit beneath it. Such is the complexity of the LDF requirements that many councils are still working to their "saved" planning policies (such as Unitary Development Plans) that predate the LDF system, which was introduced in 2004.
- 1.8 LDF documents must comply with the national policy framework.
- 1.9 Action to deal with individual streets or town centres can usually be found in an Area Action Plan (AAP), an SPD which covers a smaller geographical area. Like any SPD, it has to go through long periods of consultation, and from start to finish the adoption of an AAP can take a number of years (sometimes as long as five or six). This has led to a situation whereby many AAPs, once adopted, do not take account of prevailing economic circumstances, or council finances.
- 1.10 Planning gain: s106 and the CIL – under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local authorities can enter into agreements ("s106 agreements") for developers to make a contribution towards mitigating the effect on the wider community of a given development. More recently, the Community Infrastructure Levy has provided an opportunity for authorities to acquire a more generalised contribution from developers, that need not be tied to the development of a specific site. CIL contributions could therefore be used by councils to finance

¹⁰ <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/business/economic-development/Scoping-Report-Final.pdf>

¹¹ The LDF is not a single document. It is made up of a number of documents which are periodically updated and amended. This was a shift from the former unitary development plans, structure plans and local plans which were drafted by local authorities pre-2004, but which may still operate in some areas as "saved" policies.

¹² Many councils have only comparatively recently adopted their Core Strategies, and most are still operating at least some saved UDP policies from 2004 or earlier.

¹³ Required under Regulation 6(1)(a), 2004 Regulations

capital investment in town centre regeneration – as a legal power, it has not been in place for long enough to make a judgment as to whether it will be used for this purpose.

- 1.11 General powers under the Localism Act - Under the Localism Act, local communities can come together to draft their own neighbourhood plans. Such plans, if agreed by the local populace, must then be adopted by the council as an SPD, in much the same way as an AAP. For this to happen, the plan must conform both with national policy and with other documents in the LDF (principally, the Core Strategy). A number of areas are engaged in drafting neighbourhood plans but the practice is not yet widespread.
- 1.12 The Localism Act also makes provision – via the linked Community Right to Bid and the Community Right to Build¹⁴ – for more community involvement in prominent developments. This may be a particular opportunity to ensuring that land in a town centre or on a high street is used effectively.
- 1.13 Under the Right to Bid¹⁵, if a plot of land, building or site is designated as a “community asset” (council are under an obligation to maintain a list of such assets), whoever owns it, the local community have a right to bid to take over ownership of that asset when it comes up for sale. The legislation builds in a period of time to allow local people to secure financing to do this.
- 1.14 Under the Right to Build, a local community group (which must be “formal” – eg a company limited by guarantee – and which must have as one of its objectives enhancing the well-being of the area) has the right to build housing, retail space, community facilities, allotments, or any other facility or development, where it owns or has use of the land and is able to secure a majority in favour of these plans in a local referendum. This effectively circumvents local planning provisions¹⁶. A national fund has been set up to assist local communities wishing to take this action, although the fund cannot be used for actually purchasing land. The fund is managed by the HCA – a separate fund for London exists, administered by the Mayor.
- 1.15 Licensing and planning often go together, as land use classes determine what licensable businesses can and cannot be carried out in a given premises. The Government has recently been carrying out a consultation on use classes¹⁷, although it has withdrawn some of its

¹⁴ Explained at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityrights/righttobid/> and <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityrights/righttobuild/> respectively. Further information on the right of build can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/pdf/1647749.pdf>.

¹⁵ Locality have produced a guide: <http://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Right-to-Bid-a-quick-guide.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/21261671.pdf>

¹⁷ See both “Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential” (DCLG, 2011), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1883189.pdf> and “New

proposals (for example, those permitting a change of use from business premises to residential premises without planning permission).

- 1.16 Under authorities' licensing policies, conditions may be imposed on businesses – for example, “terminal hours” for pubs and entertainment venues, or conditions on the operation of late-night hot food takeaways. This sits on top of the requirement, where such premises have not been used for a given purpose before, to successfully apply for a change of use under the council's planning policies. So if a shopkeeper wanted to open a kebab shop in premises that had formerly been occupied by a florist, he would have to apply for a change in use from A1 (general retail) to A5 (hot food takeaway). The situation is further complicated by the presence of saturation policies, which in some areas limit the number of certain types of certain use class in a certain street or area, or which restrict or entirely prohibit certain changes of use.
- 1.17 Planning and licensing policies are hence used in conjunction to control, albeit bluntly, how high streets and town centres are permitted to develop, in line with the wider priorities for an area.

2. Reasons for the decline

- 2.1 A number of reasons have been mooted as to why town centres, and high streets, are in decline in a number of areas. The important point to note is that – as we make clear later – the reasons for decline, and the methods which can be used to reinvigorate town centres, will vary from place to place. There is no one “benchmark” against which regenerations can be judged.
- 2.2 We do not have space to consider all of these in detail, but they have all been put forward as challenges that need addressing, by a variety of sources. Readers will note that, while some of these problems have national facets, almost all of them present the opportunity to develop local solutions.
- Poor links between daytime and night-time economy (local)¹⁸;
 - Insufficient car parking, or car parking being too expensive (local)¹⁹;
 - Poor public transport permeability (local)²⁰;
 - Restrictive approaches to business rate relief, business rate deferral, or borrowing against business rate growth (local and national)²¹;

opportunities for sustainable development and growth through the reuse of existing buildings: consultation” (DCLG, 2012),

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2171937.pdf>

¹⁸ “Regeneration of town centres” (NAW, 2012), p28

¹⁹ “The Portas Review”, recommendation 9

²⁰ Ibid, recommendation 10

- Planning restrictions (local and national)²²;
- The economic climate (local and national)²³;
- Prevalence of internet shopping (national)²⁴;
- Shifts to out of town shopping (national and local)²⁵;
- Poor quality public realm (local)²⁶;
- Lack of strategic thinking about improvement from local businesses, and others, possibly deriving from conflicts of use between different kinds of user of public space (local)²⁷;
- Disjointed approach to tackling the above issues at Whitehall level (national)²⁸;
- Lack of a distinctive local retail or business offer (local)²⁹;
- Lack of appropriate space available where demand for certain uses exists (local)³⁰;

2.3 We will look at these in the following section in the context of developing national policy on regeneration over the past six years.

2.4 In this section, however, we will focus here on out of town shopping as an example of complexity of the “cause and effect” arguments around town centre decline, as the increase in out of town developments could be seen as a symptom of the decline of town centres as much as a cause of it.

Case study: Out of town shopping

2.5 Much of the thinking around the decline of town centres has been centred on the shift in retail from town centres to out-of-town facilities, or more recently to the internet. The main causes of these moves have been said to include some, or all, of the following (some of which are contingent on one another)³¹:

- Increase in car ownership;
- Construction of more supermarkets, including out of town supermarkets;

²¹ NAW 2012: recommendation 16; see also CLG select committee’s report on regeneration (2011), particularly paragraph 83 onwards and Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which allows councils to borrow against future predicted growth in NNDR receipts.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomloc/1014/101408.htm#a16>

²² “Neighbourhood planning: from consultation to collaboration” (ResPublica, 2012)

²³ “Twenty-first century town centres” (Association of Market Towns, 2012)

²⁴ “The Portas Review”, p9

²⁵ Ibid, pp30-32

²⁶ “Re-imagining urban spaces to revitalise our high streets” (DCLG, 2012)

²⁷ This was a factor that had to be overcome in some of the areas bidding for Portas Pilot status (see below).

²⁸ “Regeneration”, report of the CLG Select Committee, November 2011, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomloc/1014/1014.pdf> paragraph 124.

²⁹ NAW 2012, paragraph 72, citing Cadw’s work on “distinctiveness” in Wales

³⁰ “The Portas Review”, recommendations 21 and 26

³¹ Cited by Portas; also by ATM (see above) and DCLG (2012 guidance)

- Many units in town centres being unattractive for chain retailers (ie too small);
 - More attractive rents and higher footfall in out of town shopping centres;
 - A shift in consumer preferences for more familiar brands over independent retailers (although this shift is now reversing in some areas).
- 2.6 A lot of activity and campaigning has focused on planning restrictions to make the construction of out-of-town developments more difficult, the presumption being that such developments are a component of a “zero sum game” that means that, as footfall and spending in out-of-town developments increase, there is a corresponding decrease in town centre business³².
- 2.7 Concern about out-of-town shopping developments led (through earlier restrictions imposed in the 1990s) to PPS6, which requires authorities to carry out a “needs assessment” on their town centres, with additional development being permitted only when a specific need identified in the assessment would be met. PPS6 proved controversial, particularly with the retail sector. Retail groups claim that such a restriction hinders competition (particularly where an existing supermarket might exist in a given area which is then allowed to operate as an effective monopoly if the needs assessment prevents any more supermarkets from opening), and that out of town developments and supermarkets succeed because there is a market for them, and the experience they provide is what consumers want³³.
- 2.8 Planning policy on town centres since the introduction of PPS6 can be considered as an attempt to balance these two competing viewpoints – the response to this will be explored in the next section in the context of the approach that successive Governments have since taken to tackling this issue.

3. Responses to the challenge

- 3.1 We will look now at the non-Governmental responses to the decline of town centres in the form of the “transition towns” movements, before looking at national approaches that first the Labour Government, and more recently the Coalition Government, have sought to take – in the context of reports such as the Portas Review and the LGA’s Local Growth campaign.

Transition towns

³² This is an approach specifically taken by the Portas Review

³³ “Retail attacks ‘insane’ out of town curbs” (FT, 11 December 2011),

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b8413048-25b7-11e1-856e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz28QVoSSXe>

- 3.2 The “transition towns” movement³⁴ developed in response to the notion that the transition to a low carbon economy would require significant change in the way that the economy operates. This is focused on local action, based on the idea that securing a global impact (reducing the impact of climate change³⁵ and the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels, particularly in the context of peak oil³⁶) is only possible by taking a range of practical, local measures.
- 3.3 These might include³⁷:
- Localisation: working with local businesses to shorten supply chains and to increase diversity in the retail offer (thus making the local economy more resilient and sustainable, and having the benefit of providing a more compelling “offer” to local people);
 - Encouraging businesses to take account of natural capital when providing services or goods. Natural capital is the flow of environmental goods and services that interact with the human economic system. The idea of natural capital expands economic models to include natural resources that have value to humanity, but no inherent price.
 - Understanding the limits of natural resources and working within them. This is about reducing waste and increasing efficiency.
 - Understanding the role of businesses within communities (ie seeking out and capitalising on business opportunities which have social as well as economic value).
 - A steady state economy, meaning that economic growth (which may be unsustainable) is eschewed as an end goal in favour of social benefits, while avoiding stagnation.
 - Alternative means of exchange, such as the creation of “local currencies” to keep money within the local community. There has already been success in this with the creation of the Brixton Pound³⁸ and the Bristol Pound³⁹.
- 3.4 Transition Towns initiatives, working towards some or all of these ends, have been set up in several dozen UK towns and communities. Many look at a wider area than a high street or a central retail area, but engagement with business (not only retail) is particularly important. .

³⁴ More information at www.transitionnetwork.org. Totnes in Devon is generally regarded as the exemplar of transition in action.

³⁵ Climate change will have an impact on supply chains as retailers find it more difficult to source products that can no longer be grown / produced in more adverse environments.

³⁶ Rising oil prices, as reserves of cheap oil are depleted, will harm global supply chains and make it more difficult for large retailers to source stock globally, or even to operate national distribution systems.

³⁷ This is a precis of a range of information available on the website of the Transition Network - <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>

³⁸ <http://brixtonpound.org/>. The Brixton Pound was launched in 2009. It is accepted in over 100 local businesses in the Brixton area.

³⁹ <http://bristolpound.org/>. The Bristol Pound was launched in 2012.

- 3.5 For many, “transition” has been a useful way to provide an intellectual bulwark to arguments around the long-term benefits to regeneration of small town centres. Some of its byproducts (such as local supply chains, and providing a unique “offer” through retail facilities) are familiar from more mainstream approaches to regeneration. That said, although the principles of transition are having a significant impact in a number of communities around the country, they are yet to consistently “bubble up” through the national literature.

The Labour Government response to the challenge

- 3.6 Business and Town Centres Project (2005-2008) -In 2005, DCLG commissioned the Business and Town Centres Project, a three year programme to develop Town and City Centre Partnerships in England⁴⁰. This programme was seen as providing a framework for a range of formal and informal partnerships, with varying levels of public and private sector involvement, to bring about real change to town centres. The programme was built on five elements:
- Targeted stakeholder engagement;
 - An evidence based strategy and action plan;
 - A performance management framework;
 - Clear governance arrangements, and;
 - A robust financial management framework.
- 3.7 The programme envisaged a Town Centre Partnership that would lead and influence thinking about the improvement of a town centre, and that would be involved in service delivery. Importantly, the programme recognised the inherent interconnectedness between the TCP and the range of other local stakeholders, including other partnership bodies.
- 3.8 The programme involved the recruitment of 21 areas to explore the opportunities arising from the TCP model. DCLG produced guidance on “How to manage town centres” in 2007,⁴¹ and a detailed report on progress was made in 2008 by PWC⁴², to present a practical vision of how to proceed.
- 3.9 The inherent formality of TCP arrangements has meant that they have not become especially widespread in the precise way envisaged by the programme – in particular, they need a significant investment and impetus to get off the ground. Some areas highlighted by the PWC had established Business Improvement Districts, formal bodies that levy a tax on local businesses to support their work. The establishment of

⁴⁰ More information on these partnerships can be found on the website of the Association of Town Centre Managers - <http://www.atcm.org/>

⁴¹ “How to manage town centres” (DCLG, 2007)

⁴² “Managing town centre partnerships: a guide for practitioners” (DCLG/PWC, 2008), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/doc/1017945.doc>

BIDs is subject to a local vote of businesses, which can sometimes be divisive⁴³.

- 3.10 The Barker Review, “Planning for a sustainable future” (DCLG, Defra, DTI, DfT, 2007), Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 - The Review of Planning by Kate Barker⁴⁴ led to a Government White Paper in 2007⁴⁵. This White Paper focused on national infrastructure projects, leading to the major economic development elements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 – many provisions of which have been repealed. However, it also brought about some streamlining of the process that authorities would need to undergo to adopt Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as part of the LDF. Reductions in consultation times and additional flexibility over the number and nature of such documents that authorities would have to prepare were all themes which have been carried over to the Coalition Government⁴⁶.
- 3.11 PPS4 Guidance (DCLG, 2009) - In 2009, DCLG issued guidance⁴⁷ further to PPS4 (on economic development) which sets out to provide particular advice on assessment and other evidence-gathering exercises which would be used to support town centre regeneration. It focuses on quantitative and qualitative assessments of local need, tied to the tension between out of town and town centre developments.
- 3.12 “Looking after our town centres” (DCLG, DIUS, DCMS, 2009)⁴⁸ - DCLG also released more general guidance in 2009, which built on the detailed research carried out as part of BTCP. It sets out the following approaches as to how councils, businesses and their partners can address problems for high streets arising from the downturn.
- **increasing commitment** to maintaining the attractiveness of the centre and ensuring that visits to the centre are positive experiences through enhanced cleaning, security initiatives, planting, art installations and working with property owners;
 - **bringing together stakeholders with marketing budgets** to ensure consistent messaging. More careful targeting of these messages will also help to increase awareness of what a town centre has to offer;.
 - **targeting visitors from countries that use the euro** or other currencies, who may be attracted to our towns at the current time;

⁴³ <http://www.raylor.co.uk/cbbid-cambridge-businesses-face-tax-hike.html>

⁴⁴ “Review of land use planning”, (Barker / HM Treasury 2006), http://www.ukcip.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/PDFs/Barker_review_landuse.pdf

⁴⁵ “Planning for a sustainable future”, (DCLG, 2012), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/planningasustainablefuture>

⁴⁶ Through changes made in the Localism Act

⁴⁷ “Planning for town centres: practice guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach” (DCLG, 2012), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/towncentresguide.pdf>

⁴⁸ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1201258.pdf>

- **thinking more about the town centre** as a destination for UK visitors;
 - **managing vacant retail premises** – innovative examples show how town centre partnerships are facilitating new cultural or educational uses into vacant retail premises. Elsewhere, vacant units are being used for promotional posters or maps; while other centres are developing initiatives to enable local businesses or start-ups to be supported in these types of premises. Larger centres are looking at recruiting international retailers who now find the UK more affordable;
 - **increasing activities** by encouraging the use of the streets and venues by community or performance groups and local businesses;
 - **bringing businesses together** to ensure they are fully aware of what is happening in the town centre and to pool their ideas on what can be done to support the centre and their businesses;
 - **working closely with local media** – such as running awards with local papers so readers can nominate shops, restaurants and bars that offer excellent customer service;
 - **understanding** what is going on elsewhere.
- 3.14 Some of these ideas will be more appropriate in some areas than in others – for example, the idea of attracting visitors from other parts of the UK, or abroad, may only make sense in the context of a wider economic development plan that sees tourism as a realistic prospect for securing additional inward investment.
- 3.15 All pre-2010 guidance should be read in the context of the abolition, in 2010, of the regional planning framework (including RDAs and RSSs). The funding landscape for such initiatives has also changed significantly since 2009. We will explore the issue of funding for town centre regeneration later in this report.

The Coalition Government response

- 3.16 The Portas Review and the Portas Pilots (2011) - In 2011 the Government commissioned television personality Mary Portas to undertake a review of the “future of high streets”⁴⁹. The Review is best regarded as a personal reflection by Ms. Portas on some of the most significant challenges affecting local high streets, rather than a detailed study of previous policy and an assessment of its success or failure (there is, for example, no mention of the three-year DCLG town centres programme mentioned above, or the other work carried out by DCLG and the ATCM). Briefly, her conclusions were that:
- High streets should be run more like a single business, with a strategic vision guiding work being carried out;

⁴⁹ “The Portas Review: an independent review into the future of our high streets” (BIS, 2011), <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/p/11-1434-portas-review-future-of-high-streets.pdf>

- Better operational management exerted through so-called “Town Teams”, made up of local business leaders, and other partners, to plan, co-ordinate and agree improvement work, with these bodies also taking an important role in Business Improvement Districts;
- Government should make changes to the planning and business rate regime to reduce “red tape”;
- Government should change the planning regime to ensure that there is a more level playing field between out of town, and town centre, developments – including an explicit presumption in favour of town centre development in the NPPF⁵⁰;
- A tougher approach to landlords with vacant properties should be taken, with more use of CPOs and similar legal sanctions;
- The idea of customers as “co-creators of place” should be understood better, with more use of the neighbourhood planning and Community Right to Bid powers in the Localism Act.

3.17 Many of the findings focus on the need for partnership working in town centres, principally through the creation of “Town Teams” to take on collective responsibility for co-ordinating support for businesses and other improvements. The “Town Team” echoes the idea of the Town Centre Partnership developed in earlier work, but is arguably more dynamic as it does not involve the establishment of a stakeholder management and governance superstructure. However, the report does not engage with the wider partnership agenda at local level, with the difficulties of stakeholder engagement or the challenges of securing ongoing financial support for improvement work (in particular, the contentious nature of many BIDs). The assumption seems to be made that key stakeholders will be willing to come to the table with funding.

3.18 Portas feels that Town Teams can work at local level to bring about a range of practical improvements, which include⁵¹:

- A physical space for the “Town Team” to occupy; a kind of local “solutions centre”;
- A local “community chest” (this idea is not explained);
- Virtual High Streets; “an online ‘bottom up’ virtual version of their high street which is the easy automatic ‘go to’ for all things to do with your local area”;
- A “National Market Day”;
- Hubs for home-workers;
- Converting vacant spaces to other community uses, such as nurseries and schools.

3.19 Notably, the review did not look at business rates or rate relief (although part of the Government’s response did involve changes to

⁵⁰ Portas’s recommendation that the Secretary of State sign off any new out of town developments was not accepted by the Government.

⁵¹ “The Portas Review”, page 45, “High Streets of the Future”

the business rate regime, that we set out at the beginning of this briefing).

- 3.20 Coming out of this review has been the announcement of two waves of “Portas Pilots” – town centres that will receive support by way of funding and direct assistance from Mary Portas. The process has not been without controversy; firstly, because of the comparatively small sums of money involved, and the fact that pilot funding is not effectively joined up with other forms of Government aid⁵², and secondly because Portas’s assistance with the piloting process is the subject matter for her next TV series, something which has led to some tensions⁵³.
- 3.21 Some bids for pilot status focused on visible, public realm-facing improvements – shopfronts, signage and seating, for example. Some have also looked at revitalising local markets and providing business advice and support⁵⁴. The focus seems to be on capital investment rather than ongoing revenue support, but the principle is that the existence of the Town Team will make it easier for successful pilots to put in place more long term plans for success. In this context, the Portas Pilots could be seen as providing “pump priming” for a longer-term approach towards town centre regeneration. In this sense the pilots echo the wider, partnership-based objectives of the work DCLG carried out pre-2010.
- 3.22 The Government responded positively to the Portas Review, although the recommendation for Secretary of State approval for out-of-town developments was not accepted. Particular steps being taken are⁵⁵:
- A High Street Innovation Fund, focused on bringing empty shops back into use (“kick-started” by £10 million made available by DCLG);
 - A £1 million Future High Street X-Fund, to be awarded to the locations delivering the “most creative and effective schemes to revitalise their high streets” over 2012-13;
 - A National Markets Day;
 - A £500,000 fund for setup costs for BIDs.
- 3.23 Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) - In July 2012 the Government issued guidance⁵⁶, further to the Portas Review, to assist local authorities in regenerating and revitalising town centres. As with Portas itself, it does not engage with research carried out by Government before 2010. While its

⁵² “The hard work on Britain’s town centres has only just begun”, Guardian, 17 September <http://www.guardian.co.uk/local-government-network/2012/sep/17/portas-pilots-council-town-centres>

⁵³ <http://www.retail-week.com/property/mary-portas-high-street-review/portas-pilot-towns-have-my-backing-whether-they-feature-in-tv-show-or-not/5037583.article>

⁵⁴ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/2151943>

⁵⁵ “High streets at the heart of our communities: the Government’s response to the Portas Review” (DCLG, 2012) <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portasreviewresponse>

⁵⁶ “Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets” (DCLG, 2012)

approach has some superficial similarities with that earlier research, it arguably takes a more expansive approach in thinking about town centres less in the context exclusively of retail, and more about their use as public space.

- 3.24 It suggests an approach to town centre regeneration that builds more on the principles in the Localism Act⁵⁷, rather than the arguably more technocratic, professional-led approach exemplified by Town Centre Partnerships (reflecting Portas’s Town Teams idea). It looks at the totality of public space, rather than just retail provision.
- 3.25 Beginning with understanding how people currently use space – in different ways and at different times of day – the guidance suggests using this information to help to develop a strategic vision for the town centre/high street. The guidance says that this will require “tough strategic judgments” (ie, that some ideas may not be realistic, and it may not be possible to develop a credible, distinctive offer for the high street in the way that some stakeholders might wish). The final stage is the development of an action plan to agree priorities and make changes happen.
- 3.26 The guidance focuses on public space infrastructure, and the design of public spaces to make them more attractive and to foster and encourage shared use. This is an approach that is not without controversy – an undue focus on infrastructure (particularly on capital spending) – will not automatically address retail or business failure, and a high quality public realm can be difficult to maintain without an appropriate financial investment. The report, however, does act as a useful (and broader) counterpoint to the more retail-focused work that DCLG carried out pre-2010.
- 3.27 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 - The National Planning Policy Framework was subject to significant revision in early 2012. Amongst its new provisions were changes to the policies around town centre, and out-of-town, developments. Councils are required to take positive action to grow town centres, with those areas being given precedence in terms of development plans. This constitutes an expansion of the existing “town centre first” policy, mentioned in the section above on pre-2010 developments.
- 3.28 Applications for “main town centre uses” that are not in town centres (ie, supermarkets, other retail uses) are subject to a sequential test⁵⁸ – so, town centre locations are best, then edge-of-centre, and then, if no appropriate site is available, out-of-town. Even where out-of-town uses are approved, the site must be accessible from the town centre.

⁵⁷ Particularly, the various rights given to local people under the Act in terms of place-shaping – neighbourhood planning, the right to bid and the right to build, which were discussed earlier.

⁵⁸ NPPF, Paragraph 24

- 3.29 Where an out-of-town use would be approved under the sequential test, planners will still have to carry out an impact assessment⁵⁹ for larger developments (generally, those over 2,500m²⁶⁰), assessing:
- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
 - the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to ten years from the time the application is made.
- 3.30 Where the sequential test is not satisfied and/or this assessment demonstrate “significant adverse impact”. This is a term which the NPPF does not define, but which exists elsewhere in planning law and has been considered in the context of an appeal for a supermarket development in Lancaster, where a determination from the Secretary of State was received⁶¹. This determination suggests that the “town centres first” policy will be interpreted robustly, rather than “significant adverse impact” having a high bar. However, a similar recent overturned decision in Telford and Wrekin suggests that the position will only be clarified as case law develops⁶².
- 3.31 The policy also places councils under a responsibility to assess the availability of space in town centres, and making more available where demand exists, and taking action to regenerate “declining” town centres.
- 3.32 These new NPPF policies give councils a significant opportunity to use planning laws to “place shape” in a way that invigorates high streets and town centres. Equally, councils that do not put robust steps in place for (for example) assessing local need, identifying the risk of significant adverse impacts or understanding the wider business and retail landscape risk subjecting the town centres for which they are responsible to further decline, or risk having planning decisions for edge-of-town or out-of-town developments overturned because their local policies are insufficiently robust to engage with the NPPF’s requirements.

The LGA’s “Local Growth” campaign

- 3.33 The “Local Growth” campaign throws into sharp relief some of the current challenges facing those in local government trying to tackle

⁵⁹ Ibid, Paragraph 26

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ <http://towns.org.uk/2012/09/04/testing-town-centres-first/>

⁶² Ibid

regeneration⁶³. Although the scope of the LGA's research and its campaign are broader than just town centres, there are some key messages that are vital to consider in any effort to understand the limitations and opportunities inherent in a new approach to growth:

- Growth is inherently local – different approaches need to be taken in different areas, and there is no archetypal approach which can or should be taken⁶⁴;
- Public investment in regeneration is fragmented, and there is a need for strong civic leadership to pull different partners and opportunities together;
- More devolution is required – around education and skills, transport, and regeneration funding. The report cites the move towards City Deals, highlighting the possibility that, as more cities – and other council areas – sign up to these deals, it will make more sense just to devolve powers to all councils rather than to seek individually-negotiated solutions.

4. General analysis: the implications for local authorities

- 4.1 Notwithstanding significant effort having been put in by successive Governments, and more or less every local authority in the country, many high streets and town centres are still in decline. The Portas Review identifies many of the problems afflicting high streets as being national in nature – relating to national planning law, and to national trends towards more internet shopping and a different attitude to consumerism. However, the review, and other investigations, have also identified a multiplicity of highly local causes and symptoms of high street decline, and local economic decline more broadly. Work carried out by the LGA has similarly identified that any solution must be local in nature.
- 4.2 For local authorities, pressure on budgets will mean that they may find it difficult either to develop strategies to push economic growth in individual town centres, or that such measures become caught up in the traditional, planning-led approaches that typify the long development cycles of Supplementary Planning Documents. Even where capacity exists it might prove difficult to involve a cross-section of local people and local businesses – and to co-design solutions with them rather than to seek to control the agenda. While the LGA have highlighted the need for “civic leadership”, there might be a tension here with the Government's stated aim, through the “Town Teams” idea, for an approach that is more business-led, or at the very least an equal partnership.

⁶³ “Local leadership, local growth”, (LGA, 2012)
http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b9911ad7-ff47-4e9b-9661-ee5dd181e53f&groupId=10171

⁶⁴ Contrast with the DCLG approach pre-2010, which promoted a generic, national approach towards local regeneration.

- 4.3 Councils taking concerted action in this area will be those who recognise the knock-on impact of success or failure in town centres – impacts on jobs and skills, on the urban fabric and the public realm, on housing and planning, on income from business rates, and on transport – amongst other issues (health, community cohesion, social care etc). Councils who do not take action may not consider regeneration as a determinant of improvement in these areas – or it may recognise them, but feel that the return on investment for “preventative” work is not justifiable if there is pressure on budgets for acute services.

5. Role for scrutiny

- 5.1 A plan for a short, sharp review of a particular town centre is a positive one, but as this briefing demonstrates that are a significant number of cross-cutting issues that arguably need to be considered. Planning and licensing issues have significant impacts and the risks are that it will be difficult to disaggregate responses to need “on the ground” from the council’s wider strategic plans, leading to a piece of work that is broad, wide-ranging, and possibly long-winded and resource intensive. For example, in the course of this research we have identified links between planning and licensing regimes (both nationally and locally), skills and education, partnerships and relationships between local government and the private sector, and public realm infrastructure. One of these topics on their own could constitute a detailed scrutiny review.

- 5.2 Scrutiny could take one of a number of approaches to considering town centres, and regeneration of high streets:

- **The local approach** – looking at a particular town centre and examining a focused range of issues. So, taking lessons from the DCLG guidance, those foci might be identifying what local people, and local businesses, might want from a particular area, and trying to reconcile those particular aspirations. Or, if this has already been undertaken, identifying practical actions, across a range of policy areas, that can be taken to put them into practice. Care would need to be taken on this approach to ensure that scrutiny did not become too operational in nature.
- **The specific approach** – looking at a given issue (skills and employment, licensing and planning, support to retailers and businesses) through the prism of town centre regeneration. The question could be asked as to what steps the council and its partners need to take on these wider policy issues in order to improve the economic health of a town centre or retail area.
- **The “wider determinants” approach** – looking at the same issues as the “specific” approach, but the other way round – how tackling regeneration can lead to more positive knock on impacts. This would be a review that would focus on the “return on investment” of work on town centre regeneration – possibly taking a similar

approach to that which we explore in our research on social return on investment, “Tipping the scales” (CfPS, 2012)

- **The partnership approach** – looking at the relationships that the council has built up with a range of partners, and identifying their robustness. Perhaps better viewed as a mapping exercise, this would help to ensure that the right people were making an input in the right way and at the right time,
- **The assurance approach** – checking that a range of policy issues are being considered as part of an existing, or development, set of town centre redevelopment proposals.

Centre for Public Scrutiny
12 October 2012

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Northampton TC Car Park prog	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.
	Midsummer Meadow	Wellington Street	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower	Midsummer Meadow	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower
	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower	Upper Mounts	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper	Wellington Street	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper
	Commercial Street - TK Max	Newland	Market Street	Doddridge Street (St. Marys Street)	Upper Mounts
	Campbell Square	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper	Melbourne Street	Horsemarket (Bath Street)	St. Johns Street
	Doddridge Street (St. Marys Street)	Albion Place	Mairfair - Free School Street	Chalk Lane	Albion Place
	Horsemarket (Bath Street)	Abington Place - St. Edmunds Road		Newland	Abington Place - St. Edmunds Road
	Chalk Lane			The Ridings	
The Ridings					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Round C1 mini mec	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)
	CAMPBELL STREET	CHEYNE WALK	CAMPBELL STREET	CHEYNE WALK	CAMPBELL STREET
	CAMPBELL SQUARE	SPRING GARDENS	CAMPBELL SQUARE	SPRING GARDENS	CAMPBELL SQUARE
	CHURCH LANE ☉	ST. JOHN'S STREET	CHURCH LANE ☉	ST. JOHN'S STREET	CHURCH LANE ☉
	NEWLAND ☉	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens	NEWLAND ☉	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens	NEWLAND ☉
	VICTORIA STREET ☉	SWAN STREET ☉	VICTORIA STREET ☉	SWAN STREET ☉	VICTORIA STREET ☉
	UPPER MOUNTS	ANGEL STREET ☉	UPPER MOUNTS	ANGEL STREET ☉	UPPER MOUNTS
	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)	FETTER STREET ☉	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)	FETTER STREET ☉	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)
	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)	VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)	VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)
	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ☉	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ☉	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs
	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	VICTORIA PROMENADE (inc. parking bays- 293 yds shrubberies- 1152 sq. m)	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	VICTORIA PROMENADE	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)
	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	ST. PETERS WAY	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	(inc. parking bays- 293 yds)	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)
	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	BRIDGE STREET to cotton end (paths and channels)	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	shrubberies- 1152 sq. m	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)
	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St.	GAS STREET	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St. including litter-pick grass and shrubs (875 sq. mts.)	ST. PETERS WAY	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St. including litter-pick grass and shrubs (875 sq. mts.)
	including litter-pick grass and shrubs (875 sq. mts.)	HORSESHOE STREET	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.	BRIDGE STREET to cotton end (paths and channels)	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.
	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.		LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs	GAS STREET	LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs
	GRAFTON STREET		GRAFTON STREET	HORSESHOE STREET	GRAFTON STREET
	FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street)		FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street)		FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street)
	ST. ANDREWS STREET		ST. ANDREWS STREET		ST. ANDREWS STREET
	BROAD STREET		BROAD STREET		BROAD STREET
HORSEMARKET		HORSEMARKET		HORSEMARKET	
town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900		town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900		town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900	

Round C1 "Applied Green Machine"		Round C2 "Applied Green Machine"		Round C3 "Applied Green Machine"	
Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)		STREET SWEEPING (inc. litter-picking of grass + shrubberies + empty bins)		Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	
		Early morning sweeping	Other sweeping	Early morning sweeping	Other sweeping
ABINGTON SQUARE (outside paths only)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)				
KETTERING ROAD (Abington Square to Wellingborough Road) (outside paths only)	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	THE DRAPERY (McDonalds side) (path and channel)	GREYFRIARS (Toilet Subway)	THE DRAPERY (Auctioneers side - path only)	NOTRE DAMME MEWS ☉
CHAPEL PLACE ☉	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	GOLD STREET (paths and channels)	MAYORHOLD - SUBWAY AND APPROACHES (including litter-pick shrub areas)	EMPORIUM WALK - Paths from The Parade to Sheep St. and Bus Station (includes subway under Ladys Lane) Inc.litter pick grass + shrubs	ALBERT PLACE ☉
KETTERING GARDENS ☉	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	MAREFAIR (paths and channels)	ST. KATHERINES STREET ☉	ALL SAINTS FRONTAGE inc. empty litter bins	WELLINGTON STREET
KETTERING ROAD (St. Michaels Road to Talbot Road)	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	BLACK LION HILL (paths and channels)	ST. KATHERINES TERRACE	MERCERS ROW (both sides)	(including 2 litter bins in Car Park)
KETTERING ROAD (Clare St. to Abington Ave.) ☉	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St.	BRIDGE STREET (Gold St. to St. Peters Way) (paths and channels)	ST. PETERS GARDENS (by church wall)	WOOD HILL (both sides)	SPENCER PARADE
MARKET ST. (entrance off Kettering Road) ☉	including litter-pick grass and shrubs (875 sq. mts.)	COLLEGE STREET	KINGSWELL STREET ☉	GEORGE ROW (both sides)	HAZELWOOD ROAD
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Victoria Road to Abington Square) (outside paths only)	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.	COLLEGE STREET MEWS	FRANCES JETTY (Bridge Street to Kingswell St.)	MARKET SQUARE and THE PARADE (footpaths and channels)	DERNGATE
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Victoria Rd. to Market St./ St. Edmonds St.) ☉	LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs	KING STREET ☉	ST. KATHERINES GDNS.(sweep footpaths,litter pick grass & shrubs + empty bins)	OSBORNES (or COCKERILLS) JETTY	CASTILLIAN STREET
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Market St./ St. Edmonds St. to Bostock Avenue)	GRAFTON STREET	SILVER STREET (including litter-pick shrub areas) ☉	GREEN ST. & WESTERN TERRACE (as far as subway to Station) ☉	DRUM LANE	CASTILLIAN TERRACE
MARKET ST. cul de sac by Spread Eagle ☉	FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street)	BRADSHAW STREET ☉	TANNER STREET ☉	CONDUIT LANE	ALBION PLACE
MELBOURNE ST. ☉	ST. ANDREWS STREET	ALLEY YARD (including motor-cycle area)	NARROW TOE LANE (St. Peters St. to The Green) ☉	ABINGTON STREET	GUILDHALL ROAD
NEW TOWN ROAD ☉	BROAD STREET	MARKET SQUARE (paths and channels)	ST. PETERS STREET (St. Peters Way - Horseshoe St.) ☉	FISH STREET	ST. GILES CHURCHYARD (sweep paths, litter pick grass & shrubs, empty bins)
BOUVIERIE STREET ☉	HORSEMARKET	JEYES JETTY	THE GREEN & COURT ROAD ☉	DYCHURCH LANE	CHEYNE WALK
WEST STREET ☉		SWAN YARD	GREGORY STREET ☉	THE RIDINGS	SPRING GARDENS
VERNON STREET ☉	PLUS MON / WEDS / FRI.	SHEEP STREET (Greyfriars to The Drapery)	FRESCHOOL STREET ☉	ST. GILES STREET	ST. JOHN'S STREET
REGENT SQUARE & SHEEP STREET (Campbell Street to Ladys Lane)	Empty 4 litter bins at Upper Mounts Car Park and Campbell Square Car Park		WESTON WHARF (Carlsberg entrance) ☉	ST. GILES TERRACE	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens
CAMPBELL STREET			ST. PETERS SQUARE (St. James St. to St. Peters Walk inc. link to Woolmonger St.)	ST. GILES SQUARE	SWAN STREET ☉
CAMPBELL SQUARE			WOOLMONGER STREET ☉	YORK ROAD (path only)	ANGEL STREET ☉
CHURCH LANE ☉			FOUNDRY STREET ☉		FETTER STREET ☉
			ST. JAMES STREET (Foundry St. to Commercial st.) ☉		
NEWLAND ☉			COMMERCIAL STREET ☉		
VICTORIA STREET ☉					VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)
UPPER MOUNTS					VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ☉
GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)					VICTORIA PROMENADE (inc. parking bays- 293 yds shrubberies- 1152 sq. m)
Extras:-					
		(MON ONLY)		(TUES,THURS)	
		Litter-pick grass area adjacent to St. Johns Catholic		ST. JOHN'S TERRACE and RUSSELL TERRACE	
		Church.(between Bridge St. & Victoria Gdns.)		(old streets off Swan St.inc.steps to Albion Place)	
		(MON,WEDS,FRI)		WEDNESDAY ONLY	
		ALBION PLACE Car Park- empty 3 litter bins CE Car Park empty 3 litter bins		ST. JOHN'S ST. - litter pick grass & shrubberies ST. JOHN'S ST. to VICTORIA GDNS. Passage (litter pick shrubberies)	

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Appendix E

Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

Briefing Note: Response to the core questions: Association of Town Centre Managers (ACTM)

1 Information

1.1 The documents provided, as attached, are:-

- 100 ways to help the High Street – A Toolkit for Town Centres
- Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

1.2 100 Ways to help the High Street

The Toolkit comprises eight key sections:

- Building a Sustainable Partnership
- Accessing the High Street
- Enhancing the Streetscape
- Place Identify, Branding and Experience
- Attracting New People and Businesses to High Street and Keeping the Old Ones
- The Safe and Secure High Street
- The Evening and Night-time Economy
- Training, Development and Accreditation

1.3 The Toolkit reports that it is a collection of schemes which, if implemented in the right place at the right time, can have a positive effect for town centres. It goes on to say that the Toolkit is primarily for town centre managers and local government. A running theme throughout the Toolkit is that whatever resources you have, and whoever takes the lead on many of these activities, success is achievable through co-operation.

1.4 The Toolkit comprises a number of case studies, the purpose of which is to demonstrate how some of these hints and tips originate from real

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life examples.

Building a Sustainable Partnership – The Toolkit states that good town centre management is often dependent upon strong partnership.

Accessing the High Street – The Toolkit advises that transport considerations are amongst some of the most important for town centres. Manchester was provided as a case study,

Manchester city centre is linked together by its free city centre bus service, the Metroshuttle which has been operating since 2002. It has three routes that navigate the city centre, linking the city's major thoroughfares and stations with its main commercial, financial and cultural districts. The Metroshuttle costs around £1.2 million to operate. Smaller schemes operate in Bolton and Stockport.

Enhancing the Streetscape – The Toolkit reports that streetscape is the physical aspects of public spaces in town centres. It advises that there are a number of different components which work together to create a streetscape, that would ideally be unique to the town but also being clean and orderly, avoiding clutter and dereliction, including landscaping, lighting, paving, planting, public art and effective signposting.

Edinburgh was provided as a case study – Castle Street Project. A new road surface was laid using granite setts and Caithness flags. New street furniture and improved lighting was also installed. Power pods were put in for activation of the streets for events. It is reported that controlled vehicular access and the restoration of a quality streetscape has made walking and exploring the whole area a more pleasant and satisfying experience.

Cardiff was provided as a case study – The project was put together by city centre management and Cardiff City Council, the Keep Wales Tidy Campaign and a range of private sector organisations as an innovative and direct way to engage with the growing population that live in the city centre. It featured a unique process of recycling and key locations were branded 'thanksbanks'.

It was reported that as a result, more waste is recycled than deposited in standard litter bins and recycling in the city has increased by 43%.

The Kirkcaldy Art Trail was provided as a case study; the aim of which was to inspire and encourage people to visit different areas of the town centre. Art in shop windows was a creative initiative that transformed eight empty shop windows in Kirkcaldy town centre into works of art. An arts trail leaflet was produced providing details of a map and information of the displays.

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Place Identify, Branding and Experience – The Toolkit reports that it is impossible for town centre managers to dictate, or predict what type of experience each visitor may have because there are so many disparate elements that make up a high street.

Wood Green: International Short Film Festival was provided as a case study. The Town Centre Manager was a film fan and filmmaker who had the idea of the best way to achieve this would be through the magic of cinema. In 2003 the Wood Green International Short Film Festival was launched as a one day event. By year three it was selling out in minutes of opening and attracts short films from all over the world.

Attracting New People and Businesses to High Street and Keeping the Old Ones – The Toolkit reports that effort has to go into getting the basics right to make any high street the primary destination for people and business. It suggests a few schemes that can act as the building blocks to constructing a viable place for people to trade, employ and reside:

- Developing a general town centre website
- Virtual tour of the High Street
- On-line Town Centre Shopping
- Free Wi-Fi Hotspots
- Town Centre Loyalty card
- Empty Property Scheme
- Offering Incubator units
- Community Ownership of businesses
- Temporary Pop-up Services
- Entrepreneurial Competition for Incubator Space
- Building Upon Existing Footfall Generators
- Branding of your Town Centre
- Marketing with Neighbouring Town Centres
- Turning Empty Shops into Temporary Art Galleries
- Getting the Right Mix of Businesses
- Cheque Book Promotion
- Using Evidence to Promote your Town Centre to Investors
- Distribution of Shopping Guides to Households
- Know your consumers
- Auction

Mansfield Christmas Auction was provided as a case study. The purpose of the auction was to raise funds for the town's Christmas lights by selling a range of goods and services pledged by local businesses. A total of £23,000 was raised in one day. It was stated that the event demanded effort and goodwill but very little cash outlay.

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The Safe and Secure High Street – The Toolkit reports that the town centre is a central point for many. It goes on to say that it can attract undesired activities that threaten otherwise healthy high streets and damage people's perceptions of the town centre. It gives examples of successful efforts to improve safety and security of all town centre users:

- Creating a Retail Specific Crime Reduction Partnership
- Working with your Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- ShopWatch Scheme
- PubWatch Scheme
- Community Alcohol Partnerships
- Retail Radio Link
- Using on-Line Technology for Real-Time Crime Tracking
- Re-Deployable CCTV Capability
- CCTV Video Analytics
- Making Crime Reductions Visible
- Community Wardens
- Member Exclusion Scheme
- Safety Scheme for Lost Children
- Penalty Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices

Rochdale's Safer Communities Strategy was provided as a case study. The Project introduced a number of initiatives, including:

- Talking signs around the town
- Dispersal orders and high visibility patrols
- Subway murals
- A magazine to 30,000 people informing them of what business is doing to combat crime
- Local press advertising to promote safe venues
- Plaques in situ around the town centre reminding visitors that the town has received a Safer Business Award
- Monthly town centre columns in the local press

The Evening and Night-time economy – The Toolkit states that versatility can be the making of a great town centre. A town centre must strive to offer a clean, safe, vibrant and engaging environment for different types of people. It details a number of schemes which it feels would make this a possibility during the evening and night-time:

- Planning for the evening
- Managing the transition between day and night
- Promoting of late night transport
- Taxi marshal Scheme
- Late night bus service
- Purple flag – to establish national standards and raise the image of Britain's town centres at night.

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Dedicated ambassadors for the evening economy
Accreditation Scheme for Licensed Premises

A case study was provided - Bolton has pioneered a time-time management structure that involves the employment of ambassadors for the evening economy. The aim being to reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour and reassure the public that the town centre is a safe place to visit at night.

Training, Development and Accreditation – The Toolkit encourages a culture where training, development and accreditation are prerequisites. It goes on to support professional accreditation for Town Centre Manager and auditing the quality of the town's retail offer. Support is also given to:

- Pointing retailers towards advice on training
- Learn from real-life retail expert
- Become a retail ambassador
- Encourage junior managers to apply to Oxford summer school
- Get young learners to learn through retail
- Know what qualifications are out there
- Local Business Awards

1.3 Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

1.3.1 The reported purpose of the Guide is around setting up and evaluating town centre management initiative. The guide is set out in two sections:

An outline of set up and evaluation – A brief description of the core elements in the life cycle of a successful town centre management initiative, an explanation of the set up and evaluation process, and guidance on when, why, how and by whom the process should be undertaken.

Implementing set up and validation – Examples of good practice are provided and detailed checklists for setting up and validating each of the core elements of successful town centre management initiatives:

- Strategy and vision
- Partnership and structure
- Business and Action Plans
- Funding
- Key Performance Indicators

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1.3.2 Examples of good practice have been drawn from the Guide:

Implementing Set up and Validation – The Guide reports that the essentials of good practice are both set up and evaluation must work to build and maintain Town Centre management initiatives based on good practice, including a focus on:

- A clear Strategy, shared by all stakeholders
- Robust partnerships
- Strong partnerships
- Matched funding and leverage
- Consultation
- Outputs

Strategy and Vision – The Guide reports that a shared vision is an essential component in finding the common ground necessary for all stakeholders to give their fullest commitments to the objectives of town centre management.

Partnership Structure - The Guide reports that to be successful, town centre management must comprise a genuine, robust and stable partnership between the public, private and community sectors.

Business and Action Plans – The Guide reports that key aspects of good practice are that the range of stakeholders and their differing contributions must be recognised for a town to achieve competitiveness and the best way to achieve this is for all parties to follow the same well developed business plan

Funding - The Guide reports that key aspects of good practice are that several sources of funding exist for town centre management, most importantly the public sector and private business, both large and small, all of which need to be fully explored.

Key performance indicators – The Guide reports it is important that the town centre management partnership establishes a number of benchmarks to determine how the town centre changes over time.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

West Northamptonshire
Joint Core Strategy
Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Update 2012



SCRUTINY PANEL

Infrastructure Requirements and Section 106 Agreements

May 2013



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APPENDICES

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Appendix C	Meaningful proportion of CIL
Appendix D	Core questions
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Foreword

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

The Scrutiny Panel was made up from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillors Elizabeth Gowen (vice-chair), Matt Lynch, Suresh Patel and myself, together with Councillors Ifty Choudary, Jonathan Nunn, David Palethorpe and Terry Wire DL and Councillor Alan Chantler (Daventry District Council) and Councillor Marion Minney (Northamptonshire County Council) who we co-opted onto the Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel received a wealth of background information and data to inform its comprehensive review of a period of ten months. A series of interviews with a number of expert advisors were also held.

The Scrutiny Panel conveys it's thanks to Officers from Huntingdonshire District Council for taking the time to visit Northampton and give an informative presentation on "*the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A Local Authority's Perspective*".

As part of its monitoring regime, Overview and Scrutiny will review this report six months after Cabinet has received it.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in this piece of work.



Councillor Phil Larratt
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3

Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -

- Councillors Elizabeth Gowen, Matt Lynch Suresh Patel, Ifty Choudary, Jonathan Nunn, David Palethorpe and Terry Wire DL, Councillor Alan Chantler (Daventry District Council) and Councillor Marion Minney (Northamptonshire County Council) (co-optees) who sat with me on this Review.
- Councillor Brandon Eldred, Cabinet Member (Community Engagement), Councillor Mary Markham, Cabinet Member (Housing), Northampton Borough Council (NBC), Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage, Cabinet Member (Infrastructure and Public Protection), Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), David Farquhar, Assistant Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, NCC, Lesley Wearing, Director of Housing, NBC, Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Culture, NBC, David Atkinson, Head of the Joint Planning Unit (JPU), Jonathan Price, Highways Agency, Ben Hunter, Acting Project Manager, Business Development, NCC, Kay Ringwood, Capital Programme Manager, NCC, Duncan Mills, Strategic Planning Manager, NCC, Michael Daly, Head of Estates, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire PCT, Eric Owens, Construction Futures, John O'Neill, Environment Agency, Richard Baldwin and Chief Superintendent Paul Fell, Northants Police, and Ian Oliver and Martin Frost, Western Power, for attending a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel and providing a response to the core questions
- Homes and Communities Agency, Anglian Water, East Midlands Ambulance Service and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service for providing a written response to the Panel's core questions
- Steve Ingram, Director of Environment, Growth and Claire Burton, Planning the Implementation Team Leader, Huntingdonshire District Council, for visiting Northampton and giving the Panel a presentation on "Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in practice – A Local Authority's perspective"
- Sue Bridge, Head of Planning, NBC, for her support to this Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the review was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of infrastructure requirements and S106 Agreements. A number of proposals around these issues had been put forward by members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 3 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in July 2012 and concluded in May 2013.

A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Phil Larratt (Chair); Councillor Elizabeth Gowen (Vice-Chair); Councillors Ifty Choudary, Matt Lynch, Jonathan Nunn, David Palethorpe, Suresh Patel, Terry Wire DL, together with co-opted Members, Councillor Alan Chantler (Daventry District Council) and Councillor Marion Minney (Northamptonshire County Council).

This review links to a number of the Council's corporate priorities including Priority 1 – Putting Northampton back on track – a vibrant town, Priority 2 – Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods and Priority 5 – Better homes for the future.

The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

Baseline data:

- purpose and scope of S106 Agreements and introduction to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Schedule
- Central Area Action Plan Infrastructure Schedule
- Sources of funding for infrastructure
- Table of existing NBC S106 obligation monies and information relating to NCC and WNDC S106 monies
- Developer Obligations Supplementary Planning document
- Future provision of skills and training programmes
- Affordable housing
- Memorandum of Understanding for the Growth Management Scheme for the A45/M1

- Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy
- Map: defended and undefended areas
- Drainage Strategy (summary)
- A copy of a Section 106 Agreement
- Desktop research – best practice elsewhere
- Evidence from a variety of key partners and Agencies

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

Infrastructure Requirements

5.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel concluded that infrastructure requirements are identified up to 2026, in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan, covering the administrative areas of Northampton Borough Council, South Northants Council and Daventry District Council, including:

- Highways
- Drainage/Water management
- Flood defences
- Schools
- Primary Health Care
- Leisure

5.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed that the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Development Plan will be updated annually, which it realised, is a necessity to ensure that priorities are continually aligned with changes in development priorities or pace of development. It emphasised that flexibility to re-prioritise accordingly will be important.

Highways

5.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel identified that there is a significant funding gap in respect of the building of highways. Section 106 Agreements and CIL will have to contribute to improvements to the Strategic Highways Network via the A45/M1 Growth Management Scheme. It is recognised that the funding gap remains challenging for growth beyond 2026 and further work will have to be undertaken in this area.

Joint working and early engagement

- 5.1.4 The evidence gathered accentuated the need for joint working, in particular, joint working when drawing up charging schedules; joint review of Infrastructure Delivery Plans and housing/employment delivery performance / development trajectories, could be helpful in ensuring proper cross boundary funding of key infrastructure. The need for all partners to be involved in planning stages for infrastructure to design the most efficient and cost effective schemes as possible was highlighted.
- 5.1.5 The evidence gathered identified the need for early engagement between the developer, Council and relevant authorities (such as the Environment Agency, Northamptonshire County Council and water company) to promote efficiency, help to understand the requirements for the site and identify a solution that meets the needs of the proposed development whilst operating within environmental limits.

Schools

- 5.1.6 The Scrutiny Panel noted that it is vital to continue to encourage development and try to ensure developments take place and developers are able to deliver viable schemes. The importance of partnership involvement in order to make this happen was realised. It was further realised that there is some capacity in secondary schools, but the increasingly steady growth in primary numbers means this will be an issue in the future.
- 5.1.7 The evidence gathered highlighted a major increase in inward migration. There is a requirement for more school places in Northampton.

Drainage/Water management Flood defences

- 5.1.8 The evidence collected identified that future developments need to be planned carefully so that they do not add to the pressures already on the water environment, i.e. flood water resources and increased volumes of sewage effluent that may lead to any compromise in water quality.
- 5.1.9 It was recognised that the funding of water and wastewater infrastructure identified, will be managed within the Water Industry Act 1991 and will not be required to form part of CIL provisions.

Western Power

- 5.1.10 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted that Western Power's infrastructure improvements are put in place through a cost supporting factor, which means that the customer is required to pay a percentage of the cost of providing the infrastructure. This upgraded infrastructure cost via new

load activity can be “clawed back” by subsequent users over a five year period.

Policing

- 5.1.11 The Scrutiny Panel noted that generally, small scale development can be absorbed within existing Policing resources but larger scale developments generate additional policing resource requirements.
- 5.1.12 The Police would welcome any opportunity to occupy shared spaces in public buildings.

Leisure

- 5.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that all leisure facilities are well used, with most of the pitches and courts fully booked. However, some current leisure provision, such as that at the Lings Centre, which has a limited life span, will need to be reviewed in the next 5-10 years.

Primary Health Care

- 5.1.14 It was acknowledged that the Trust, East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) is currently in the process of an estates restructure targeted at more efficient support to the public. Any funding from Section 106 and infrastructure projects will be used to support its on-going effects.
- 5.1.15 The evidence gathered identified that for large housing developments, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) would prefer a ‘turn key’ ready to occupy a health centre.
- 5.1.16 Location of new facilities should be planned to ensure connectivity within new and existing communities.

Funding gap

- 5.1.17 In noting the infrastructure funding gap of £439.6 million as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Scrutiny Panel concluded that infrastructure cannot be totally funded through Section 106 Agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that other sources of funding are required.

Section 106 Agreements

- 5.1.18 Currently, Section 106 delivers contributions to strategic infrastructure requirements, as well as site specific requirements.
- 5.1.19 Section 106 is managed through the Section 106 Board and projects. The infrastructure is delivered through Northampton Borough Council or Northamptonshire County Council’s capital programme. S106

Agreements will still be used for on-site mitigation following the introduction of CIL.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel realised that although it was in no way anticipated that CIL will be adopted throughout the country, Section 106 arrangements will change in 2014, which will restrict the pooling of S106 agreements to five for any one type of infrastructure or infrastructure project. The advantage of CIL is that it allows flexibility on where it can be spent as it does not have to be in the same locality as the development.
- 5.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that a recent Government speech, January 2013, made it clearer as to the proposed level of meaningful proportion of CIL to be spent in the local area. Figures indicated a 15% levy, within Parished areas, up to £100 per existing household, with that percentage rising to 25% if there was a local neighbourhood plan has been adopted, with no upper cap. This was a much higher figure than had previously been anticipated.
- 5.1.22 The evidence gathered highlighted that determining and administering CIL needs to be a corporate exercise for the whole Council, not just planning services, with required adequate administrative support. The Scrutiny Panel emphasised that the process of introducing CIL needs to be properly resourced.
- 5.1.23 The Joint Planning Unit is looking at how CIL will be implemented across West Northamptonshire.
- 5.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that in order to deliver schools, CIL is the only realistic method to deliver secondary schools.

Affordable Housing

- 5.1.25 The evidence received alluded to a potential shortfall in affordable housing once CIL is introduced. This was of particular concern to the Scrutiny Panel because affordable housing provision is a Council priority. The Scrutiny Panel was concerned that the amount of affordable housing may fall.
- 5.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel realised that the demand for affordable housing is likely to increase. The Localism Act, the slow-down in new building, difficult economic climate and changes to Welfare Reform are likely to increase demand for all forms of affordable housing. If new affordable

homes are not delivered, the Council may have to use expensive bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

6.1 The purpose of this Scrutiny Panel was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

Scrutiny Panel 3 recommends to Cabinet that:

Infrastructure Requirements

- 6.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel formally informs Cabinet that it is satisfied that the infrastructure requirements are identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan up to 2026.
- 6.1.2 Infrastructure cannot be totally funded through Section 106 Agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Cabinet investigates other funding sources to meet the funding gap of £439.6 million.
- 6.1.3 It is ensured that the North West Bypass is fully funded and built, when required, to serve new developments and that appropriate arrangements are agreed with South Northants Council and Daventry District Council to ensure funding CIL infrastructure is given priority across the partnership.
- 6.1.4 Section 106 Agreements and CIL contribute to improvements to the Strategic Highways Network via the A45/M1 Growth Management Strategies.

Affordable Housing

- 6.1.5 Cabinet satisfies itself that the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will not have an adverse impact on the provision of affordable

housing; whilst recognising that the existing S106 Policy allows for flexibility in accordance with Government Policy.

- 6.1.6 Cabinet recognises that the introduction of CIL will have corporate implications and these must be identified and addressed.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny

Report of Scrutiny Panel 3 - Infrastructure Requirements and S106 Agreements

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

1.2 A copy of the scope of the review is attached at Appendix A.

2 Context and Background

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 to include a review of infrastructure requirements and S106 Agreements. A number of proposals around these issues had been proposed by members of the public as a key suggestion for a future Scrutiny review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 3 to undertake the Review. An in-depth review commenced in July 2012 and concluded in May 2013.

2.2 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Phil Larratt (Chair); Councillor Elizabeth Gowen (Vice-Chair); Councillors Ifty Choudary, Matt Lynch, Jonathan Nunn, David Palethorpe, Suresh Patel, Terry Wire DL, together with co-opted Members, Councillor Alan Chantler (Daventry District Council) and Councillor Marion Minney (Northamptonshire County Council).

2.3 This review links to a number of the Council's corporate priorities including Priority 1 – Putting Northampton back on track – a vibrant town, Priority 2 – Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods and Priority 5 – Better homes for the future.

2.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

Baseline data:

- purpose and scope of S106 Agreements and introduction to CIL

- Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Schedule
- Central Area Action Plan Infrastructure Schedule
- Sources of funding for infrastructure
- Table of existing NBC S106 obligation monies and information relating to NCC and WNDC S106 monies
- Developer Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
- Future provision of skills and training programmes
- Affordable housing
- Memorandum of Understanding for the Growth Management Scheme for the A45/M1
- Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy
- Map: defended and undefended areas
- Drainage Strategy (summary)
- A copy of a Section 106 Agreement
- Desktop research – best practice elsewhere
- Evidence from a variety of key partners and Agencies

2.5 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the majority of the Infrastructure requirements, how they should be delivered and who will deliver the various different elements. There are some additional Infrastructure requirements set out in the Central Area Action Plan. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan concentrates only on the perceived Infrastructure requirements that are a result of new development and would not be aimed at improving any current deficiencies.

2.6 Key Infrastructure types:-

- Transport
- Health
- Education
- Community and Leisure
- Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- Utilities

2.7 Primary School provision is not included as a key Infrastructure requirement. Secondary school is. Building a secondary school would cost in excess of £40 million.

2.8 The provision of utilities is chiefly the responsibility of the commercial power supply companies. Power companies will probably not be working to the same time scales as the Infrastructure plan but a shorter time frame based on trigger points in capacity.

2.9 Within the Infrastructure requirements, there are requirements identified for improvements in walking/cycling, crossing improvements and bus improvements in each section of the town.

2.10 Several areas have community leisure facilities based in schools. A review of existing facilities is underway, and it is likely that some areas will have an over provision and some an under provision. There will also be a review of sports facilities.

3 Evidence Collection

3.1 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

3.2 Briefing Session

3.2.1 A briefing session was held early into the evidence gathering process that apprised the Panel of a number of background documents around the subject matter of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Agreements.

3.3 Background data

3.3.1 A series of key documents:

- [West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2012](#)
- [Infrastructure Delivery Plan Final Report February 2011](#)
- [A45/M1 J15 NGMS – Memorandum of Understanding – March 2012](#)
- [Section 106 \(S106\) Agreements held – August 2012](#)
- [Potential sources of funding for infrastructure projects](#)
- [West Northamptonshire Water Cycle Study](#)
- [Northampton Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#)
- [Northampton Central Area Drainage Assessment Final Report](#)
- [Affordable Housing Interim Statement](#)
- [Northamptonshire County Council- Flood Prevention Strategy](#)
- [Northampton Borough Council Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy](#)

3.3.2 A briefing note detailing background to CIL. (Appendix B) and a further briefing note providing updates to CIL regarding the meaningful proportion. (Appendix C) were provided as evidence.

3.4 Core Questions

3.4.1 The Scrutiny Panel produced a series of core questions that it put to key witnesses over a number of meetings. Copy at Appendix D.

3.4.2 Key witnesses provided a response to these core questions at the meetings of the Scrutiny Panel held on 8 November 2012, 10 December, 17 January 2013 and 7 March.

3.4.3 Key points of evidence:-

Head of the Joint Planning Unit (JPU)

- The Submission West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (JCS) and the Northamptonshire Central Area Action Plan, together, set out a vision for the future of Northampton. Delivering the vision is dependent on growth and infrastructure provision.
- The emerging JCS Local Plan identifies 12 Primary Key Infrastructure Projects across West Northamptonshire which if not delivered in a timely manner could hold up the delivery of development or compromise the delivery strategy. Seven of which relate to Northampton Borough.
- Funding of these key infrastructure projects should fall within the Council's identified priorities for funding. These strategic projects includes:
 - Northampton Bus Interchange
 - Castle Station Improvement
 - Northampton Growth Management Scheme (A45/M1 improvements);
 - North West Bypass
 - Sandy Lane Relief Road
 - Improvements to the waste water network for Northampton Town
 - Increased capacity at Great Billing Waste Water Treatment Works
- Funding has been received for the bus interchange and Castle Station.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is in place setting out funding requirements and phasing of the A45/M1 improvements. The timetable of the delivery of the A45/M1 improvements is dependent on which developments are delivered first.
- Waste water and drainage is the responsibility of Anglia Water Services and it will monitor its capacity as developments are delivered. The Environment Agency is also closely involved.
- The transport infrastructure required is assessed according to modeling completed based on evidence obtained by Northamptonshire County Council. New development acts as a trigger for that assessment.
- It is difficult to assign a priority between affordable housing and S106 requirements in advance. It should be undertaken on a site by site basis. Provision may be determined as part of how an overall requirement is being

provided. There may be occasions when insisting on a particular affordable housing percentage could impact upon the viability of a development. Nevertheless, affordable housing is an important priority for Northampton and all efforts should be made to secure what is required to meet need.

- Although the funding gap of £440 million may seem very large it is not unprecedented or unexpected. There are several places which are facing larger gaps.
- Finance will have to be concentrated on key priorities and as many funding sources as possible identified.
- The submitted JCS policy advises that developers will need to demonstrate that the provision of the necessary infrastructure will be made within an appropriate timescale.
- The West Northamptonshire partner authorities are working together closely to identify early master planning matters.
- A steering group is looking at how CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) might be implemented.
- Government consultation is ongoing regarding the level of meaningful proportion of CIL that should be directed to the local community in which new development is located.

Highways Authority, Northamptonshire County Council

- Key priorities are the primary infrastructure projects that have been identified as part of the Joint Core Strategy. As the Highways Authority, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), looks at any potential development impact by creating traffic modeling based on projected vehicle movements etc. and identifies potential measures that might be introduced to mitigate them. Developers can only be asked to mitigate against the impacts that their development creates and not to mitigate against natural growth. In other words to maintain the status quo at time of application/development. NCC is responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of the whole highway network.
- NCC works with Borough and District Council partners to ensure a viable network. Local and strategic networks need to work together.
- Prioritisation is complex and although a general principle will be chronological order, sometimes previously unforeseen opportunities develop that need to be explored.
- The works around the Guildhall, widening of Swan Street and St John's are a Growing Places Fund scheme, of just under £1 million in value.
- The town is expanding. There is a finite amount of space available for the expansion of roads. There are areas of town which do come close to reaching

traffic capacity; however, this is predominantly at peak times during the day. In tackling the growth of the town and associated growth in traffic then changes in the way that people regard car journeys will need to change but this will not transpire overnight.

- Widespread consultation is undertaken on the Local Transport Plan, with a series of public workshops.
- Although NCC does have strategic responsibility for highways and transport, it doesn't for the overall planning and development and as such it has to be aware of the localism agenda and the need to make sure that funding goes to the appropriate area.

Highways Agency (HA)

- Plans to deliver considerable housing and employment growth have been evolving over the past few years as part of the development of a West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS). Ensuring that the appropriate transport infrastructure is in place to accommodate these aspirations is important. To assist the planning authorities to address this, and in response to approaches from the local authorities in the area, the Highways Agency (HA) has been working with the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU), the Local Planning Authorities in West Northamptonshire and NCC to understand the scale and location of development proposed, and to advise them about the implications of new development on the operation of the SRN and the need for measures to safeguard its future operation.
- Through this process and the study work undertaken by the HA itself, the HA has been able to identify appropriate and deliverable SRN transport measures for inclusion in the WNJCS and IDP, together with requisite funding and delivery mechanisms. These include measures on the A45 around Northampton known as the Northampton Growth management Scheme (NGMS), improvements to junctions on the A43 to be provided directly by developers and an improvement at the A5/A45 junction, to be delivered through the Growing Places Fund but also to be ultimately funded by developer contributions.
- Given the HA's remit is focused on the SRN, its priority given to delivering SRN measures required to support the WNJCS, including where relevant, developer contributions, provided either through planning condition or Section 106/CIL. It nevertheless seeks to take into consideration viability and resource constraints.
- In engaging with the West Northants local authorities, the HA has sought to be open about its own sources of funding and government expenditure programmes. The government has recently announced a new Pinch Point

Programme and funding has been allocated from this programme to deliver an improvement at the A5/A43 Tove roundabout. The HA is keen to work with the West Northants local authorities to investigate all possible funding sources that could support delivery of enhanced transport facilities in the area.

- The transport network, and particularly the SRN, can be impacted by development over a wide area. The HA therefore considers it important to identify transparent and clear mechanisms to enable the infrastructure required to support development to be brought forward. HA has worked with local authorities in the Northampton area and West Northants Development Corporation to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide an agreed basis for supporting the funding and delivery of the A45 Northampton Growth Management Scheme (NGMS) using developer contributions.
- The implementation of the NGMS will be managed by the HA and is expected to take place in stages as funding is identified. Works will be coordinated between the HA and NCC through agreements under the Highways Act 1980 as necessary. This process will be subject to on-going review by the HA and reported to the parties on a regular basis. Provision is also included within the MoU for it to be reviewed as and when CIL proposals for the area are clarified.
- The HA considers that it is important for CIL to support both local and strategic requirements that arise as a result of development. Given the funding gap identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2012, the HA anticipates that a prioritisation of infrastructure requirements will need to take place on an on-going basis and will wish to be closely involved in this process with the aim of ensuring that the requirements of the SRN are fully considered.
- It appears that CIL alone will not deliver all infrastructure requirements and there will be a need for alternative funding sources such as future Pinch Point Programmes or innovative solutions like Northants County Council is exploring.

Action Project Manager, Business Development, Capital Programme Manager and Strategic Planning Manager, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)

- Over the last five years there has been a 19% increase in the number of under 5's. This is looking to be a sustained growth. The greatest pressure in the county is in Northampton town.
- Three key reasons for the growth:

- Since 2008 large scale housing developments have reduced, but smaller scale developments has been continuing.
 - A national rise in the birth rate that is reflected in Northamptonshire.
 - A rise in in-migration in Northamptonshire. A majority is from migrants into the country, but there is also inward migration from other counties.
- The admissions team looks at projections to predict the number of students who will require places. In some cases, preferences made by parents do not necessarily reflect the schools that are in the closest locations. When predicting places required, the admissions team tries to place children in the nearest locations in order to minimise transport journeys.
 - Resources for capital works, in order to provide sufficient places, come from both central Government, in the form of a grant based on numbers of spaces required, and monies raised by S106 contributions. In 2011/2012, the basic needs grant was £6.5 million, funding levels for 2013/2014 will not be known until January 2013.
 - The capital maintenance grant was £9.5 million for 2012/2013. This money was mainly spent on extending school premises. There was also a £20 million programme which was spent on a programme of refurbishment of schools with severe maintenance issues. If additional space is required, the first approach is usually to extend existing school premises. The cost of providing a completely new school is more costly and requires new leadership and staffing.
 - The admissions team is consulted about every development of more than ten houses. Normally demand generated from smaller developments should be able to be absorbed in existing capacity.
 - There is a changing trend in where people are living. Historically, families moved out of the town centre as they grew in size, recently more people are continuing to live in the town centre.
 - Development funding only takes primary stage education into account. Potentially, there is a corresponding deficit when those primary children reach secondary school age.
 - When assessing the numbers of school places that are likely to be required as a result of any particular development then an assessment is made of the number and types of dwelling. There are surveys which provide a formula which gives an average number of potential students arising from different types of dwelling.
 - There is a significant funding gap. Finances will be unlikely to be sufficient to build a new school which is why extending capacity of existing schools is a preferred option. Should significant developments warrant new schools, build timing is considered very carefully. If schools open before developments are complete there tends to be a trend of them taking pupils from neighbouring

schools which can mean that when developments are complete there are not any spaces available for local children.

- It is vital to continue to encourage development and try to ensure developments take place and developers are able to deliver viable schemes. Partners need to be fully involved in order to ensure that this happens.
- There is still some limited capacity in secondary schools. The increasingly steady growth in primary numbers means this will be an issue in future.
- All sites that are still in county ownership are being re-examined, alongside other sites that may be suitable for conversion to school premises.
- There has been a major increase in inward migration in recent years. Over the last two to three years there has been a sevenfold increase in the number migrating to the county. This can be hard to predict. Overall, there have been 1,200 additional movements in schools in Northamptonshire. On average, there are 9,000-10,000 primary place requirements and a similar number of secondary places.
- Within Northampton, many existing schools have been Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funded, new schools will be academies. No distinction is made in terms of how funding is set up, just the number of spaces available. The only impact being that it is more complex to amend PFI agreements as contracts need to be renegotiated.
- During the previous decade, there was a national policy of reducing the number of surplus school places. As Northampton has converted from the three to two tier system there are a number of original middle school sites which have closed. The value of these sites has decreased during the recession, but they are all being re-evaluated in terms of considering whether they should be sold or the potential reuse of the site.

Head of Estates, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust (PCT)

- There are 77 GP surgeries across Northampton each with an average 1,800 patient list. It is anticipated that for every 500 new dwellings there is the need for an additional GP and supporting primary care infrastructure.
- On average, patient numbers from small developments (fewer than ten new properties) can be absorbed into existing GP practices.
- There may be certain geographical concentrations whereby certain GP practices cannot take on additional patients without extra investment in their premises, such as, another consulting room and supporting ancillary accommodation, and ideally additional car parking space.
- In respect of large housing developments (upwards of circa 1300 dwellings), the PCT would prefer if the Council, in discussion with developers, factored in a 'turn key' ready to occupy health centre based around the set GP/patient

multiplier. On average a new GP surgery would require land of between 0.75 – 1.0 acres.

- It is preferred that funding for primary health care provision is secured early in the development. On average, it takes around one year to plan and one year to build a new GP surgery.
- The PCT will not usually request a S106 contribution in respect of social housing. Across different counties within Northamptonshire, Councils use a 'roof funding formulae'; which gives the PCT a greater degree of certainty in forward premises planning.
- From April 2013, Northampton General Hospital will negotiate any increase in patient activity directly with the Nene Clinical Commissioning Group.
- The management of primary health care is undergoing significant re-organisation, locally and nationally.
- NHS Northampton has re-commissioned its Estates Strategy which will address the projected housing trajectory (where known) across Northampton. Future allocation of Community Infrastructure (CIL) and Section 106 money will only make a contribution to the planned expansion of primary care premises locally. This Strategy will form part of the supporting case for additional NHS resources.

Construction Futures

- Construction Futures was set up with the aim of tackling unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.
- A lack of available skills locally and employers' reluctance to invest in apprenticeship and training opportunities for young people was identified in the construction industry. There were poor links between the industry and schools with perceived barriers for some groups, such as women or ethnic minorities wishing to enter the industry.
- Construction Futures helps Local Authorities create training and apprenticeships on new developments by using planning and procurement policies to secure opportunities. It brings properly accredited skills into the industry and helps to ensure local people benefit from new developments and helps to balance the supply and demand of labour; ensuring opportunities are allocated on an equitable basis.
- Construction Futures makes assessments regarding the number of training opportunities that developments may provide and matches the relevant applicant to the training. These training requirements can then be made part of the required legal process i.e. delivered through Section 106 agreements.
- Construction Futures has been included in 40 legal agreements, including a range of development types. A contribution of £97 per dwelling has been secured and over 2,300 training weeks secured in Northampton; 1,300 weeks have been delivered.

- Previously, candidates had to pass academic tests in order to be accepted for training. Construction Futures' scheme does not use educational attainment as criteria, but commitment to the process and personal development. The time taken to obtain an NVQ varies dependent on the individual, but it is usually around a year.
- Construction Futures offers training in a range of construction related skills and works closely with developers to identify required skills.
- Construction Futures keeps an on-going record of participants so that they can track the future careers of the participants. Generally, students who have been on work placements do better in their college achievements. Nationally, only about a third of participants stay in the construction industry, but those who have participated in the Construction Futures programme have a higher success rate.

Briefing note with further details at Appendix E.

Cabinet Member (Housing) and Director of Housing, Northampton Borough Council

- Affordable housing priorities are within the Council's Housing Strategy. The Strategy is considered by a cross party group who assess predicted needs and development opportunities. Affordable housing is defined as that which is made available at between 60 and 80% of market value.
- Delivery of affordable housing is achieved mainly through Housing Association partners. There have been recent changes in the way that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding operates. In *the* business plan there are funds for new build 2015.
- The Council has a target to provide 150 affordable homes each year, from 2013/14. These homes were previously provided through Housing Association partners or Registered Social Landlords (RSL) using Section 106 monies, and direct government grant funding. The recent changes in this area means this is may not be possible as grant rates are changing Housing Associations are exploring other methods of funding and may fund more directly.
- Changes denote it will be very difficult to provide affordable housing within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). If CIL is set too high it will damage the viability of development schemes to deliver any affordable housing, particularly in times of recession. The percentage delivered could not then be guaranteed.
- There are interdependencies regarding infrastructure requirements as if houses are not built, there will not be as high an increase in demand for infrastructure services.

- If new affordable homes are not delivered, the Council will have to use expensive bed and breakfast accommodation or temporary accommodation
- Demand for affordable housing is likely to increase. The Localism Act, the slow-down in new building, difficult economic climate and changes to Welfare Reform are all likely to increase demand for all forms of affordable housing.
- The current HRA business plan allows for 40 homes a year to be built once the decent homes programme has been completed with the first ones starting in 2014/15.
- There are proposals under consideration to use private sector investment to supply affordable homes. The Council will manage the properties, paid for by private investment companies, and there will be an agreement to buy the properties at a point in the future.
- Agreements are made with many partners to ensure the provision of affordable housing wherever possible.
- The Council has a Joint Nominations Agreement with Daventry District Council that enables Northampton to have 100% of the nominations on all the affordable homes built on the Sustainable Urban Extensions; this has been agreed by the Cabinets of both Councils. Negotiations are also taking place with South Northants Council on a similar basis.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

- Significant work appears to have been undertaken to identify the quantum, timing and cost of infrastructure requirement to support development in and around Northampton. The Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedules sets out the vision, challenge and requirements. Some of the key points relating to determining funding priorities have already been identified.
- Key factors:
 - to maintain a frequently updated and detailed housing/employment site delivery trajectories as this will underpin infrastructure requirements and phasing.
 - to understand which infrastructure items could potentially stall or block development (e.g. through grampian conditions) and work pro-actively with responsible delivery authorities to deliver these infrastructure requirements in a timely fashion, identifying sources of funding, including developer contributions via planning obligations or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
 - Work appears to have been done to classify infrastructure as key primary infrastructure secondary or tertiary. This should help in

assessing whether items should be delivered via planning obligations or whether contributions should be sought via a CIL charge. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan leaves this decision to the various Charging/Collecting Authorities. Given the nature of some of the more strategic infrastructure items, Charging Authorities may need to work together to ensure that these priorities are aligned and to determine whether combined CIL charges will meet any funding gap. Regulation 122 prevents pooling of more than five planning obligations to a particular infrastructure project or type of infrastructure. Some co-ordination on CIL priority projects will be required if funding contributions are to be made available from more than one Charging Authority.

- Where infrastructure delivery is funded by more than one Charging Authority it may also be pertinent to consider timing of payments for example where charging Authorities decide to introduce an instalment policy. This may help ensure that CIL funding contributions are available in a timely fashion.
 - The Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) will be updated annually, which will be a necessity to ensure that priorities are continually aligned with changes in development priorities or pace of development. Flexibility to re-prioritise accordingly will be important.
 - Statutory obligations are also likely to affect delivery priorities.
 - There will be conflicting priorities as there are a number of potential delivery agencies (local authorities, Highways Agency, PCT/Clinical Commissioning Groups etc.). Phasing of projects could help alleviate this.
- A balanced approach is recommended to deliver affordable housing requirements but with a CIL charge that has due regard to economic viability. If a CIL charge is set too high, negotiation will be around contributions such as affordable housing and other S106 obligations. Developers will seek Social Housing Relief on the qualifying part of the development, so this would need to be modelled as part of the viability work when determining a CIL charge.
 - Delivery of a balanced, sustainable development will be important and robust modelling will be required to understand the impacts of various levels of charge. Different rates can be applied for different zones (e.g. greenfield, brownfield, or geographical zones where development values may differ) or to different end uses.
 - The HCA's Area Wide Viability Model could potentially be useful in understanding some of the impacts of differential charges.
 - Local Authorities and delivery Partners will have a good understanding of their funding streams. Consideration could also be given to initiatives which

provide revolving funds where this could help development by forward funding infrastructure requirements (e.g. Growing Places Fund).

- Joint working when drawing up Charging Schedules; joint review of Infrastructure Delivery Plans and housing/employment delivery performance / development trajectories, could be helpful in ensuring proper cross boundary funding of key infrastructure
- There is a balance to be struck and this would need to be determined by each Charging Authority. An understanding of potential local projects and costs, whether they have a robust business case and governance procedures in place and any impact on revenue budgets will need to be understood.

Environment Agency

- The Environment Agency (EA) acts as a planning advisor (Schedule 5, Articles 16 and 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010), but is also the regulator for key infrastructure items such as waste water treatment works. Northampton has one waste water treatment works (Billing).
- Future developments need to be planned carefully so that they do not add to the pressures already on the water environment, i.e. flood water resources and increased volumes of sewage effluent that may lead to any compromise in Water Quality. Following the significant flooding to Northampton town centre in Easter 1998 improvements were made to the defences along the River Nene. In order to secure the level of protection afforded by the new defence the standards set for new development (within the Upper Nene catchment) is greater than that required by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- All proposed developments are considered on a site by site basis, with a range of partners. There is a continual review of potential flood water storage/attenuation areas and one area currently being examined is in relation to Billing. There is an enormous cost associated with flooding and many practical, financial and emotional consequences of flooding incidents.
- Responses to requests for consultation on planning development are assessed on a basis of the probability of flooding. The probability of an event is typically defined as the relative frequency of occurrence of that event, out of all possible events. Probability of flooding will be expressed as a percentage and/or an annual chance. For example:
 - a chance i.e. '... a 1 in 100 chance of flooding at that location in any given year' or
 - a probability i.e. '... a 1% annual probability of flooding'.

- The Environment Agency receives numerous reports from local residents expressing their concern at potential local problems. Local residents are very involved in identifying problems and potential solutions. An evidence base on water resources, waste water treatment, water quality and flood risk has been prepared to inform the development of policy throughout the process of producing the Joint Core Strategy. The EA is committed to an on-going working relationship to develop and deliver an integrated approach to water related policy. This approach is essential to ensure that water resources, waste water and flood risk management is taken into account as growth within West Northamptonshire proceeds. The West Northamptonshire Water Cycle Study is a vital piece of evidence supporting the JCS. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is also going through the public consultation process. All of the comments received during the consultation period will be analysed, and the draft strategy and associated documents will be amended as appropriate to form the adopted strategy. This will be taken to Cabinet for approval in the summer of 2013. The Environment Agency held records of reported incidences of groundwater flooding. In carrying out its new lead role as the LLFA the County Council's key duties and responsibilities, once all elements of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) have been enacted will include a power to undertake works to manage flood risk from surface water run-off and groundwater.

Anglian Water

- As identified within the West Northamptonshire Water Cycle Strategy and Northampton Drainage Plan, there are likely to be water and waste water infrastructure costs, covered by the developer that are secured by the Water Industry Act 1991. Surface water infrastructure will also need to be delivered. It is assumed that the developer will provide onsite solutions; there may be a need to fund strategic solutions through planning obligations.
- The water and wastewater infrastructure requirements will be dependent on the location, size and phasing of the development. All sites will require a local connection to the existing sewerage network which may include network upgrades. To enable new developments to connect to existing infrastructure local connections and sewer reinforcements would be funded by developers through the provisions of the Water Industry Act (1991). Upgrades to the Sewage Treatment Works may also be necessary. These are usually planned and funded through Anglian Water's Quinquennial business plan, approved by the economic regulator Ofwat. Additionally, there are likely to be developer contributions required for strategic and local water infrastructure improvements. These costs are calculated based on site specific information including location, phasing and demand.

- The funding of water and wastewater infrastructure identified will be managed within the Water Industry Act 1991 and will not be required to form part of Community Levy Infrastructure (CIL) provisions. The drafted policies require surface water management on site in accordance with the management hierarchy set out within Building Regulations part H and the National Planning Policy Framework Technical Guidance. There may be opportunities to provide more cost effective strategic options which may require funding through planning obligations.
- Early engagement between the developer, Council and relevant authorities (such as the Environment Agency, Northamptonshire County Council and water company) promotes efficiency and helps to understand the requirements for the site and identify a solution that meets the needs of the proposed development whilst operating within environmental limits. Anglian Water provides a [pre-planning service](#) for developers that identifies the need and cost of any upgrades required. This information is compiled specifically to inform the planning process and aid discussions on viability. Co-ordinated pre-application discussions will reduce the uncertainty regarding the provision of infrastructure to support growth and ensure all parties are fully informed.
- Planning strategically and ensuring infrastructure is not delivered in isolation is likely to result in economies of scale. Anglian Water endorses the work completed to assess drainage requirements at catchment level. Masterplanning could be promoted in order to reduce the risk of piecemeal delivery and allow parcels to be implemented in accordance with an approved strategy.
- The evidence compiled to inform the Joint Core Strategy and Central Area Action Plan, the Water Cycle Strategy and Northampton Drainage Plan respectively, has developed a strong partnership in West Northamptonshire on water issues. This partnership and close working arrangements needs to continue in order to ensure adequate water, wastewater and surface water infrastructure is delivered in parallel with the proposed growth.
- In the case of drainage infrastructure, local solutions may alleviate pressure on strategic infrastructure. Accordingly the timing or extent of necessary strategic infrastructure may be impacted by expenditure at a local level.

Western Power

- Infrastructure improvements are put in place through a cost supporting factor, which means that the customer is required to pay a percentage of the cost of providing the infrastructure. This upgraded infrastructure cost via new load activity can be “clawed back” by subsequent users over a five year period. Actual levels of contribution vary depending on what is required.

- An internal funding system for slow growth provision and replacement of infrastructure is in place. Both of are monitored annually. Currently there is excess capacity. The level of this varies dependent on geographical areas, for example the Swan Valley Infrastructure has good capacity as it was built at a time of economic prosperity and has not attracted as much business as it was designed to accommodate.
- Certain large scale users, such as Carlsberg, have been upgraded at their cost. The next grid site due to be upgraded is that near Avon.
- Infrastructure is now made up of a series of smaller generation points (private assets). There are a number of circuit sites around town, most of which could be boosted if demand required. All capacity is assessed on a rolling 10-20 year programme. Location will determine the type of “asset”, in a town centre the largest asset possible will always be included.
- Over time the type of usage has changed there is less industrial/commercial usage and more domestic.
- There is sufficient capacity regarding the Moulton/ Overstone area but there are some problems in achieving direct delivery, although work is on-going in the area.
- In the main, additional demand generated from small scale developments can be incorporated into the existing systems, however, these developments are monitored through the slow growth process to determine when capacity may be reached. Kingsthorpe is the latest area where this applies, and this peak point will be dealt with this year.
- There are also issues concerning the growth of solar power, which requires management in order to balance the generation and use of energy. There have been over 500 enquiries from the Kings Heath area and it will require the building of bigger assets to distribute the generated capacity.

Northamptonshire Police

- Priorities should be determined by the local community. All service providers have been going through difficult economic times. The Police Force has the additional difficulty of being unable to generate income.
- Locally generated funding should be spent locally. Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, the Borough Council has a responsibility to reduce crime and disorder. Many of the organisations that would have previously participated in delivering that have also experienced reductions in funding and have withdrawn their assistance.
- The Police supports good examples of delivering improvements that are value for money i.e. examples of self-policing and new developments which are secure by design.

- The Police supports any opportunities that can be generated through Section 106 monies to provide shared spaces in public buildings or fund specific items such as Police Community Support Officers to provide a police presence from the moment building commences, and the site becomes a crime attractor, to the point at which other revenue streams, such as council tax precept, come into effect.
- Whilst the provision of affordable housing is not a function of the Police, it emphasises the need to make sure that any form of social housing is properly integrated. The most efficient communities will be safer and more sustainable.
- There is a national formula which is used to determine the amount of funding required for new development, however, in the current economic climate Northants Police recognises that it is not reasonable to expect developers to fully meet the cost of policing new developments. Therefore the cost of policing small scale developments will usually be absorbed within existing resources but larger scale developments, which inevitably generate greater amounts of crime, will require contributions from developers to meet the cost of the additional resource requirements.
- Overall, it is vital to make sure that best value is delivered whatever the Infrastructure project and that every aspect is considered by making sure that
- developments are properly planned and that advice is taken to ensure that crime is designed out.
- Partnership is vital. All partners need to be involved in planning stages for Infrastructure to design the most efficient and cost effective schemes possible.
- It is difficult to identify a number which would represent a meaningful proportion as it would depend on the type/size and timing of the development.

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Northampton Borough Council

- Of the 17 Rugby Union pitches in Northampton, one is provided by Northampton Borough Council. The other facilities belong to Rugby clubs. There is one Rugby League pitch at Duston that is provided by a private club.
- There are four hockey pitches, all run by clubs, and there is no public provision.
- All facilities are well used with most of the pitches and courts fully booked. The need for future facilities is calculated by examining the demographics of local areas. The Leisure Strategy identified that Northampton is very well served by private clubs. There are areas where there is provision which is not necessarily being utilised.
- Some areas and clubs had reported a massive surge in demand since the Olympics 2012. New clubs are given support.

- A comprehensive analysis of requirements associated with the urban extensions has been undertaken.
- Some current leisure provision, such as that at the Lings centre, which has a limited life span, will need to be reviewed in the next 5 –10 years.

East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)

- Funding priorities need to be based on demographic changes and the demand that services are seeing. The ambulance service in Northamptonshire is responding to 6% more calls for help from the public than in 2011/12. This equates to over 92,000 calls during 2011/12 with a predicted 100,000 calls in 2012/13. This increase in demand is against a back drop of tightening budgets and a global increase in demand putting significant pressures on the service to maintain quality, timeliness and patient experience.
- The Trust is currently in the process of an estates restructure targeted at more efficient support for the public and any funding from section 106 and infrastructure projects will be used to support its on-going efforts.
- Provision or prioritisation of affordable housing is not a view the Trust is able to comment upon.
- Where funding is available, it needs to get to the organisations delivering the service, so partnership is essential to ensure that increase in population are supported by appropriate and proportionate increases in emergency service provision.
- Proportionality can be calculated on the basis of costs, predicted demands and current demands. This can also take into account the need to deliver the infrastructure requirements.
- An overarching consideration should be given to patient, public and stakeholder early involvement, engagement and consultation on the plans where there are more details.
- EMAS is committed to working with all of its partners.

Northants Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

- Currently Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows NFRS to apply for financial or other contributions due to the impact caused on the Service by the growth within the County.
- NFRS adopts a tariff based approach to financial contributions from developers to address the impact of growth on Service provision. The funding formula is based upon population growth and applies to both residential and commercial development.

- The indication to seek section 106 contributions for Fire and Rescue will be outlined in an initial section 106 response sent by the Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Development Management Team, who co-ordinate section 106 applications for all NCC service areas. The Business Planning Manager will liaise with NCC Development Management Team to ensure the correct tariff is applied. A record of all section 106 applications will be recorded in the S106 Growth Planning Database by the Business Planning team.
- On-going discussions to come to an agreement on any section 106 monies will take place between NCC's Development Management Team/NFRS and the relevant Local Planning Authority and developer, until an agreement is made and signed. The Service Improvement department will co-ordinate this element of work on behalf of the Service.
- Contributions received will provide capital funding to enable the Fire and Rescue Service to maintain its operational standards of response. This is achieved through a combination of prevention and enforcement activity to reduce community risk and through response in implementing changes to fleet, equipment and properties.
- Developer contributions may be used for the capital element of any or all of these, as required to mitigate the impacts of development growth in accordance with the results of risk mapping, data analysis and predictive modelling.
- NFRS strongly advocates the installation of fire suppression systems in all commercial buildings and in high risk residential accommodation. Where developers are prepared to install these systems, NFRS would negotiate on the tariff to reflect the reduction in community risk.
- All new developments require the installation of fire hydrants. Whilst each development requires a risk based assessment for hydrant provision, on average, one fire hydrant is required for every 50 properties. The cost to install a fire hydrant is currently £834, which equates to a cost of £16.68 per residential dwelling or approximately £16.68 per 100 sq. m of commercial building
- The capital contribution for hydrants can be secured through a planning obligation, it is the preference of NFRS that fire hydrants should be designed into the development at the master-plan stage and enforced through a planning condition.

3.5 Presentation – Huntingdonshire District Council on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in practice – A Local Authority's perspective

3.5.1 The Scrutiny Panel received a comprehensive presentation from the Assistant Director of Environment, Growth and Planning and the Implementation Team

Leader from Huntingdonshire District Council, on its CIL process on 7 March 2013. Key points:

- Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has already implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system. It is now able to collect monies from smaller developments which had not previously had to make Section 106 payments. It felt that this bought the amount of money available via CIL to approximately that previously made available by Section 106 monies.
- Determining and administering CIL needs to be a corporate exercise for the whole Council, not just planning services, with required adequate administrative support, which HDC stated can be taken at 5% of monies collected.
- The process of introducing CIL has taken two years, which has been longer than anticipated, much in part to the changing regulations when the process was undertaken. The process needed to be properly resourced.
- It is clear that there is more infrastructure need in the district than CIL monies that will be received to be spent on infrastructure within the area. There will be further clarification from the Government on how monies can be used regarding the meaningful contribution to be given to Parish and Town Councils.
- HDC has been working with its Parish Councils to ensure that the full local infrastructure needs are known and to support the Parish and Town Councils in making their decision on how their meaningful proportion should be spent, which may include contributing it towards larger infrastructure projects in the parish area

4 Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council's statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny Reports/agendas/minutes and other such documents. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny/Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e.: on the Council's website, copies issues to the local media and paper copies available in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Panel was mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it made could identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This was borne in mind as the Scrutiny Review progressed and evidence gathered.
- 4.3 Any possible recommended changes may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects for all diversity groups.

- 4.4 In order that the Scrutiny Panel obtains a variety of views, a number of key witnesses provided evidence as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 4.5 Details of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken can be obtained from the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#).

5 **Conclusions and Key Findings**

- 5.1 After all the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

Infrastructure Requirements

- 5.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel concluded that infrastructure requirements are identified up to 2026, in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan, covering the administrative areas of Northampton Borough Council, South Northants Council and Daventry District Council, including:

- Highways
- Drainage/Water management
- Flood defences
- Schools
- Primary Health Care
- Leisure

- 5.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed that the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Development Plan will be updated annually, which if realised, is a necessity to ensure that priorities are continually aligned with changes in development priorities or pace of development. It emphasised that flexibility to re-prioritise accordingly will be important.

Highways

- 5.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel identified that there is a significant funding gap in respect of the building of highways. Section 106 Agreements and CIL will have to contribute to improvements to the Strategic Highways Network via the A45/M1 Growth Management Scheme. It is recognised that the funding gap remains challenging for growth beyond 2026 and further work will have to be undertaken in this area.

Joint working and early engagement

- 5.1.4 The evidence gathered accentuated the need for joint working, in particular, joint working when drawing up charging schedules; joint review of Infrastructure Delivery Plans and housing/employment delivery performance / development trajectories, could be helpful in ensuring proper cross boundary funding of key infrastructure. The need for all partners to be involved in planning stages for infrastructure to design the most efficient and cost effective schemes as possible was highlighted.
- 5.1.5 The evidence gathered identified the need for early engagement between the developer, Council and relevant authorities (such as the Environment Agency, Northamptonshire County Council and water company) to promote efficiency, help to understand the requirements for the site and identify a solution that meets the needs of the proposed development whilst operating within environmental limits.

Schools

- 5.1.6 The Scrutiny Panel noted that it is vital to continue to encourage development and try to ensure developments take place and developers are able to deliver viable schemes. The importance of partnership involvement in order to make this happen was realised. It was further realised that there is some capacity in secondary schools, but the increasingly steady growth in primary numbers means this will be an issue in the future.
- 5.1.7 The evidence gathered highlighted a major increase in inward migration. There is a requirement for more school places in Northampton.

Drainage/Water management

Flood defences

- 5.1.8 The evidence collected identified that future developments need to be planned carefully so that they do not add to the pressures already on the water environment, i.e. flood water resources and increased volumes of sewage effluent that may lead to any compromise in water quality.
- 5.1.9 It was recognised that the funding of water and wastewater infrastructure identified, will be managed within the Water Industry Act 1991 and will not be required to form part of CIL provisions.

Western Power

- 5.1.10 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted that Western Power's infrastructure improvements are put in place through a cost supporting factor, which means that the customer is required to pay a percentage of the cost of providing the infrastructure. This upgraded infrastructure cost via new load activity can be "clawed back" by subsequent users over a five year period.

Policing

- 5.1.11 The Scrutiny Panel noted that generally, small scale development can be absorbed within existing Policing resources but larger scale developments generate additional policing resource requirements.
- 5.1.12 The Police would welcome any opportunity to occupy shared spaces in public buildings.

Leisure

- 5.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that all leisure facilities are well used, with most of the pitches and courts fully booked. However, some current leisure provision, such as that at the Lings Centre, which has a limited life span, will need to be reviewed in the next 5-10 years.

Primary Health Care

- 5.1.14 It was acknowledged that the Trust, East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) is currently in the process of an estates restructure targeted at more efficient support to the public. Any funding from Section 106 and infrastructure projects will be used to support its on-going effects.
- 5.1.15 The evidence gathered identified that for large housing developments, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) would prefer a 'turn key' ready to occupy a health centre.
- 5.1.16 Location of new facilities should be planned to ensure connectivity within new and existing communities.

Funding gap

- 5.1.17 In noting the infrastructure funding gap of £439.6 million as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Scrutiny Panel concluded that infrastructure cannot be totally funded through Section 106 Agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that other sources of funding are required.

Section 106 Agreements

- 5.1.18 Currently, Section 106 delivers contributions to strategic infrastructure requirements, as well as site specific requirements.
- 5.1.19 Section 106 is managed through the Section 106 Board and projects. The infrastructure is delivered through Northampton Borough Council or Northamptonshire County Council's capital programme. S106 Agreements will still be used for on-site mitigation following the introduction of CIL.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel realised that although it was in no way anticipated that CIL will be adopted throughout the country, Section 106 arrangements will change in 2014, which will restrict the pooling of S106 agreements to five for any one type of infrastructure or infrastructure project. The advantage of CIL is that it allows flexibility on where it can be spent as it does not have to be in the same locality as the development.
- 5.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that a recent Government speech, January 2013, made it clearer as to the proposed level of meaningful proportion of CIL to be spent in the local area. Figures indicated a 15% levy, within Parished areas, up to £100 per existing household, with that percentage rising to 25% if there was a local neighbourhood plan has been adopted, with no upper cap. This was a much higher figure than had previously been anticipated.
- 5.1.22 The evidence gathered highlighted that determining and administering CIL needs to be a corporate exercise for the whole Council, not just planning services, with required adequate administrative support. The Scrutiny Panel emphasised that the process of introducing CIL needs to be properly resourced.
- 5.1.23 The Joint Planning Unit is looking at how CIL will be implemented across West Northamptonshire.
- 5.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that in order to deliver schools, CIL is the only realistic method to deliver secondary schools.

Affordable Housing

- 5.1.25 The evidence received alluded to a potential shortfall in affordable housing once CIL is introduced. This was of particular concern to the Scrutiny Panel

because affordable housing provision is a Council priority. The Scrutiny Panel was concerned that the amount of affordable housing may fall.

- 5.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel realised that the demand for affordable housing is likely to increase. The Localism Act, the slow-down in new building, difficult economic climate and changes to Welfare Reform are likely to increase demand for all forms of affordable housing. If new affordable homes are not delivered, the Council may have to use expensive bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary accommodation.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The purpose of this Scrutiny Panel was:

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

Scrutiny Panel 3 recommends to Cabinet that:

Infrastructure Requirements

- 6.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel formally informs Cabinet that it is satisfied that the infrastructure requirements are identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan up to 2026.
- 6.1.2 Infrastructure cannot be totally funded through Section 106 Agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Cabinet investigates other funding sources to meet the funding gap of £439.6 million.
- 6.1.3 It is ensured that the North West Bypass is fully funded and built, when required, to serve new developments and that appropriate arrangements are agreed with South Northants Council and Daventry District Council to ensure funding CIL infrastructure is given priority across the partnership.
- 6.1.4 Section 106 Agreements and CIL contribute to improvements to the Strategic Highways Network via the A45/M1 Growth Management Strategies.

Affordable Housing

- 6.1.5 Cabinet satisfies itself that the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will not have an adverse impact on the provision of affordable housing; whilst recognising that the existing S106 Policy allows for flexibility in accordance with Government Policy.
- 6.1.6 Cabinet recognises that the introduction of CIL will have corporate implications and these must be identified and addressed.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.

Appendices



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – Infrastructure Requirement and S106 Agreements

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To identify the infrastructure requirements to Northampton and the surrounding areas
- To evaluate how the infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- To identify any funding gaps and how these will be filled
- To understand the management of S106 funding

2. Outcomes Required

- An understanding of the requirements and how there are going to be delivered via developer or other funding streams

3. Information Required

Background data purpose and scope of S106 Agreements and introduction to CIL
Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Schedule
Central Area Action Plan Infrastructure Schedule
Sources of funding for infrastructure
Table of existing NBC S106 obligation monies and information relating to NCC and WNDL S106 monies
Developer Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
Future provision of skills and training programmes
Affordable housing
Memorandum of Understanding for the Growth Management Scheme for the A45/M1
Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy
Map: defended and undefended areas
Drainage Strategy (summary)
A copy of a Section 106 Agreement

Desktop research – best practice elsewhere

Witness Evidence: Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity and Sewerage Providers
Assistant Director of Education Services, NCC
Childcare providers
Developer
Homes and Communities Agency
Housing Strategy Manager, NBC
Nene Commissioning
General Manager, Construction Futures
Assistant Director of Highways, NCC
Assistant Director of Environment, NCC
Highways Agency
Assistant Chief Constable, Northants Police
S106 Officer, NBC

Site Visit: Examples of infrastructure that has been constructed

4. Format of Information

- Mini training session on a Section 106 – 5th September 2012 – 6.30pm to 8pm
- Site visits
- Officer briefings and reports
- Witness evidence – verbal and written

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Briefing session
- Desktop research
- Site Visits (if applicable)
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice external to Northampton
- Witness Evidence as detailed in Section 3 of this Scope

6. Co-Options to the Review

Chair, or their nominated member, of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, NCC, be approached to be co opted to this Review.

Chair, or their nominated member, of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, Daventry District Council, be approached to be co opted to this Review.

Chair, or their nominated member, of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, South Northants Council, be approached to be co opted to this Review.

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- An Equality Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

July 2012 to March 2013

- 19th July 2012 Scoping Meeting
- 26 September 2012 Evidence gathering
- 8th November Evidence gathering
- 13th December Evidence gathering
- 17th January 2013 Evidence gathering
- 7th March Chair's draft report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

7. Responsible Officers

Lead Officer Sue Bridge, Head of Planning

Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

8. Resources and Budgets

Sue Bridge, Head of Planning, to provide internal advice.

9 Final report presented by:

Completed by 7th March 2013. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

10 Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months after receipt of Cabinet's response (Approximately January/February 2014)



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Appendix B

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND S106 AGREEMENTS

BRIEFING NOTE: DESKTOP RESEARCH – COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Panel, at its inaugural scoping meeting, agreed that as part of the evidence gathering process desktop research would be undertaken regarding Local Authorities that had already introduced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 1.2 The purpose of CIL is to provide a fair and transparent means for ensuring that development contributes to the cost of infrastructure required to support development.
- 1.3 The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) advises that there are many ways to approach setting a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), dependent upon the starting point and circumstances, and has published a suggested approach:
 - Show the amount of development that you are intending to put in your strategy (or is already in an adopted strategy) on a map.
 - Overlay a 'heat map' of the values of the different key development uses e.g. housing. This will help you (and your consultants) to understand where your focus should be. It will assist you in terms of what rate/s you start testing and how much differentiation is relevant. If the vast majority of your future development is all in one area, or in areas of a similar value, this will indicate that no differentiation is required. If you are undertaking your plan making and site allocation at the same time as your CIL it may help you make decisions on the deliverability of potential sites.
 - Start with a CIL rate or rates that you have estimated based on the values from your heat map and test in terms of all the other costs (s106, affordable housing, carbon reduction etc.) and for all your key uses. Then differentiate up and down from that rate. If you are preparing your plan at the same time you may need to try different combinations of CIL rate and policy levels (costs).
 - Involve councillors and management team. Make sure that they understand CIL and involve them in setting the rate, the balance

between different costs and the level of risk (the balance between maximising CIL revenue for infrastructure and risking development delivery).

- Engage with developers, agents and landowners that have knowledge of, and an interest in your area, at an early stage to test your assumptions.
- Using your infrastructure delivery plan and following engagement with developers, identify a draft regulation 123 list and identify how you could balance your CIL with s106 and affordable housing policies and test that with councillors and the relevant stakeholders.
- Be prepared, and prepare your consultant, to undertake a number of sensitivity tests and iterations at each stage in the preparation of your CIL (viability evidence, key stakeholder meeting, PDCS, DCS and examinations stages).
- Consider how you will administer your CIL – the more differentiation the more complex the administration.
- Make sure that you are considering governance of CIL at the setting

2 Information

2.1 PAS reports that CIL has been in operation for over two years and that:-

- Six Local Authorities have adopted schedules
- Three have been through examination and have not yet adopted
- A few more Local Authorities are either at examination or about to go to examination.

2.2 PAS provided support to eight Authorities (or groups of Authorities) that were likely to be amongst the first to implement CIL in the form of the Front Runners Project: Each Front Runner has access to a tailored package of support from PAS to help them set a charge for their area. This includes group workshops and good practice advice.

List of councils - phase one

The 'front runners' in the first phase of the Project:

- Newark and Sherwood District Council - CIL adopted
- Shropshire Council - CIL adopted
- Greater London Authority - CIL adopted
- London Borough of Redbridge - CIL adopted
- Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council - draft charging schedule
- Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) - draft charging schedule
- Bolton Council
- Mid Devon District Council - preliminary draft charging schedule

2.3 Attached at Appendix A are examples of adopted CILs of Newark and Sherwood District Council and Shropshire Council.

2.4 PAS provided the table below that sets out a summary of adopted rates and levels of consultation response experienced by some of the more advance CIL front runner Local Authorities:

Authority and Link	Adoption date/stage	Finalised Rate/s (post examination)	Comments	Engagement/consultations Response rates	Comments
Newark and Sherwood: Newark and Sherwood District Council adopted charging schedule, policies and documents – on the NSDC website	Adopted 1 December 2012	Residential 0-£75, 0-£20 commercial, apart from retail £100-£125; and agriculture, community, leisure & sui generis - £0	Complex geographic and rate matrices for commercial and residential	PDCS – 36 responses (nine development industry) DCS 19 (nine development industry)	In addition to the consultation NSDC contacted approximately 35 developers, agents and infrastructure providers.
Shropshire: Shropshire adopted CIL documents including policies – on the Shropshire website	Adopted 1 January 2012	£40 residential in Shrewsbury, the market towns and key settlements, and £80 elsewhere. All other uses £0.		PDCS- 51 responses (12 from development industry) DCS Engagement on the working draft of the PDCS prior to formal PDCS including the SHLAA developer panel	The SHLAA Developer Panel raised concerns that the rates proposed in the “Analysis of CIL and Affordable Targets” were too high. Subsequently the Levy rate for Shrewsbury, the market towns and other key centres was reduced to the average contribution rate currently being obtained through section 106 agreements (£40 per square metre).
London Borough of Redbridge: Redbridge CIL adopted including	Adopted 1 January 2012	All uses £70 per sq M	Flat rate +Mayoral rate of £35	PDCS- 14 responses DCS- 8 responses	

Examiners letter – on the Redbridge website					
GLA: The Greater London Authority adopted CIL schedule – on the GLA website	Adopted 1 April 2012	£20, £35 and £50 (3 charging zones)		PDCS- 105 responses DCS- 75 responses	
Portsmouth Portsmouth City Council charging schedule: instalments policy, calculator, infrastructure lists, etc. – on the Portsmouth website	Adopted 1 April 2012	£105 for everything apart from : £53 : A1- A5 (small), C1 hotels, &C2 residential institutions; £0- B uses & D1 community uses		DCS-10 responses(3) PDCS – 11 responses (4 development industry)	No one wanted to be heard in front of an inspector.
Huntingdonshire: Huntingdonshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy – on the Hunts District Council website	Adopted May 2012	£85 for everything except: small A class (below 500 sq. m) - £40 big retail -£100 class C1 and Health £60 B and the rest of D use £0.		TBC	
Wandsworth: Wandsworth draft charging schedule and examiners letter – on the Wandsworth website	Approved but not yet adopted	Residential £575, £265 (9 elms a & b), £0 (Roehampton) and elsewhere £275 Office and A class- 9 elms - £100 All other uses- £0		PDCS- 22 (10 development industry) DCS 22 (9 Development Industry)	1000 letters sent from LDF database
Bristol: Bristol City Council draft Charging Schedule Consultation - approved at examination with no alterations – on the Bristol website	Approved but not yet adopted	Residential - £50-£70 Hotels -£70, Students Accommodation. - £100, retail - £120, B uses, All other residential C and D uses, and 999 operational-£0. Everything		PDCS- 38 responses DCS- 15 responses developers workshop during PDCS to discuss viability appraisal	

		else £50			
Poole: Poole CIL documents - at examination – on the Poole website	Approved but not yet adopted	Residential £75, £100 & £150, Everything else £0			Pre PDCS, Developer and agent -Workshop – 30 invited, 12 attended PDCS 10 developer and agent comments DCS 11 developers and agents
Wycombe: Wycombe District Council draft charging schedule consultation submitted for examination July 2012 – on the Wycombe District Council website	Awaiting examiners report	n/a			Engagement of a range of developers, registered local housing providers and development industry stake holders during the original viability work PDCS- 16-responses (9 from development industry) DCS-22 responses (12 from the development industry)
Havant: Havant Borough Council draft charging schedule – on the Havant council website	Examination (written reps)	n/a			PDCS- 18 (4 development industry) DCS – 6 (+ 1 late) (2 development industry)
East Cambridgeshire: East Cambridgeshire District preliminary draft charging schedule – on the East Cambridgeshire District Council	Submitted for examination October 2012	n/a			PDCS- 12 DCS- 12. Following PDCS LA & their viability consultants met individually with several developers. The meeting post PDCS with developers gave rise to significant changes. No changes were made following DCS.

Authority and Link	Adoption date/stage	Finalised Rate/s (post examination)	Comments	Engagement/consultations Response rates	Comments
Chelmsford: Chelmsford preliminary draft charging schedule – on the Chelmsford website	DCS imminent	n/a		PDCS 107 comments from 24 respondents Developers workshop particularly on viability assumptions pre PDCS consultation	
Colchester: Colchester draft charging schedule – on the Colchester website	Reviewing DCS following consultation	n/a		PDCS- 12 DCS- 13 to draft Post draft stage developer and councillor workshop	Following the developer and councillor workshop more viability work is being undertaken.
Elmbridge: Elmbridge preliminary draft charging schedule – on the Elmbridge Borough Council website	Considering DCS responses	n/a		PDCS-13 (2 development industry) DCS-16 representation (9 development industry) Housing market partner panel at viability stage.	
Barnet: London Borough of Barnet preliminary draft charging schedule – on the Barnet website	DCS consultation imminent		'single low flat rate' of £135/sqm.... recognises the need to prioritise economic growth in the Borough – Barnet Website	PDCS 27 parties commented 11 attended developers forum Developers invited to a further CIL training session/forum	1200 parties consulted on PDCS and told of the Developers Forum.11
Plymouth: Plymouth Preliminary draft Charging Schedule – on the Plymouth website	Considering DCS responses			PDCS- 22 (14 from the development industry) DCS- 15 (10 from Development industry. Also developers from the Plymouth regeneration forum (4 or 5 from the outset))	

- 2.4 A [draft manual](#) (March 2012) setting out all the main elements of introducing and implementing a CIL has been produced by the London Borough of Redbridge in conjunction with the PAS. Within the manual is a case study of how the London Borough of Redbridge developed and implemented its CIL.

Front Runners Project

- 2.5 The aim of the Front Runners Project is to ensure that all Local Authorities can access useful examples of good practice. PAS will be providing support to all CIL front runners and will use their experiences to inform its events and the information will be shared on the PAS website.
- 2.6 PAS reports that the front runner Local Authorities that have succeeded at examination have rates that range from £0 to £575 per square metre illustrating the local nature of setting a CIL.
- 2.7 In all areas, with the exception of parts of Newark and Sherwood and Roehampton in Wandsworth, residential uses are levying above £0, but there is a range between £575 per square metre on the Thames waterfront at Nine Elms, Wandsworth and £40 per sq metre in Shropshire.
- 2.8 It is noted that it has been fairly common for office and industrial (B use) floorspace to be rated at £0 per square metre reflecting the challenging economic and development climate and often the practical evidence of application numbers submitted for these uses. Only Redbridge, of those that have adopted, has a single flat rate, although others are following their lead. Newark and Sherwood, the first authority to go through examination, remains the most complex structure of differentiation.
- 2.9 Most Local Authorities have CIL rates of between £40-£105 for residential, limited differentiation of four uses and/or only two or three geographic zones. PAS comments that so far there has been very limited levels of consultation response from interested parties but where there has been early engagement by the development industry on viability assumptions, cost and values, it has been of significant value to the Local Authority in the rate setting.
- 2.10 PAS advises that this has resulted in reviews of the assumptions, rates or further testing of evidence to ensure that development across the area remains deliverable. It appears likely that the development industry will become more involved and engaged with the CIL setting process as more authorities develop their CILs and awareness in the development industry increases.

Front runner phase two support programme

- 2.11 PAS support for the second phase of CIL Front Runners started in July 2011 with two workshops. PAS has commissioned consultants to provide the support to the authorities.

The second Group of CIL front runners are divided into three groups:

Group one

- Redcar and Cleveland Council
- St Helens Council
- Barnsley Metropolitan Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Milton Keynes Council
- Cambridgeshire Horizons; East Cambs (draft charging schedule) and Huntingdon (adopted) and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Group two

- Swindon Borough Council
- Torbay Council - preliminary draft charging schedule.
- Plymouth City Council - draft charging schedule
- Bristol City Council - approved at examination with no alterations
- Havant Borough Council - draft charging schedule
- Oxford City Council
- Wycombe District Council - submitted for examination

Group three

- London Borough of Islington - preliminary draft charging schedule
- London Borough of Sutton - preliminary draft charging schedule
- London Borough of Wandsworth - completed examination
- London Borough of Barnet - preliminary draft charging schedule
- London Borough of Croydon - submitted for examination
- Elmbridge Borough Council - draft charging schedule
- Chelmsford Borough Council - preliminary draft charging schedule

2.12 As part of the Front Runners Project, PAS asked Local Authorities for their top tips and what they thought the common myths were in the development of CIL:

Top Tips

1. Engage and secure corporate and political buy in at the start of your CIL project
2. Understand in detail the viability in your local area; read the report
3. Take account of all the policy costs such as affordable housing, s106 when doing CIL assessment as they are interlinked
4. Have a project plan in place and understand the risks at the outset
5. Start CIL implementation early, its more work than the charging schedule
6. Read and understand the regulations

Top Myths

1. The CIL regulations are simple and understood by everyone
- This is clearly not true particularly when you see the responses to the schedule consultation
2. Local Authority services will have clear infrastructure plans to support your funding gap
3. CIL will pay for all of your infrastructure

4. CIL will single handedly stop development
 - The provision of new infrastructure through CIL will make an area more attractive encouraging investment. And generally CIL as a proportion of the value of a development will usually be very small.
5. CIL is expensive and will take a long time to put in place.
6. Developers prefer CIL to Section 106. - This is not necessarily true as they often had more control over the delivery of infrastructure in the s106 regime.

Series of events

- 2.13 PAS ran a series of CIL events regarding preparing a charging schedule and setting a charge. All presentations and speaker notes from the events have been made available on the [PAS website](#). Examples of the presentation material include experience to date from Shropshire Council, Redbridge and Portsmouth and details of a presentation provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on adopting a schedule – regulations and guidance.
- 2.14 The Panel may find it useful background information to look over details of the [presentations](#).

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Phil Larratt, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Infrastructure Requirements and Section 106 Agreements

Date: 21st September 2012

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Member/officer briefing

Val Coleby & Grant Perks

30 January 2012

Before we start...



Programme

- **What is CIL?**
- **Break**
- **Examples of CIL**
- **CIL in West Northants**

What is CIL?

- **Planning Act - 2008**
- **CIL Regulations – April 2010**
- **Guidance - March 2010**
- **Regulations update - April 2011**
- **CIL overview update – May 2011**
- **Consultation on Reg changes – 2011**
- **Localism Act – 2011**



What is CIL?

- **A charge on new development**
- **Development over 100sqm gross**
- **Buildings that people normally go into**
- **Can apply to development that doesn't require planning permission**

What is CIL?

- **£x per square metre on net additional floorspace**
- **Due from the date the development is commenced**
- **The levy will be index linked**
- **The owner of the land pays**

Why introduce CIL?

- Local authorities can choose to introduce it or not
- A ‘pro-growth tool’
- It’s your ‘flexible friend’
- A little from almost everyone

Why introduce CIL?

- April 2014 deadline – restrictions on pooled S106 contributions
- Tightening up on how S106 contributions are applied
- Lack of government money

What you need to set a CIL

- Up to date development plan



What you need to set a CIL

- Evidence of an infrastructure funding gap

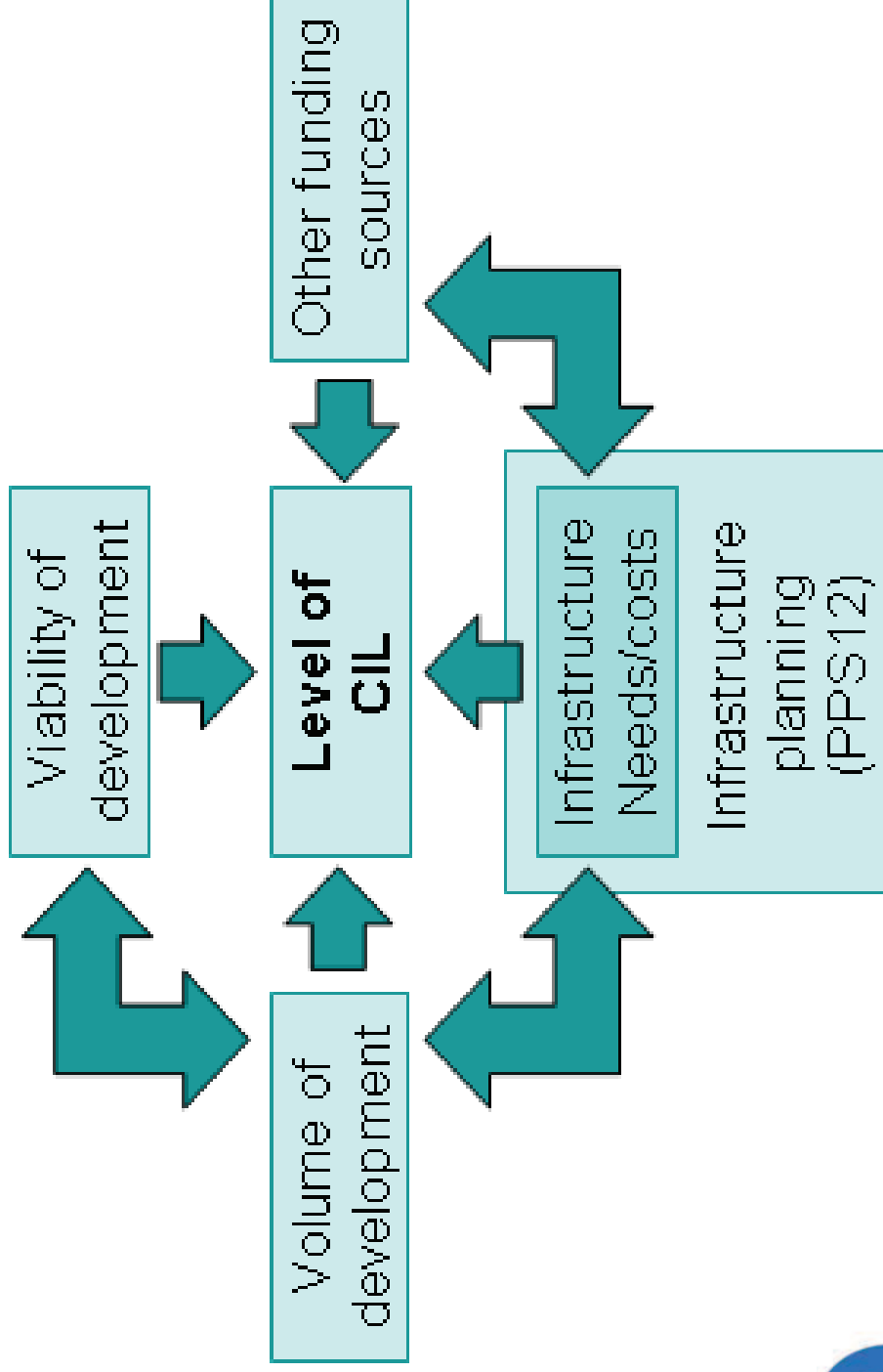


What you need to set a CIL

- Evidence on viability

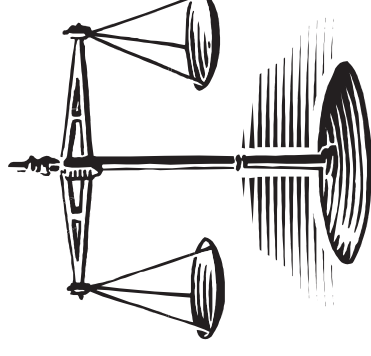


Matters to take into account in setting CIL



What you need to set a CIL

‘Strike the balance’



Desirability of funding the
infrastructure via CIL

V

The effect on the economic
viability of development



West Northamptonshire
Joint Planning Unit

Setting the CIL rate

- **Single rate across the whole area**
- or**
- **Different rates for different types of development**
- or**
- **Different rates in different areas**

Setting the CIL rate

- **The CIL rate or rates are subject to independent examination**
- **Informed by appropriate available evidence**
- **An appropriate balance has been struck**

Collecting CIL

- **A highly regulated administrative process**
 - **Notifications**
 - **Appeals**
 - **Relief**
 - **Penalties**

Spending CIL

- **CIL monies are not ring-fenced but must be spent on infrastructure**
- **It is up to the local authority how the money is spent**
- **The local authority have to produce a spending list**

Spending CIL

- **Collecting Authorities must report on amount collected and amount spent.**
- **This must be annually**
- **‘Real time’ reporting is under consideration.**

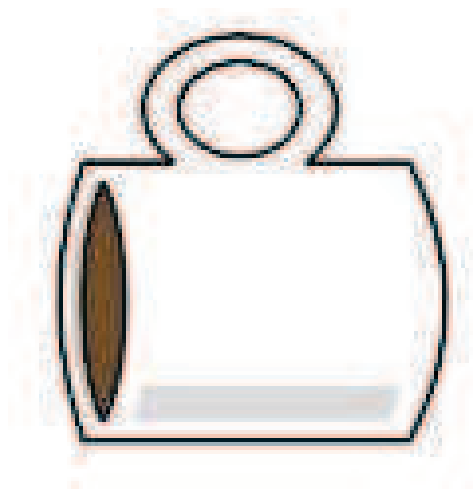
Key messages

- **CIL is to support growth**
- **Your CIL rate needs to be informed by viability**
- **Don't expect to meet all of your funding gap**
- **Keep it simple**

Key messages

- **The Local Authority has control over spending**
- **Without CLL funding strategic infrastructure will be harder**
- **Authorities need to work corporately and work together**

BREAK



Examples of CIL

- **3 local authorities have CIL in place**
 - **Newark and Sherwood District Council**
 - **Shropshire Council**
 - **London Borough of Redbridge**



Examples of CIL

- **Many others have draft charges at various stages of consultation**

Portsmouth City Council

Wycombe District Council

Plymouth City Council

Colchester Borough Council

Greater Norwich Development Partnership and others.....

Examples of CIL

Newark and Sherwood District Council

7 geographic zones with differing charges against 4 types of development

Charges range from nil to £100 per sqm

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Charging Schedule

NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Commercial Community Infrastructure Levy Rates

Zones	Hotel C1	Residential Institution CZ	Industrial B11/B11*/B2/B8	Offices B1a	Large Retail (500-sq.m+)	Small Retail (< 500-sq.m)	Community/ Institutional D1	Leisure D2	Agricultural	Sui Generis
Newark Growth Point	£0	£0	£20	£0	£125	£100	£0	£0	£0	£0
1 Newark & Rural South	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
2 Collingham	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
3 Newark & Rural North	£0	£0	£15	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
4 Southwell	£0	£0	£5	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
5 Nottingham Fringe	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
6 Sherwood	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0
7 Mansfield Fringe	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£75	£0	£0	£0	£0

Examples of CIL

Portsmouth City Council

a basic rate (£105 per sqm) for all development types with a variation for unree types of development (retail, hotels and residential institutions) at a lower rate (£53 per sqm)

Portsmouth City Council

Charging Schedule

Table 3:
Proposed CIL rates (referred to as R in the formulae below) in £ per m²

Use class/Type of Development	CIL Rate
All development types unless stated otherwise in this table	Basic CIL rate: £105
A1 – A5 In-centre retail of any size and small (<280m ²) out-of-centre retail	£53
B1(a), B1, B2, B8 Office and Industrial	£0
C1 Hotels	£53
C2 Residential Institutions	£53
D1 community Uses	£0

Examples of CIL

Shropshire Council

- 2 geographic zones (urban/rural)
- 1 form of development (residential)

London Borough of Redbridge

- 1 charge for all forms of development no zones identified



West Northamptonshire
Joint Planning Unit

London Borough of Redbridge

Charging Schedule

“A CIL of £70/m² of gross internal floorspace shall apply to any new building or an extension to an existing building in the London Borough of Redbridge if it has at least 100m² of gross internal floorspace or involves the creation of a dwelling even when that is below 100m²”

Examination of CIL rates

- 5 CIL examinations to date
- 1 by written representations
- Mayoral CIL charge was the most contested

Examples of CIL spending lists

- 3 Reg 123 lists exist at present
 - Newark and Sherwood District Council
 - Shropshire Council
 - London Borough of Redbridge

Examples of CIL collection

- Watch this space



CIL in West Northamptonshire

- **Each authority will be a charging authority in its own right**
- **Each authority will produce its own spending list**
- **Each authority will agree its own spending priority**

CIL in West Northamptonshire

- **Joint approach to viability evidence**
- **Joint approach to identification of an infrastructure funding gap**
- **Joint examination of CIL rates**
- **Coordination of spending lists for strategic cross-boundary infrastructure**



CIL in West Northamptonshire

- Do we have everything we need?
 - an up to date development plan
 - an infrastructure funding gap
 - viability evidence

CIL in West Northamptonshire

- **Timetable**
- **Run CIL preparation alongside Joint Core Strategy**
- **Adopted Joint Core Strategy anticipated mid 2013**
- **Adopted CIL shortly afterward**



Thank you for listening

Any questions?



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Appendix C

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND

S106 AGREEMENTS

BRIEFING NOTE: CIL AND THE 'MEANINGFUL PROPORTION'

Introduction:

The Localism Act introduces a duty to pass money collected through CIL from the local authority to other persons or bodies (section 115). Explanatory notes to the Localism Act explain that s115 sets out a *framework* for the process of transferring CIL money from one body to another.

The 'Meaningful proportion' is the amount of CIL collected by the charging/collecting authority to the community group. The regulations will explain in further detail

- The area to which the meaningful proportion applies;
- The bodies it will apply to;
- The amount and timings of payments;
- Things that may or may not be funded;
- Monitoring, accounting and reporting; and
- When money should be returned to the local authority.¹

The explanatory notes to the Localism Act provide some clarification on what the meaningful proportion can be used for. The notes state that:

*"[...] funds may be applied to infrastructure or any other matter that supports development by addressing the demands that it places on the areas that host it."*²

Ministerial Announcement:

In January 2013, the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Planning, Nick Boles MP announced that the Meaningful proportion will be set at 25% for parished communities with a Neighbourhood Plan in place. The Minister's principle is that communities will accept new development more readily when offered a cash incentive, thereby increasing the rate of house-building.³

This statement closely relates to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 175 which states that CIL should:

¹ Explanatory Notes, Localism Act, s115 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/notes/division/5/6/2/2>

² Explanatory Notes, Localism Act, s115 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/notes/division/5/6/2/2>

³ Communities to receive cash boost for choosing development, DCLG, 10/01/13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-to-receive-cash-boost-for-choosing-development>

“... support and incentivise new development, particularly by placing control over a meaningful proportion of the funds raised with the neighbourhoods where development takes place.”⁴

Further explanation was published on the gov.uk website with regard to how the proportion will be applied. This is set out in figure 1, below:

✓Parish Council ✓Neighbourhood Plan (adopted) = 25% of CiL, uncapped, Paid to the Parish	✓Parish Council ✗Neighbourhood Plan = 15% capped at £100 per council tax dwelling, paid to the Parish
✗Parish Council ✓Neighbourhood Plan (adopted) = 25% of CiL, uncapped, local authority consults with the community	✗Parish Council ✗Neighbourhood Plan = 15% capped at £100 per council tax dwelling, local authority consults with

Figure 1: Meaningful proportion

Context and History:

The Consultation ‘Detailed Proposals and Draft regulations for reform’ (October 2011) set out the requirement to pass a ‘meaningful proportion’ of CIL to the local community. The document states:

“Clause 103 of the Localism Bill allows ministers to lay regulations to place a duty on charging authorities to pass a proportion of the funds that they raise through the levy to other persons. We intend to use the powers conferred by this clause to require charging authorities to allocate a meaningful proportion of the revenue generated from the levy to the local elected council for the area where the development and growth take place.”

The consultation invited responses with regard to what this proportion should be. The consultation covered a range of different elements of how this transfer could work, including potential caps to the fund, who it is payable too and what it can be spent on. Many expected the proportion to be in the region of 5-10%. The regulations which set out the transfer mechanisms are subject to a further revision of the regulation, due in early 2013.

Issues

1. **Impact on Local Authority Infrastructure Spend:** The Planning Officers' Society (POS) said the measure could seriously prejudice the delivery of essential infrastructure and hinder growth as a result.⁵
2. **Redefinition of the purpose of CIL:** The NPPF introduced the concept of using CIL money as an ‘incentive’ for neighbourhoods through providing local control over the funds, rather than merely offsetting local infrastructure needs arising from new development.

⁴ P175, NPPF https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

⁵ Fears over levy plan threat to infrastructure, Planning Resource, 25/01/13 <http://www.planningresource.co.uk/news/1167970/Fears-levy-plan-threat-infrastructure/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH>

3. **'Token' Neighbourhood Plans:** there have been a number of discussions relating to Parish Councils in areas of high growth producing 'tokenistic' neighbourhood plans to receive the uncapped amount.
4. **Cross boundary, cross Parish Agreements:** It remains unclear with regard to what happens to CIL collected within a Parish but outside of a Neighbourhood Area, or how receipts could be split between adjoining parishes that experience significant expansion.

Summary

The proportion of CIL provided to local communities will be higher than that initially expected by local authorities. There is significant uncertainty in relation to how the meaningful proportion will be applied in practice, and its effects on growth, particularly in relation to cross boundary issues. An update to members will be provided when further clarification arises.

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - SECTION 106 AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

KEY QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

The Infrastructure Delivery Plans in the JCS and CAAP set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the development required in West Northamptonshire by 2026 and this has been endorsed by all partners and relevant agencies in advance of submission of the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. As the infrastructure requirements are now established, the Panel would like to explore the following within that context:

1. How do we determine funding priorities, lead delivery agencies and accountability against delivery timetables and funding availability to ensure the timely delivery of key infrastructure projects?
2. What priority or how should priority be assigned to affordable housing and other Section 106 obligations when CIL is introduced given viability and other constraints?
3. Given the funding gap of £439.6 million as identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2012, what sources of funding can be identified and are available to the Council and its partners for the delivery of infrastructure to supplement Sec 106 contributions and CIL revenue?
4. What mechanisms need to be put in place between the Council and its partners to ensure proper cross boundary funding of key infrastructure. Are the JCS policies and provisions and the statutory duty to co-operate enough, or do we need other protocols?

5. The Government intends that a meaningful proportion of CIL should be allocated to be spent in the community local to the CIL development. What is a meaningful proportion in the Northampton context. Given the funding deficit is there a danger that key strategic infrastructure will not be delivered if too much is diverted to local projects?



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Appendix E

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND S106 AGREEMENTS

BRIEFING NOTE: CONSTRUCTION FUTURES

1 Construction Futures

1.1 Construction Futures reports that it has developed an innovative way to deliver construction training and apprenticeships, including:

- Delivering training and jobs through the planning and procurement system
- Embedding requirements in section106 agreements and contracts

1.2 Construction Futures has developed ways for public sector organisations to create construction apprenticeships and training placements. It reports that Planning Authorities have the right processes and procedures to kick-start the careers of local people through two potential methods:

Harness the Planning System - Construction Homes works with Local Authorities to help create jobs and training. When a planning application is proposed, Construction Homes uses specialist software to forecast what training and employment opportunities could be generated by the development. These opportunities are agreed with developers and embedded in S106 Agreements. Once the development is on-site, Construction Futures work with local training providers to supply suitably skilled, site-ready trainees.

Enhance Public Procurement - Construction Futures reports that it has established a way to create apprenticeships and training placements on new developments. It advised that it has established the legal framework to embed training requirements in development contracts. When the development is on-site, Construction Futures work with local training providers to supply suitably skilled, site-ready trainees. Construction Futures manages the whole process.

1.3 Construction Futures also provides information for:

Potential Trainees

Developers

Training Providers

- 1.4 Free seminars are offered to developers.
- 2.5 Construction Futures has developed a [website](#).

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Phil Larratt, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Infrastructure Requirements and Section 106 Agreements

Date: 4th October 2012

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Budget Scrutiny – Reporting and Monitoring Working Group

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In recent years the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has set up a Reporting and Monitoring Working Group annually that provides initial scrutiny input in the budget process. The Group reviews the budget and refers specific budget items to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider in detail. This takes place in January each year.
- 1.2 This Group was set up again last year and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is keen for this type of budget scrutiny to continue as he recognises this type of budget scrutiny as an example of best practice.
- 1.3 This scrutiny activity will continue to operate as a Working Group, operating directly with the Finance service, feeding back its schedule of budget items for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider in late January/early February.
- 1.4 Membership of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group for 2012/2013 comprised:

Councillor Les Marriott (Chair)
Councillor Brendan Glynane
Councillor Beverley Mennell
Councillor Nilesh Parekh
Councillor Danielle Stone

- 1.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to determine the membership of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group for 2013/2014. It is noted that the Working Group usually comprises a number of members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although other non-Executive members may also be invited to join. The Chair of the Working Group should be a member of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

- 1.6 Dates for the meetings of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group have been set:

3 October 2013	5.15pm
6 January 2014	5.15pm
22 January 2014	5.15pm

- 1.7 The Terms of Reference of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group will be presented to the meeting of the O&S Committee on 11 November 2013 for approval.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee determines membership of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group 2013/2014.

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 May 2013

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY– WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

In Depth Policy Reviews

Topic Area	Rationale for Review	Scrutiny Panel	Lead Councillor	Suggested Timescale
Improving the town's parks 265	To evaluate community engagement for the improvement of parks and green spaces	Scrutiny Panel 1 – Improving the town's parks	Councillor Elizabeth Gowen	From: June 2013 To: December 2013 (approx.)
Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (including HMOs)	To investigate the regulation and management of private lettings	Scrutiny Panel 2- Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (including HMOs)	Councillor Danielle Stone	From: July 2013 To: April/May 2014 (approx.)

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

West Northants Development Corporation	To ensure the smooth transition from WNDC to Northampton Borough Council	Scrutiny Panel 3 – West Northants Development Corporation	Councillor Jamie Lane	From: July 2013 To: April/May 2014 (approx.)
Responding to the Welfare Reform Act	To evaluate the effect of the Welfare Reform Act on the public and Council employees	Scrutiny Panel 1- Responding to the Welfare Reform Act	Councillor Lee Mason	From: January 2014 (approx.) To: TBC
Reporting and Monitoring Working Group	To provide scrutiny input early on in the budget process and to review the effects and implications of the budget changes	Working Group	Councillor TBC	From October 2013 To Ongoing

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY– MONITORING WORK 2013/2014

COMPLETED REPORTS AND MONITORING STATUS

Cabinet meeting that received the Overview and Scrutiny Review report 267	Title of report	Monitoring Activity
9 th June 2010	Community Centres	Date of Cabinet response: 28 July 2010 (reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 20 September 2010) Monitoring activity: 19 September 2011 meeting Further monitoring: 28th May 2012 meeting Further monitoring – 31st January 2013 meeting Update – 27 January 2014 meeting

Agenda Item 15

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Cabinet meeting that received the Overview and Scrutiny Review report	Title of report	Monitoring Activity
25 May 2011	Neighbourhood Model	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 7th July 2011</p> <p>(reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 19 September 2011)</p> <p>Monitoring activity: 28th May 2012 Further monitoring 28th January 2013 10 June 2013</p>
25 May 2011	Lease that Northampton Borough Council has with Northampton Town Football Club, the contractual arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 7th March 2012</p> <p>(reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 26th March 2012)</p> <p>Monitoring activity: 17th September 2012 10th June 2013</p>
25 May 2011	Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 28 July 2011</p> <p>(reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 19 September 2011)</p> <p>Monitoring activity: 28th May 2012 Further monitoring 31st January 2013 Update 27 January 2014</p>

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Cabinet meeting that received the Overview and Scrutiny Review report	Title of report	Monitoring Activity
14 December 2011	Councillor Empowerment Fund	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 7th March 2012 (reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 26th March 2012)</p> <p>Interim monitoring activity: 17th September 2012 Monitoring activity: 10th June 2013</p>
16 January 2013	Hate Crime Reporting Mechanisms	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 16 January 2013 (reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 31 January 2013)</p> <p>Monitoring activity: 9 September 2013</p>
16 January 2013	Customer Services	<p>Date of Cabinet response: 16 January 2013 (reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 31 January 2013)</p> <p>Monitoring activity: 9 September 2013</p>
	Independent Living Strategy	Date of Cabinet response: expected in the autumn 2013

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Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2013

Briefing Note: Northamptonshire County Council's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

1 Background

- 1.1 Councillor Matt Lynch has been appointed as Northampton Borough Council's representative to Northamptonshire County Council's (NCC) Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising and reviewing issues and services relating to:
 - health;
 - adult social care; and
 - public health
- 1.3 A meeting of NCC's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was held on 5 June 2013.

2 Update

- 2.1 The Committee considered the appointment of co-opted members for 2013/2014. It was agreed that it be recommended to Northamptonshire County Council's full Council that voting co-optees from districts and borough Councils be appointed for 2013/2014.
- 2.2 The Committee received a presentation about its remit and powers and met the new Director of Public Health and Wellbeing – Dr Akeem Ali.
- 2.3 Details of the main issues discussed at the meeting held on 5 June 2013 are listed below:

www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Call 01604 837408

E-mail: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

2.4 The agenda comprised the following main items:

2.5 **Executive Scrutiny: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

The Committee questioned the Cabinet member about his Portfolio priorities and challenges.

2.6 **Shaping Healthcare in Northamptonshire: NHS Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) Commissioning Intentions**

The Committee considered the CCGs' joint commissioning intentions putting forward its comments.

3 **Conclusions**

3.1 That the update is noted.

3.2 That, should Northamptonshire County Council's full Council approve the appointment of co-optees to its Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, regular updates be provided by Councillor Matt Lynch to this Committee.

3.3 The meetings of Northamptonshire County Council's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are scheduled for:

- 4 September
- 5 November
- 8 March 2014

commencing at 10:00am.

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Matt Lynch

6 June 2013

www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Call 01604 837408

E-mail: ttiff@northampton.gov.uk



Northampton Borough Council

(Section 5 & 9 of The Local Authorities – (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012)

Decision Maker: Cabinet

Directorate:	Customers and Communities
Report of:	Director of Customers and Communities
Public or Private	PUBLIC
Expected Date of Decision:	12 June 2013
Title of Expected Decision	Improving Northampton's Parks and Open Spaces
Record of the expected decision to be made:	Approve the refresh of the 2009 parks and open spaces and approve proposals for improved local management of parks.

Directorate:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
Report of:	Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
Public or Private	PUBLIC
Expected Date of Decision:	12 June 2013
Title of Expected Decision	Northampton 'Heritage Gateway' Feasibility Study and Options Appraisal
Record of the expected decision to be made:	Approve the outline proposal for the 'Heritage Gateway' as set out in the report.

Where indicated a decision or part of a decision may be made in Private – details regarding this can be found by [clicking here](#). Anyone wishing to make representations that this matter should be discussed in public, should do so by not later than 12 Calendar Days prior to the meeting, using the details below:
 The Monitoring Officer c/o The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE or
 email: democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

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