



**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **CABINET AGENDA**

**Wednesday, 20 May 2020**

This meeting will be held remotely at  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/northamptonbctv>

At 6:00 pm

**Members of the Cabinet:**

**Councillor:** Jonathan Nunn (Leader of the Council)

**Councillor:** Phil Larratt (Deputy Leader)

**Councillors:** Mike Hallam, Tim Hadland, Stephen Hibbert, Brandon Eldred, Anna King and James Hill.

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**Chief Executive**

**George Candler**

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact  
[democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk) or 01604 837722

## PORTFOLIOS OF CABINET MEMBERS

CABINET MEMBER	TITLE
Councillor J Nunn	Leader
Councillor P Larratt	Deputy Leader
Councillor M Hallam	Environment
Councillor B Eldred	Finance
Councillor T Hadland	Regeneration and Enterprise
Councillor S Hibbert	Housing and Wellbeing
Councillor A King	Community Engagement and Safety
Councillor J Hill	Planning

## SPEAKING AT CABINET MEETINGS

### **PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE TAKING PLACE REMOTELY – SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS OF PUBLIC SPEAKER REGISTRATION/HOW TO VIEW THE MEETING**

Persons (other than Members) wishing to address Cabinet must register their intention to do so by 12 noon on the day of the meeting and may speak on any item on that meeting's agenda. It is recommended that you register well before the deadline to ensure that you can be sent the link to the meeting in time for it to start.

Registration can be by:

Telephone: (01604) 837722  
(Fax 01604 837057)

In writing: Democratic and Member Services Manager  
The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE  
For the attention of the Democratic Services Officer

By e-mail to [democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk)

- **Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Zoom video conferencing webinar for this meeting.**

Only thirty minutes in total will be allowed for addresses, so that if speakers each take three minutes no more than ten speakers will be heard. Each speaker will be allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes at each meeting. Speakers will normally be heard in the order in which they registered to speak. However, the Chair of Cabinet may decide to depart from that order in the interest of hearing a greater diversity of views on an item, or hearing views on a greater number of items. The Chair of Cabinet may also decide to allow a greater number of addresses and a greater time slot subject still to the maximum three minutes per address for such addresses for items of special public interest.

Members who wish to address Cabinet shall notify the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting and may speak on any item on that meeting's agenda. A maximum of thirty minutes in total will be allowed for addresses by Members unless the Chair exercises discretion to allow longer. The time these addresses take will not count towards the thirty minute period referred to above so as to prejudice any other persons who have registered their wish to speak.

## KEY DECISIONS

 denotes the issue is a 'Key' decision:

- Any decision in relation to the Executive function\* which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of saving which are significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. For these purpose the minimum financial threshold will be £250,000;
- Where decisions are not likely to involve significant expenditure or savings but nevertheless are likely to be significant in terms of their effects on communities in two or more wards or electoral divisions; and
- For the purpose of interpretation a decision, which is ancillary or incidental to a Key decision, which had been previously taken by or on behalf of the Council shall not of itself be further deemed to be significant for the purpose of the definition.

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/northamptonbctv>

on Wednesday, 20 May 2020

at 6:00 pm.

**George Candler**  
Chief Executive

**AGENDA**

- 1. APOLOGIES**
- 2. MINUTES**
- 3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY**
- 4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES**
- 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**
- 7. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-23**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 8. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 9. PURCHASE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF RIVERSIDE HOUSE FOR USE AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 10. REDEVELOPMENT OF BELGRAVE HOUSE FOR AFFORDABLE RENTED HOUSING**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 11. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 12. NORTHAMPTON ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY**  
 (Copy herewith)
- 13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

THE CHAIR TO MOVE:

“THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF SUCH CATEGORIES OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED BY SECTION 100(1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS LISTED AGAINST SUCH ITEMS OF BUSINESS BY REFERENCE TO THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH OF SCHEDULE 12A TO SUCH ACT.”

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**Exempted Under Schedule  
12A of L.Govt Act 1972  
Para No: 3**

14. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC ACQUISITION (3)  
📎 (Copy herewith)
15. EXEMPT APPENDICES TO AGENDA ITEM 9 (3)  
(Copy herewith)
16. EXEMPT APPENDICES TO AGENDA ITEM 10 (3)  
(Copy herewith)

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## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

Wednesday, 4 March 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill, Hibbert and King

#### **APOLOGIES:**

##### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

##### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February were agreed and signed by the Leader.

##### **3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY**

There was no intention to hold any part of the meeting in private.

##### **4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

There were none.

##### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

##### **6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

##### **7. BOROUGH WIDE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

Councillor Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member outlined the report. Responses from the consultation carried out in November/December 2019 had been supportive and the Article 4 Direction now needed to be agreed.

Councillor McCutcheon addressed Cabinet and welcomed the report. However, he expressed concern over parking problems – particularly where planning decisions had been overturned on appeal by the Inspectorate. He queried whether there had been sufficient investment in enforcement, and asked whether the Article 4 Direction would be expanded into the growth areas beyond NBC's boundaries as these areas would form part of the new West Northamptonshire Council.

In answering these concerns, Councillor Hill pointed out that a Supplementary Planning Document addressing parking issues had been brought to Cabinet a few months previously - the current report was concerned with process. He considered that adequate resources were available for enforcement. Expansion of the area covered would be an issue for consideration by the unitary council.

The Head of Planning noted that a need would have to be shown before the Secretary of State would agree to expansion of the area covered by the Article 4 Direction. Setting up the new unitary council would be a prompt to do that.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That Cabinet confirms the Article 4 Direction made by the Council on 7 November 2019 the effect of which will be to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Class C3 Dwellinghouses to Class C4 Houses In Multiple Occupation in the area of the Borough as shown on Map 1 and which will come into force on 13 November 2020.

## **8. DISPOSAL OF COMMUNITY CENTRE SHOPS**

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member outlined the report seeking approval for disposal of 15 shops by way of a freehold sale. He pointed out that these properties did not sit well with the Council's overall portfolio. Repair costs were increasing and rental values reducing. Occupying tenants would be offered first refusal at the market value, with a restrictive covenant to ensure continuation of retail use. If unsold after six months the shops would be offered for sale on the open market.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the community centre shops shown on Annex 1 to this report are progressed for sale.
- 2.2 That the process for the sale is as follows:-
  - 2.2.1 That each one has a restrictive covenant placed on the title to remain as commercial use on the ground floor within use Class A1, changes within this use class are regulated by Planning Policy.
  - 2.2.2 That the shops will be sold at market value (to comply with the Council's obligation to obtain best consideration), determined by an independent RICS registered valuer taking into account the restrictive covenant and the costs of sale.
  - 2.2.3 That the tenants are given the opportunity to purchase the shops at the market value as determined by the Council's market valuation.
  - 2.2.4 To allow the tenants a period of six months from the date of the valuation to confirm their offer to purchase the shops and provide evidence of financial ability to complete in a timely manner.
  - 2.2.5 That those shops which are not under offer after six months will be progressed for sale on the open market.
- 2.3 That authority be delegated to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to progress this sale on the terms listed in points 2.2.1 – 2.2.5

## **9. PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT - QUARTER 3**

Councillor Larratt as the relevant Cabinet Member outlined the performance indicators for October-December 2019. Over 79% of the indicators were exceptional, green or within tolerance. Staff sickness (BV 012) had been a persistent issue, but was now over-performing and missed bins/boxes (ESC01) was also very good.

There had been issues with household waste (EC04) – which could be seasonal.

Councillor Larratt questioned whether EC06 included the major road network. There had been many complaints regarding the A45, which NBC were willing to clear, but this required co-operation from Highways England to arrange lane closures.

Councillor Larratt reported that it was hoped to split indicator EC09 so that fly tipping of hazardous and non-hazardous waste were reported separately. Hazardous waste took longer to remove because of the need to involve specialist contractors.

The Enterprise Zone indicators (MPE01 and MPE02) were expected to improve over time.

RESOLVED:

2.1 That Cabinet review the contents of the performance report (Appendix 1).

The meeting concluded at 6:20 pm

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Appendices

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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Approval of Northampton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2020-23</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Expected Date of Decision:</b>	20 May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	Yes
<b>Directorate:</b>	Housing and Wellbeing
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Hibbert
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to approve Northampton Borough Council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2020-23 ("the Strategy").
- 1.2 Implementation of the Strategy will continue until the transition to a new unitary West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021, which will become the local housing authority for all of West Northamptonshire on that date, and by which time it is likely that a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will have been developed for the new authority.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - (a) Approves the Council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2020-2023; and

- (b) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, to make any minor changes to improve the layout and readability of the Strategy and Action Plan prior to publication.

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report Background**

- 3.1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 (“the Act”) requires the Council to undertake a Review of Homelessness (“the Review”) in the Borough of Northampton (“the Borough”) for the purpose of formulating and publishing a new Homelessness Strategy (“the Strategy”) at least once every five years, based on the findings of that Review. It must allow for the inspection, without charge, of the results of the Review by members of the public.
- 3.1.2 The Council must then take that Strategy into account in the exercise of its local housing authority functions. The Act also requires the social services authority for Northamptonshire, namely Northamptonshire County Council (“NCC”), to take the Council’s Strategy into account in the exercise of their own functions in the Borough.
- 3.1.3 A Homelessness Review means a review of the level, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the Borough and the activities that are carried out for the purpose of:
- preventing homelessness;
  - securing that accommodation is or will be available for people in the Borough who are or may become homeless; and
  - providing support for people in the Borough who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- 3.1.4 A Homelessness Strategy is a strategy formulated for the objectives of :
- Preventing homelessness in the Borough;
  - securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless; and
  - securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the Borough who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- 3.1.5 A Strategy may include specific objectives to be pursued, and specific action planned to be taken, in the course of the exercise of the functions of the Council as a local housing authority, as well as by NCC as a social services authority.

- 3.1.6 In formulating or modifying a Strategy, the Council must have regard to its Housing Allocation Scheme and its Tenancy Strategy, the latter to which the registered providers of social housing in the Borough must have regard when formulating policies regarding the tenancies they grant.
- 3.1.7 In recent years, substantial amendments have been made to the primary homelessness legislation which the Council's Strategy needs to consider, including, most notably, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect in April 2018.
- 3.1.8 In February 2018, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government ("MHCLG") published its Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and, in August 2018, it published its National Rough Sleepers Strategy and directed local housing authorities to include rough sleeping in their Homelessness Strategies.

#### The Council's Homelessness Review

- 3.1.9 The purpose of the Council's Review of Homelessness , which was carried out during October and November 2019 and which was conducted having considered MHCLG's 2018 Code of Guidance, was to:
- Examine current levels of homelessness and housing need, break down the underlying causes of homelessness and the types of household that become homeless, and consider whether certain groups or types of household are at higher risk of homelessness or require specific intervention;
  - Identify current provision in the area; mapping services and activities and the resources available to the Council and its statutory and voluntary sector partners to prevent and relieve homelessness; and
  - Identify gaps and weaknesses in the current provision and estimate likely future levels of homelessness and the range of factors that may affect and contribute to them.

#### Northampton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-23

- 3.1.10 The findings from the Homelessness Review were then used to inform the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Objectives and Action Plan during a series of workshops with stakeholders who work with single homeless people, rough sleepers and families.
- 3.1.11 When the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was completed, a 28-day public consultation was held in February and March 2020.
- 3.1.12 The Strategy (see **Appendix C**) takes into account the new legislation and guidance, the findings of the Review of Homelessness (see **Appendix A**) and the results and analysis of the public consultation (see **Appendix B**).

## 3.2 Issues

### Key findings from Northampton's Review of Homelessness

#### 3.2.1 The key findings from the Review are as follows:

- The number of homeless households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty has increased significantly over the past few years. Together with a severe shortage of suitable move-on accommodation, this has resulted in a large increase in the number of homeless households (families and single people) living in temporary accommodation.
- Higher temporary accommodation numbers have resulted in the Council becoming increasingly reliant on expensive nightly-purchased temporary accommodation that is procured from private landlords.
- The increase in the number of homeless households accepted for rehousing is driven by two main causes: the ending of tenancies in the private rented sector and households being excluded by their parents or other members of their own family.
- This in turn is affected by: (a) diminishing affordability in the private rented sector and the structural problems that are making it difficult for households on a low income to access the private rented sector, and (b) the year-on-year decline in general needs social lettings and households' decreasing access to affordable housing.
- Although new homes are being built for affordable rent, this new housing supply has not kept pace with the steady decline in social lettings in recent years.
- Violent and non-violent relationship breakdown remains a main cause of homelessness.
- Since the 2011 Census, the increase in households renting privately and the decline in homeownership have continued, both in absolute numbers and proportionately.
- In line with the main causes of homelessness, most of the households approaching the Council when they are threatened with homelessness are living in the private rented sector or living with family or friends.
- The profile of the households approaching the Council for assistance under the homelessness legislation is disproportionately young (compared to all residents of Northampton) and disproportionately likely to be headed by a female main applicant.
- A notable aspect of the demographic profile of approaching households is the prevalence of single main applicants; only 17% had a partner in their household.
- A large minority of main applicants were in work (41%)
- Three quarters of households had no recorded support needs. Structural homelessness appears to be a bigger driver for approaching households than unmet support needs and personal causes of homelessness.
- Mental health problems are the most common support need overall and were very common among rough sleepers. Most rough sleepers had multiple support needs.

- Rough sleeping has increased and the Nightshelter continues to receive a steady stream of referrals. Although we acknowledge the limitations of the methodology that the Government has set for conducting Rough Sleeper Counts – and the fact that such Counts provide only a ‘snapshot’ figure that does not include everyone who is sleeping rough – we estimate (based on our six-days-a-week Outreach sessions and the intelligence we receive from local services) that, on any one night, 50 - 60 people sleep rough in Northampton.

### Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

3.2.2 Based on the findings of the Review of Homelessness and the outcome of the Homelessness Forum Workshops held with, four strategic objectives were identified for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, each with their own sub-objectives and actions:

- (1) Creating effective and collaborative partnerships
- (2) Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention
- (3) Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable housing for homeless households
- (4) Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive

#### Objective 1: Creating effective and collaborative partnerships

3.2.3 A recurring theme during the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was the importance of instilling a culture of homelessness prevention within all organisations and not just within the statutory services.

3.2.4 Everyone agreed that more can and should be done to harness the full potential of all services and organisations in the borough.

3.2.5 There was also strong support for the idea of creating a more collaborative environment in which all services and organisations communicate better with one another, there is a lot less duplication, and effective and collaborative partnerships are able to flourish.

3.2.6 In order to achieve this objective, it was agreed that:

- **A Single Homelessness Forum** and a **Family Homelessness Forum** would be established and meet quarterly; and
- **A Shared Directory of Services** (containing details of the services available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness) would be produced and published on the Council’s website in order to improve everyone’s awareness and understanding of local services, what they offer, what they don’t offer and how people can access them.

## Objective 2: Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention

- 3.2.7 Another recurring theme during the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was the importance of early and targeted intervention to prevent homelessness when more options are available.
- 3.2.8 Early and targeted intervention to prevent homelessness is a primary focus of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which created a new Prevention Duty, owed to all eligible households threatened with homelessness within 56 days
- 3.2.9 For most people who are threatened with homelessness – and the services that are working with them – the best outcome is achieved by acting quickly to prevent them becoming homeless in the first place.
- 3.2.10 Acting quickly to prevent homelessness is important for everyone (single people, childless couples and families with children) and, over time, it will help to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and the number of people sleeping rough.
- 3.2.11 Early and targeted intervention will focus on the main causes of homelessness: the loss of private rented accommodation and relationship breakdown (including family exclusion).
- 3.2.12 In order to achieve this objective, it was agreed that:
- **The Housing Advice & Options Service changes** (including the appointment of additional staff and the creation of specialist advisers) will increase the amount of homelessness that can be prevented;
  - **The creation of self-serve Housing Advice** (by providing more interactive and user-friendly web pages on the Council's website) will help young people, care leavers and people leaving prison to help themselves;
  - **Better use of the private rented sector** (achieved by strengthening relationships with private landlords through the Landlord Forum and persuading landlords, with the assistance of financial incentives, to offer new lettings to households nominated by the Council or renew tenancies they were planning to bring to an end) will help reduce the number of private tenants that become homeless.
  - **The Home Visiting Officer** will continue to reduce the number of households that become homeless when they are asked to leave the home of a family member or friend. After completing a holistic assessment of the household's housing needs and financial resources, they will work with the household to address their housing needs and help them to secure suitable settled housing.
  - **By enabling victims of domestic abuse to remain safe in their homes, maximising the number of spaces in the refuges and improving move-on from the refuges**, it will be possible to reduce the number of people who become homeless due to domestic abuse.

Objective 3: Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable housing for homeless households

- 3.2.13 The sharp rise in the number of households living in temporary accommodation, together with the increase in the amount of time that households are required to spend in temporary accommodation, was highlighted as one of the main issues in the Review of Homelessness in Northampton.
- 3.2.14 Managing such a large number of homeless households in temporary accommodation takes up a lot of time and can adversely affect the amount of time that the Council is able to spend on preventing homelessness and meeting households' housing needs.
- 3.2.15 In addition to the impact that living in temporary accommodation is having on the lives and life chances of the households affected, the cost of accommodating hundreds of households in temporary accommodation is having a huge impact on the Council's budget. The new Strategy has been formulated in order to help achieve a reduction in that cost.
- 3.2.16 In order to achieve this objective, it was agreed that:
- **Increasing the supply of affordable housing** is the most effective way of improving the rates of homelessness prevention and relief, and reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and the amount of time they spend in such accommodation;
  - **Improving households' move-on into social housing** can be achieved by increasing the proportion of general needs properties that are allocated to homeless households and working with social landlords to ensure that homes are let and re-let as quickly as possible;
  - **Alternative, more cost-effective temporary accommodation** can be secured by increasing the number of council homes that are used as temporary accommodation, awarding housing applicants extra priority if they continue living with friends or family instead of moving into temporary accommodation, and working with Registered Providers; and
  - **Improving the standard of local housing** will ensure that all of the private rented accommodation that is used to discharge the Council's homelessness duty is suitable and in a good state of repair. The Housing Enforcement Team will take action against criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords who knowingly let out substandard, unsafe and/or unlicensed private rented housing.

#### Objective 4: Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive

- 3.2.17 The Government's target, set out in its national Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2018, is for rough sleeping in England to be halved by the year 2022 and to be reduced to zero by the year 2027.
- 3.2.18 Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 in this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – and the corresponding actions in the Action Plan – will contribute positively to the achievement of the Government's objective.
- 3.2.19 During the Homelessness Workshops, participants emphasised the need to create an environment in which rough sleepers can thrive, realize their full potential and escape from the cycle of repeat homelessness.
- 3.2.20 Although it will be easier to accommodate rough sleepers who have high support needs if they are addressing their support needs, it is important that those who are not doing so are helped to manage better and access the services they need, regardless of their housing situation.
- 3.2.21 Feedback from the Workshops highlighted the importance of day centres, and the daytime activities and services that are available to rough sleepers through these centres and elsewhere in the town. For entrenched rough sleepers, who may find it extremely difficult to leave the streets, these daytime activities and services can make a real difference to their lives.
- 3.2.22 Homeless Link, a national umbrella group for homelessness groups and organisations which helped to facilitate the Workshops, agreed to establish a 'Communities of Practice' group in Northampton to bring together frontline workers from different organisations to find creative solutions for the issues they face. These issues will include working with rough sleepers with high and complex needs such as mental health problems, a history of offending, and drug or alcohol dependency.
- 3.2.23 In order to achieve this objective, it was agreed that:
- **Shared single homelessness assessment forms and processes** will be developed and implemented jointly by the Council and its partners;
  - **Barriers to timely move-on from supported housing** will be identified and overcome;
  - **The Nightshelter's role and effectiveness** will be evaluated;
  - **An evidence-based strategy for future Nightshelter provision in West Northamptonshire** will be developed;
  - **Dedicated housing and support** will be provided for women;
  - **Joint training in trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing and strengths-based practice** will be commissioned;

- **People who have lived experience of homelessness** will be involved in the design and delivery of rough sleeper services
- **A Community of Practice** will be established and meet quarterly;
- **Ongoing MHCLG funding will be sought, in 2020/21** to support the work that is already being done to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in Northampton;
- **The help available for young people (under 25)** will be evaluated and recommendations made for improvement; and
- **The support available for ex-offenders** will be evaluated and recommendations made for improvement.

### 3.3 Choices (Options)

#### Option 1 (recommended)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet can choose to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix C). This option is recommended because the Council has a statutory duty to develop and publish an updated or new Homelessness Strategy not more than five years and publication of the previous Strategy following review. This must include details of the action being taken to tackle rough sleeping.
- 3.3.2 Approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan will mean that it can be published as required by the Homelessness Act 2002 and implementation will begin in earnest.

#### Option 2 (not recommended)

- 3.3.3 Cabinet can choose not to approve the Strategy at Appendix C and to request changes to the Strategy. This option is not recommended because the Council has a statutory duty to publish a Homelessness Strategy, the Strategy has been co-produced with a broad range of services and organisations and the MHCLG requires all local housing authorities to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place.
- 3.3.4 If approval of the Strategy is delayed, the Council is likely to attract criticism from the MHCLG and the many services and organisations that contributed to the development of the Strategy. It will also limit the amount of progress that can be made prior to the 'vesting day' of West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021.

## 4. Implications (including financial implications)

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### 4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is in line with Council policy and will help the Council to meet its policy objectives of tackling, preventing homelessness and reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

## **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 The cost of implementing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan will be met from the Housing and Wellbeing Service's existing budgets. Some of these budgets are currently funded by the MHCLG through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens funding (Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).
- 4.2.2 Levels of external funding will continue to be monitored. If there was to be a reduction in external funding the Action Plan would be reviewed and proposals put forward as to the options open to the Council to deliver differently, supported by a robust business case where necessary.

## **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, which was amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, requires local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness and to "relieve" homelessness for eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 4.3.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to review homelessness in their district and prepare and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the results of that review.
- 4.3.3 The Homelessness Review informing the Strategy and referring to these considerations is appended to this report at Appendix A.
- 4.3.4 Under section 182 of the Housing Act 1996, local authorities must have regard to any Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities when exercising its functions relating to homelessness and prevention of homelessness. The Strategy at Appendix C was formulated taking into account the current Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities published by MHCLG on 22 February 2018.
- 4.3.5 Section 3(8) of the 2002 Act requires the council to consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy. The consultation that has taken place is detailed in Section 4.5 of this report.

## **4.4 Equality and Health**

- 4.4.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2006 lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED") which requires the Council to have due regard when, making strategic decisions, to the desirability of exercising its functions in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, especially when shaping policy and delivering services.
- 4.4.2 The Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

4.4.3 The Review of Homelessness (Appendix A) evaluated how different cohorts of people are affected by homelessness in Northampton. It identified that certain groups are more likely to be affected, as they are more likely to present themselves to the Council as homeless. These groups are:

- Black African, Black Caribbean, Asian and Other ethnic groups
- The 25-44 age group (this group is also more likely to have children)
- Women
- Households with children/pregnant women
- Children
- Lone parents
- Low income households.

4.4.4 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy seeks to address the needs of those groups that are worst affected by homelessness and, where possible, targets resources and specific initiatives at those at greatest risk.

4.4.5 The Strategy's focus on preventing and relieving homelessness will benefit these groups. There should be no potential negative impact on these groups.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

4.5.1 A wide range of services and organisations were consulted during a series of Workshops held during the second half of 2019 and the early part of 2020.

4.5.2 Most of the people who attended the Workshops work with single homeless people, rough sleepers and families. Some are social care professionals.

4.5.3 When the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was completed, a 28-day public consultation was held during February and March 2020. The feedback and analysis from the public consultation is contained in Appendix B.

4.5.4 The feedback received from partners and members of the public was overwhelmingly constructive and positive.

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

4.6.1 The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will help meet the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2019-21:

- **Improving the health and wellbeing of local people**
- **Resilient communities:** Implementation of the Strategy will support vulnerable people to achieve their full potential, encourage and support housing delivery and tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness.
- **More homes, better homes:** Implementation of the Strategy will reduce homelessness through homelessness prevention and intervention, explore options for establishing a permanent emergency nightshelter and reduce the overall cost of temporary accommodation.

- **Exceptional services to be proud of:** Implementation of the Strategy will provide high quality services and value for money services.

#### **4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)**

4.7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this Strategy.

#### **4.8 Other Implications**

4.8.1 There are no other implications.

### **5. Background Papers**

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Part 7, Housing Act 1996

Homelessness Act 2002

Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018)

### **6. Appendices**

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Appendix A – Review of homelessness in Northampton

Appendix B – Results and analysis of the public consultation

Appendix C – Northampton’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-23

### **7. Next Steps**

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7.1 If Cabinet approve the recommendations, the final draft will be re-formatted for publication on the Council’s website in June 2020.

7.2 Implementation of Northampton’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will continue until it is replaced by West Northamptonshire Council’s Strategy upon the dissolution of the Council on 1 April 2021.

**Phil Harris**  
**Director of Housing and Wellbeing**  
**01604 837871**

# Appendix A: Review of Homelessness in Northampton (2019)



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Introduction

The Strategy is based on the results of a review of homelessness in Northampton. This review was undertaken in October – November 2019.

The purpose of the review of homelessness is to:

1. Examine current levels of homelessness and housing need using available information. To include a breakdown of the causes of homelessness and of the households that become homeless and to consider if certain groups or types of household are at higher risk of homelessness or require specific intervention.
2. Identify current provision in the area; mapping services and activities and the resources available to the Council and its statutory and voluntary partners to prevent and relieve homelessness.
3. From the findings of 1 and 2, try to identify gaps and weaknesses in the provision currently available and estimate likely future levels of homelessness.

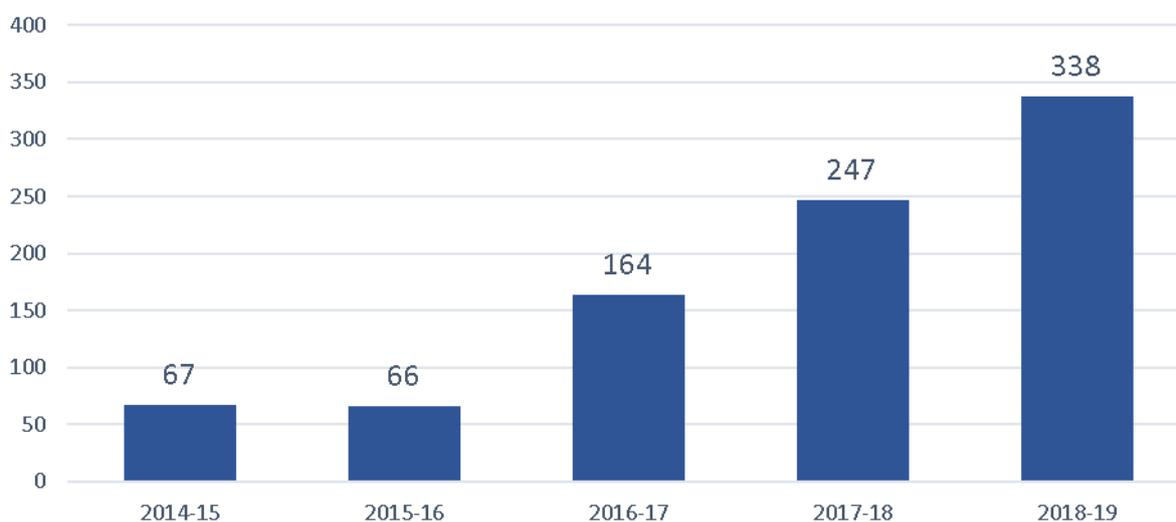
These findings will then help to inform the strategic objectives and action plan of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

### Main Duty Acceptances



1

### Households in temporary accommodation



2

The two graphs above show main duty homeless acceptances and numbers in temporary accommodation over the past 5 years. The 2018-19 figure for accepted cases is far lower than previous years, but this figure was reported under the new duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came in to force on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018. Main duty acceptances still have equivalent criteria, but the process of reaching that point has changed as new additional duties can delay a main duty decision. Therefore, the lower figure for 2018-19 is likely to be at least partially due to a lag in accepted cases being reported.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness> - Table 784, and Corporate Performance Monitoring 2018-19

<sup>2</sup> Same sources as 1

TA Numbers support that idea, as they have continued to increase, reaching 338 by March 2019. This is more than 5 times the figure from the end of 2015-16 (66). Of the 338 households in TA at that time, 87% of them were accommodated under the Homelessness Reduction Act, with a small number of legacy cases remaining in TA.

<b>TA Numbers Per 1000 Households<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Northampton</b>	0.73	0.71	1.73	2.57
<b>East Midlands</b>	0.35	0.39	0.52	0.63
<b>England</b>	2.85	3.12	3.32	3.44

The table above compares TA Numbers Per 1000 Households against national and regional figures. Equivalent 2018-19 data is not available. Northampton's most recent figure (2017-18) is lower than England but substantially higher than the East Midlands region.

<b>Type of Temporary Accommodation<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Bed and breakfast (including shared annexe)	20	33	116	51	25
Hostels	-	-	--	--	
LA/HA stock	47	33	48	60	60
Other types (including private landlord)	-	-	--	136	252

The breakdown of TA numbers above, shows how these households are accommodated. There has been success in reducing numbers in B&B and increasing the amount of Council stock used as TA. However, the large increase in TA numbers has led to far higher use of self-contained nightly paid accommodation (252 households, 75% of TA). This growth, and the associated costs, are addressed in detail in the Temporary Accommodation Action Plan 2019.

## Rough Sleeping

<sup>3</sup> P1E Data – Live Tables on Homelessness

<sup>4</sup> P1E Data/ Corporate Performance Monitoring

<b>ROUGH SLEEPERS COUNT<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	19	25	14	13	26	28
<b>% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR</b>	111	32	-44	-7	100	8
<b>NUMBERS IN NIGHT SHELTER ON THE NIGHT OF THE COUNT</b>				11	17	14

Each year, we carry out an Annual Rough Sleepers Count in accordance with government criteria and guidance. The most recent Count took place at the end of November 2019. For the Count, rough sleepers are defined as: ‘People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on / in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or “bashes”).’

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers. It does not include people who were rough sleeping in the area on a previous night or earlier in the evening but who were not there at the time of the Count. It does not include people wandering around, or empty sleeping sites. However, since the opening of Northampton’s Nightshelter in 2017 we have separately recorded the numbers in the Shelter on the night of the count.

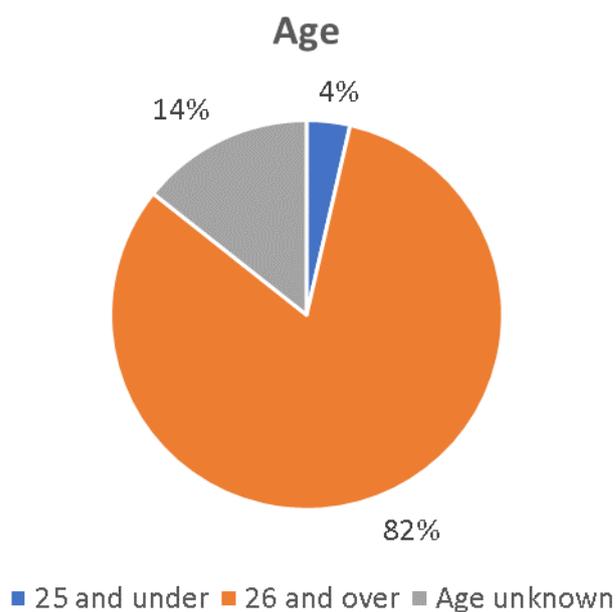
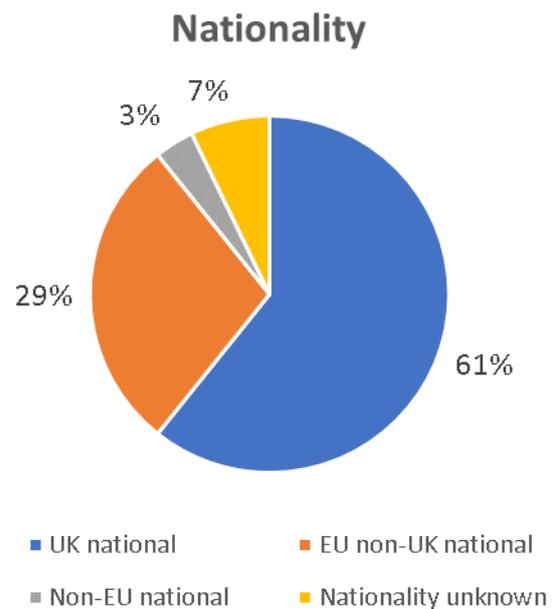
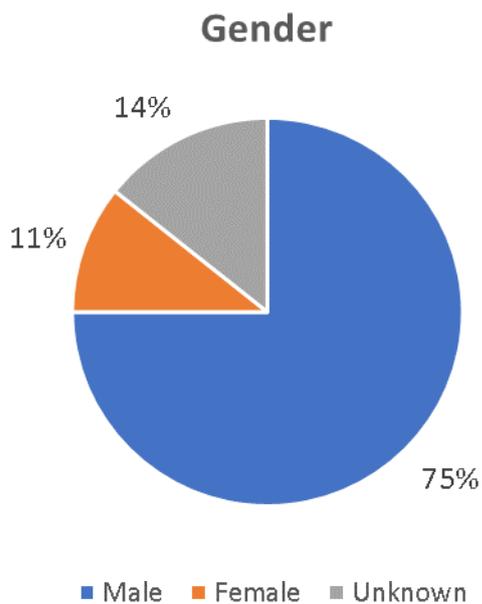
In the first 18 months, 220 homeless men spent an average of three weeks in the Nightshelter, and a total of 24 women were provided with emergency housing to prevent them from sleeping rough. Almost two thirds of these men, and most of these women, were helped to move on into settled accommodation.

<b>2018-19</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
<b>Number of referrals that are accepted by the Nightshelter</b>	38	58	45	54
<b>Number of people moved on successfully from the Nightshelter</b>	19	29	27	17

The Rough Sleeping Count figure for 2018 showed a large increase from previous years, double the 2017 figure, and with more people using the Nightshelter. The 2019 Count number increased to 28 people. Most of these people were already known to our service. However, we recognise that the Count is only a snapshot figure. From intelligence gathered by street outreach teams as well as information from the public and local rough sleeping services, it is estimated that there are 50-60 people sleeping rough in Northampton on any one night.

<sup>5</sup> MHCLG - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#rough-sleeping>

## Profile of Rough Sleepers - 2019 Count



The charts show the recorded gender, age, and nationality of the 28 people in the 2019 Rough Sleepers's Count. The data suggest the typical rough sleeper in Northampton is a British male over 26 years of age, though 8 of the recorded rough sleepers were EU nationals.

## Support Needs – Rough Sleepers

Of the 51 people who are regularly sleeping rough in Northampton, the youngest is 23 and the oldest is 61. After identifying and assessing their needs, we have established that:

- 38 (75%) have mental health problems
- 34 (67%) have offending behaviour
- 26 (51%) have drug problems
- 22 (43%) have alcohol problems

We have also established that, of the 51 people who are regularly sleeping rough in Northampton:

- 3 do not fit within any of the above categories
- 1 fits within one of the above categories
- 14 fit within two of the above categories
- 30 fit within three of the above categories
- 3 fit within all four of the above categories

#### **People who are staying in Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter**

Although the men booked into the Nightshelter are not sleeping rough, they have a profile that is similar to the 51 people who do regularly sleep rough in Northampton.

The youngest person is aged 24 and the oldest person is aged 63.

Of the 18 guests in the Nightshelter:

- 15 are alcohol and/or drug dependant
- 11 have a diagnosed mental health condition
- 13 have a criminal conviction

Furthermore, of the 18 guests in the Nightshelter:

- 1 does not fit into any of the above categories
- 4 fit within one of the above categories
- 13 fit within two or more of the above categories

This information is clear evidence about the high level of need amongst rough sleepers in Northampton. Addressing these needs will be an important factor in a) helping people to access accommodation, but also b) to help those currently unable to do that manage better and access services they need regardless of their housing situation .

The provision of treatment for addiction and mental health will be key, and how these services interact with outreach and day centres. Information from local partners has also

highlighted the importance of improving the help available to access training and employment for rough sleepers and single homeless. All of the evidence gathered emphasises the need to offer a holistic support system for rough sleepers, day and night, to begin the transition of moving off the street. The Strategy will need to consider this provision and how it can be improved, and where it will be delivered.

### **Specific Client Groups**

In addition to the identified rough sleepers, the council is aware of up to 25 Eastern Europeans who sleep in makeshift shelters or tent encampments on the outskirts of Northampton. The profile of rough sleepers from annual Counts also shows a consistent sizeable minority of EU nationals sleeping rough. The Strategy must consider how to improve engagement with these groups, for example through specialist intervention or services to address any language barrier.

This is an overview of households in Northampton who have a level of housing need that may make them more likely to become homeless or face the threat of homelessness. In addition this section contains relevant data about the local housing market.

### Housing Needs Register<sup>6</sup>

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Number of Households on Register</b>	3034	2093	2929	4100	2968	2,753

The total number of households on the Housing Needs Register in 2018 was broadly similar to the level in 2013, albeit the intervening years have seen large fluctuations. Typically, 50-60% of households on the Register have a 1 or 2 bedroom housing need.

### Benefit Claims

#### Housing Benefit Claimants<sup>7</sup>

	Dec-14	Dec-15	Dec-16	Dec-17	May-18
<b>Total Number of Claimants</b>	16,647	15,841	14,716	14,026	13,956

	Tenure Type		Passported Status	
<b>May 2018 - All HB claimants</b>	Social Rented Sector	Private Rented Sector	Passported	Non-Passported (Standard Claims)
13,956	10,142	3,809	8,340	5,563

Figures from MHCLG show how housing benefit caseloads have changed in Northampton up to May 2018 (the latest figures available). The total number has reduced, but this will be partially due to the introduction of Universal Credit, which will eventually replace housing benefit. The vast majority of claimants in May 2018 were renting in the social rented sector (73%). However, there were still nearly 4000 claimants in the PRS, who have lower security of tenure and may be more likely to face the threat of eviction. They are also more exposed to the welfare reforms and any benefit freezes announced by central government.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies> - Table 600

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-benefit-caseload-statistics>

The total number of claimants (13,056) represents approximately 15% of all households in Northampton.

The table below shows how many households in Northampton have had the ‘Bedroom Tax’ applied, officially known as the Spare Room Subsidy Reduction. This is for social housing tenants of working age who are judged to be under-occupying their property. 872 households were affected by the Bedroom Tax in May 2018. The average reduction in their housing benefit was £16.24 per week.

#### Spare Room Subsidy Reduction (Bedroom Tax)

Not applied	Applied	Applied - average HB reduction amount
9,274	872	£16.24

#### Benefit Cap Households<sup>8</sup>

	Total	Up to £50	£50.01 to £100	£100.01 to £150	£150.01 to £200	£200.01 to £250	£250.01 to £300
<b>Cumulative 2013-2019</b>	734	414	197	77	25	7	9
<b>February 2019</b>	239	143	70	21			

In February 2019 there were 239 households in Northampton who had their benefits capped. This number will include some households who are already accepted homeless cases and are currently living in temporary accommodation.

Cumulatively, since the Benefit Cap was introduced in April 2013, 734 households have been capped at some point. The table above shows the amounts these households have had their Housing Benefit (or housing costs element of Universal Credit) reduced by, in order for their benefits to meet the cap. Over 100 households had reductions in their Housing Benefit of over £100. For any households in temporary accommodation this will make it far more difficult for them to move on to settled accommodation. For existing social or private rented tenants it will increase their risk of homelessness.

#### Possession Claims and Affordability

#### Landlord Possession Claims<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-february-2019>

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Number of Possession Claims</b>	685	759	732	691	660

A claim for possession is when the landlord makes a claim to the court to be granted an order for possession to evict the tenant. It will typically reflect a fairly high threat of homelessness because tenants who are able to find alternative housing more easily would often be expected to vacate on or before the expiry of a Section 21 Notice. When landlords pursue a claim for possession this is because the tenant has not left after a Section 21 Notice is issued. As the table shows the number of claims for possession has remained broadly consistent; the 2018-19 figure slightly lower than 5 years prior.

### **Mortgage Lender Possession Claims**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Possession claims by mortgage lenders</b>	147	85	88	82	77

The number of possession claims issued by mortgage lenders is far lower and has been declining. This reflects the high proportion of households who own outright and the current period of low interest rates and mortgage affordability.

### **Lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings ratio**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Northampton</b>	6.72	7.08	7.22	8.35	8.66

Lower quartile house price – lower quartile earnings is a common measure of general housing affordability. Northampton's ratio has continued to increase for the last 5 years of available data.

### **Housing Stock and Supply**

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<sup>9</sup> [Shelter Housing Databank](#)

## Dwelling Stock<sup>10</sup>

	Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Private sector	Total (P) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Number of Dwellings – 2018</b>	11,540	4,890	80,200	96,630
<b>2014</b>	11,980	4,220	77,030	93,260

83% of housing stock in Northampton is privately owned. The remaining 17% is owned either by Northampton Borough Council or by other Registered Providers. The table above shows how the makeup of dwelling stock has changed in a 5 year period. There was a decrease in the number of Council owned homes, partly due to tenants exercising their Right to Buy.

## Council homes sold through Right to Buy<sup>11</sup>

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
<b>Northampton</b>	88	101	125	138	--

## Additional Affordable housing supply – Completions<sup>12</sup>

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<b>Social Rent</b>	30	40	32
<b>Affordable Rent</b>	11	97	91
<b>Shared Ownership</b>	0	70	59
<b>Affordable Home Ownership</b>	30	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>182</b>

The majority of additional affordable supply is built and owned by Registered Providers in the area and is for affordable rent or shared ownership. A consistent -albeit relatively small number- of units have been built for social rent in recent years.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants> - Table 100

<sup>11</sup> [Shelter Housing Databank](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants)

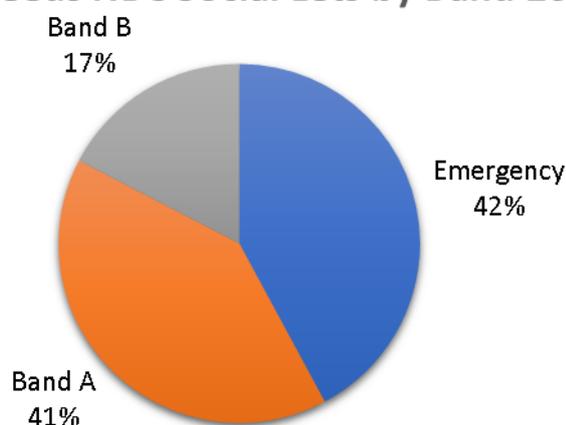
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply> - Table 1011c

## Social Lets

Lets <sup>13</sup>	General Needs Social Rent PRP	Supported Housing Social Rent PRP	General Needs Affordable Rent PRP	Supported Housing Affordable Rent PRP	General Needs Social Rent LA	Supported Housing Social Rent LA	Total Lettings
<b>2017-18</b>	183	197	152	38	322	53	945
<b>2016-17</b>	226	231	80	-	410	87	1,034
<b>2015-16</b>	236	297	97	0	705	86	1421
<b>2014-15</b>	321	295	84	0	779	101	1580
<b>2013-14</b>	307	353	90	0	757	98	1605

Additional affordable supply is one factor in the number of social lets available per year, the main factor being the number of vacancies that become available in existing stock owned by the Council or RPs. The table above shows new social housing lettings over a 5 year period. Data from 2018-19 is not yet available. The figures show a clear pattern of declining lettings available, particularly general needs social rent properties. Between 2013-14 and 2017-18 the total number of lettings decreased by 41% ( 1605 – 945). This inevitably feeds through in to homeless acceptances and temporary accommodation numbers, as it reduces the number of properties available to prevent or discharge homelessness duties. The reduction in social lettings will therefore be a contributing factor to the increase in households in temporary accommodation.

### General Needs NBC Social Lets by Band 2019



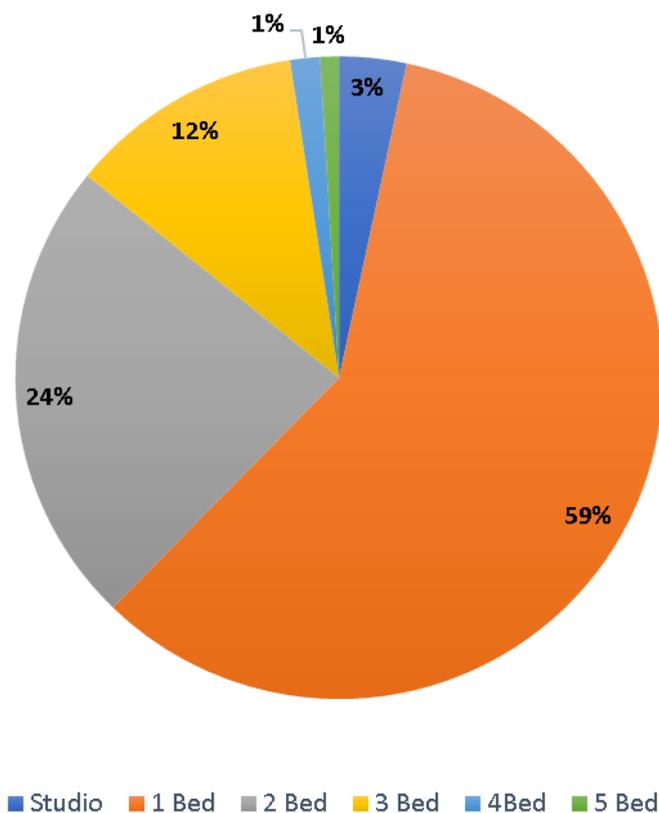
The pie chart above illustrates how these social lets are divided by band on the Housing Register. The data is taken from Jan-Aug 2019. Households in the Emergency Band or Band A were offered 83% of general needs lets in the period. Homeless households can be in any

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rents-lettings-and-tenancies>

of the three bands depending on their exact circumstances but household owed the main housing duty (s193) are in the Emergency Band.

The chart below shows the same data set (general needs social rents Jan-Aug 2019) but with the breakdown of lets by bedroom size of the property. 86% of lets were for Studios, 1 beds or 2 bed homes, with 1 beds representing by far the biggest proportion.

### General Needs Social Lets by Bedroom Size 2019



Tenure

## Dwelling Stock by Tenure<sup>14</sup>

<b>All households – 2011 Census</b>		<b>88,731</b>
<b>Owned</b>		55,622
Owned outright		22,307
Owned with a mortgage or loan		33,315
<b>Shared ownership (part owned and part rented)</b>		1,134
<b>Social rented</b>		15,113
Rented from council (Local Authority)		11,319
Other		3,794
<b>Private rented</b>		15,817
Private landlord or letting agency		14,657
Other		1,160
<b>Living rent free</b>		1,045

The most comprehensive and accurate figures about tenure in Northampton are from the 2011 Census above. The ONS produces more recent estimates for two main forms of tenure, owned and private rented, but not in as much detail. The table below shows the estimates for 2017:

### 2017

<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>Privately Rented</b>
54,958	24,542

The estimates suggest that the number of owner occupier households has decreased slightly, whilst the number of privately rented households has grown by 55%. As the ending of private rented tenancies is a major cause of homelessness, this changing makeup of housing tenure is an important shift.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS402EW/view/1946157159?cols=measures> and <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates>

## Summary of Housing Need under Homelessness Reduction Act

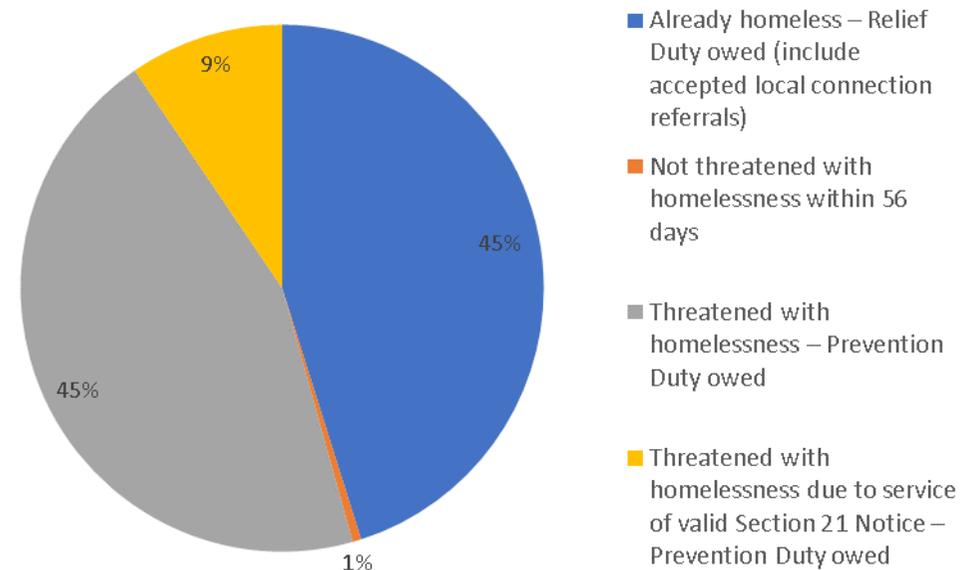
Since the Homelessness Reduction Act came in to force in April 2018, MHCLG introduced a new reporting specification; H-CLIC. The new specification is more comprehensive and allows us to capture more information on households who have approached with a housing problem. The data evaluated below is all taken from the Council's case management system Jigsaw and includes all opened cases from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018 to October 2019. No comparable data is available from previous years, but this period is sufficient to get an accurate overview of the types of households who are approaching our service.

### Initial Assessments

Approaching cases are given an initial assessment to see if they are owed a duty, and if so, what duty. Some legacy cases are not included.

Initial Assessment	Number of Cases
Relief Duty owed - already homeless	1511
Not threatened with homelessness within 56 days	18
Prevention Duty owed - threatened with homelessness	1501
Prevention Duty owed - valid Section 21 Notice	319
<b>Total</b>	<b>3349</b>

A total of 3349 cases were assessed under the Homelessness Reduction Act over an 18 month period, approximately 186 cases per month on average, or 8-9 per working day. The majority (54%) were owed a prevention duty, including the 9% owed that duty specifically due to being served a valid s21 notice. 45% were owed



a relief duty. A small proportion were not owed any duty at all.

#### Accommodation at Time of Application and Last Settled

<b>Type of Accommodation at time of application</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Armed Forces accommodation	4	0.12%
Caravan / houseboat	51	1.52%
Council tenant	237	7.04%
Homeless on departure from institution: Custody	27	0.80%
Homeless on departure from institution: Hospital (general)	11	0.33%
Homeless on departure from institution: Hospital (psychiatric)	8	0.24%
Living with family	810	24.07%
Living with friends	256	7.61%
Looked after children placement	4	0.12%
NASS accommodation	5	0.15%
No fixed abode	300	8.92%
Other	144	4.28%
Owner-occupier	57	1.69%
Private rented sector: HMO	111	3.30%
Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends)	32	0.95%
Private rented sector: self-contained	1024	30.43%
Refuge	52	1.55%
Registered Provider tenant	77	2.29%
Rough sleeping (in judgement of assessor)	70	2.08%
Shared ownership	4	0.12%
Social rented supported housing or hostel	70	2.08%
Student accommodation	5	0.15%
Tied accommodation	6	0.18%

<b>Total</b>	<b>3365</b>
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There are 23 different types of accommodation that approaching applicants can be recorded as having at the time of the application. Only 5 types accounted for more than 5% of cases: private rented sector – self contained (30%), living with family (24%), no fixed abode (9%), living with friends (8%) and council tenant (7%). These five types of accommodation accounted for 78% of cases between them.

<b>Last settled Accommodation</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Armed Forces accommodation	4	0.12%
Council tenant	310	9.20%
Living with family or friends	932	27.66%
Lodging (not with family or friends)	54	1.60%
Looked after children placement	10	0.30%
Not known	150	4.45%
Other	161	4.78%
Owner-occupier	80	2.37%
Private rented sector	1385	41.10%
Registered Provider tenant	126	3.74%
Shared ownership	4	0.12%
Social rented or supported housing	140	4.15%
Tied accommodation	14	0.42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3370</b>	

34

Last settled accommodation is where the household last had a settled home. It can be the same type of accommodation as their accommodation at the time of their application. For example, if a current council tenant approaches then it will be both. However, in some cases people used to have settled accommodation but then lost it. As the two tables show, a higher proportion of people had private rented sector accommodation as their last settled than their current accommodation, suggesting a number of people approached who had lost their previous tenancies and were now NFA or living with friends or family.

## Main Causes of Homelessness

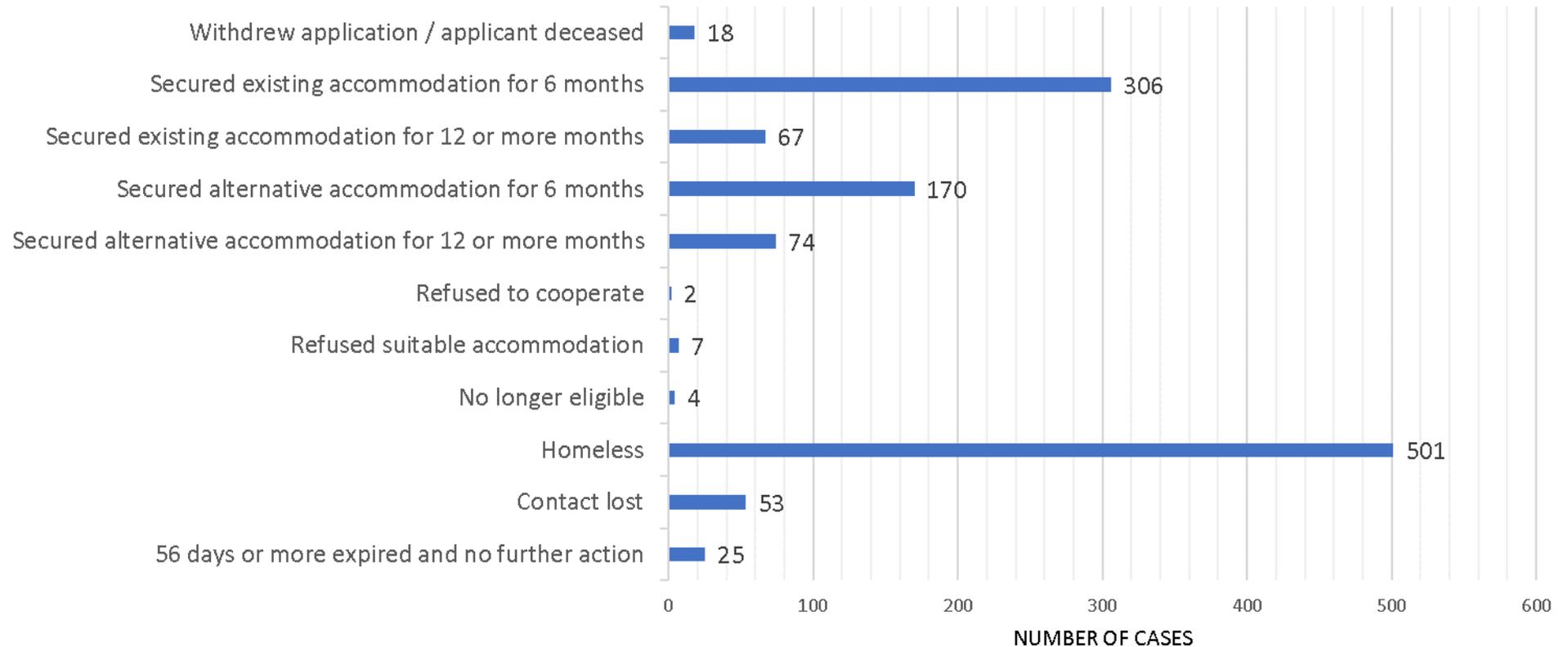
Main reason for losing their settled home	Number of Cases	% of Total
Domestic abuse	252	7.48%
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	1044	31.01%
End of private rented tenancy – not assured shorthold tenancy	115	3.42%
End of social rented tenancy	292	8.67%
Eviction from supported housing	97	2.88%
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	750	22.28%
Fire or flood / other emergency	10	0.30%
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	155	4.60%
Left HM Forces	4	0.12%
Left institution with no accommodation available	40	1.19%
Mortgage repossession	38	1.13%
Non-racially motivated / other motivated violence or harassment	29	0.86%
Other	347	10.31%
Property disrepair	4	0.12%
Racially motivated violence or harassment	2	0.06%
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	188	5.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3367</b>	

The table above shows the main causes of homelessness or the threat of homelessness for approaching households. The end of an assured shorthold tenancy and family exclusion are by far the biggest causes. As the end of an AST is the single biggest cause of homelessness, the table below shows in further detail the reasons for these tenancies ending. The landlord wishing to re-let or sell the property accounts for more than half of the the 1029 cases where a household was being evicted from a private sector tenancy.

<b>Reason for loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Breach of tenancy, not related to rent arrears	9	0.87%
Illegal eviction	3	0.29%
Landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property	558	54.23%
Other	164	15.94%
Rent arrears due to change in personal circumstances	70	6.80%
Rent arrears due to increase in rent	13	1.26%
Rent arrears due to reduction in employment income	56	5.44%
Rent arrears due to tenant difficulty budgeting or tenant making other payment(s)	115	11.18%
Rent arrears following changes in benefit entitlement	22	2.14%
Tenant abandoned property	16	1.55%
Tenant complained to the council/agent/landlord about disrepair	3	0.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1029</b>	

Prevention Duty

### Reason for Prevention Duty Ending

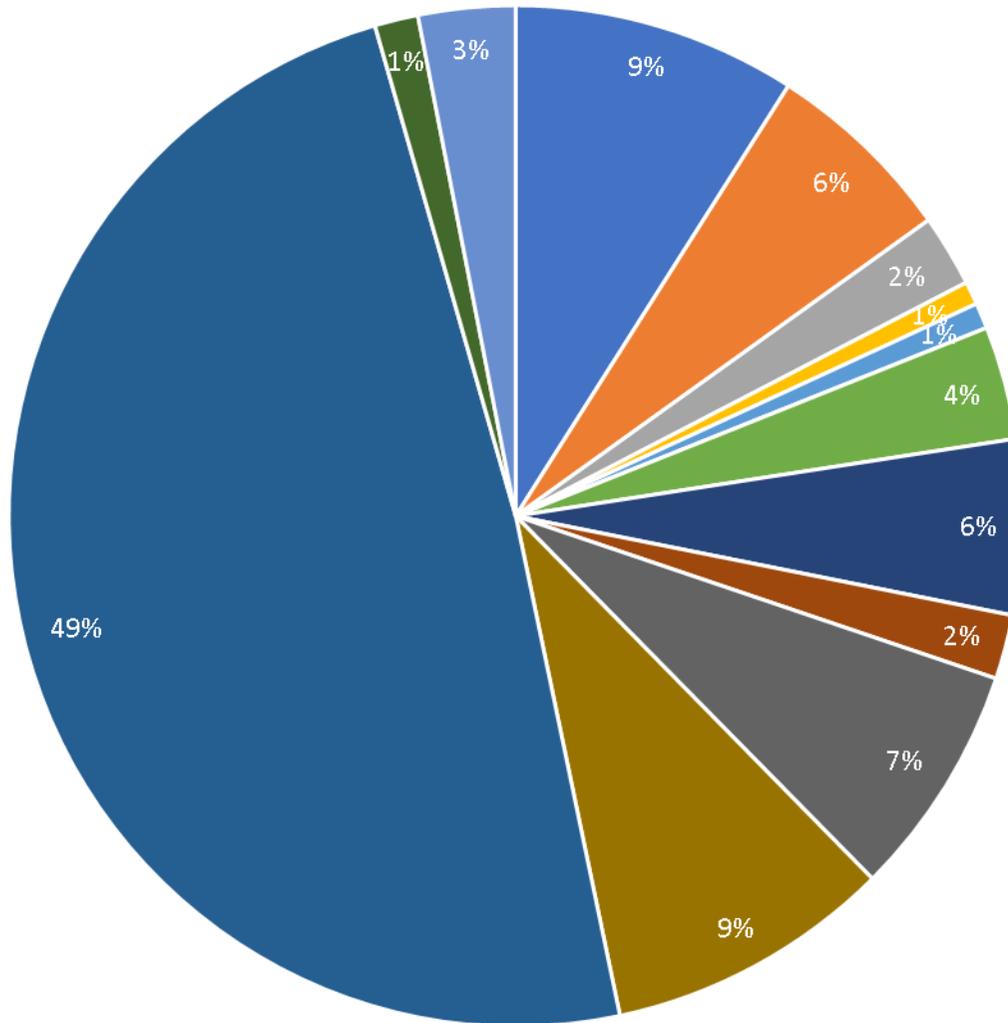


37

A total of 1227 cases had the prevention duty owed to them end during the period. The successful 'Prevention Rate' was 50%; 617 cases were able to either secure their existing accommodation or find alternative accommodation, for at least 6 months. 501 cases (41%) became homeless and were likely to have gone on to be owed a relief duty. The chart below shows the type of prevention activity used by the service.

### Prevention Activity

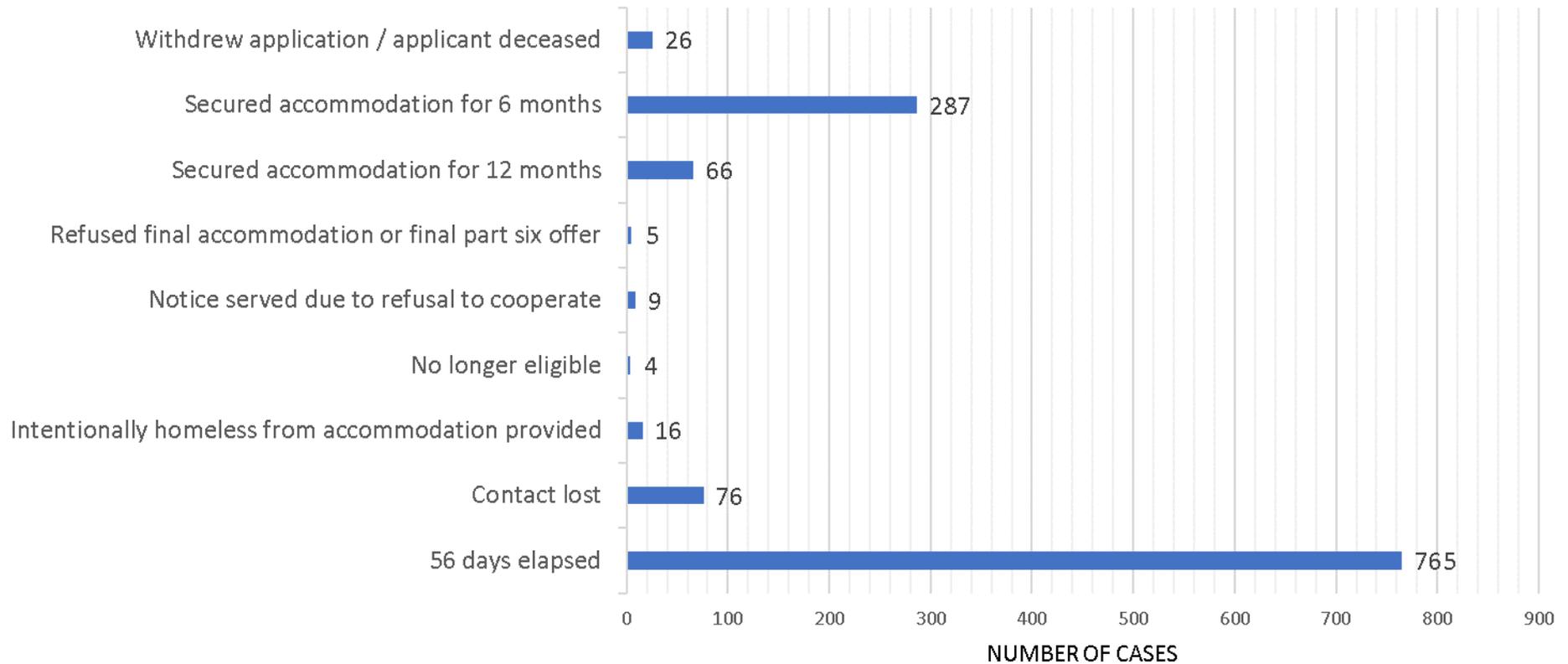
38



- Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service
- Debt advice
- Discretionary Housing Payment to reduce shortfall
- Financial payments to reduce rent service charge or mortgage arrears
- Financial payments used for other purposes (not arrears or to secure new accommodation)
- Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment
- Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment
- Housing related support to sustain accommodation
- Negotiation/mediation work to secure return to family or friend
- Negotiation/mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction/repossession
- No activity – advice and information provided
- Resolved benefit problems
- Supported housing provided

Relief Duty

### Reason for Relief Duty Ending



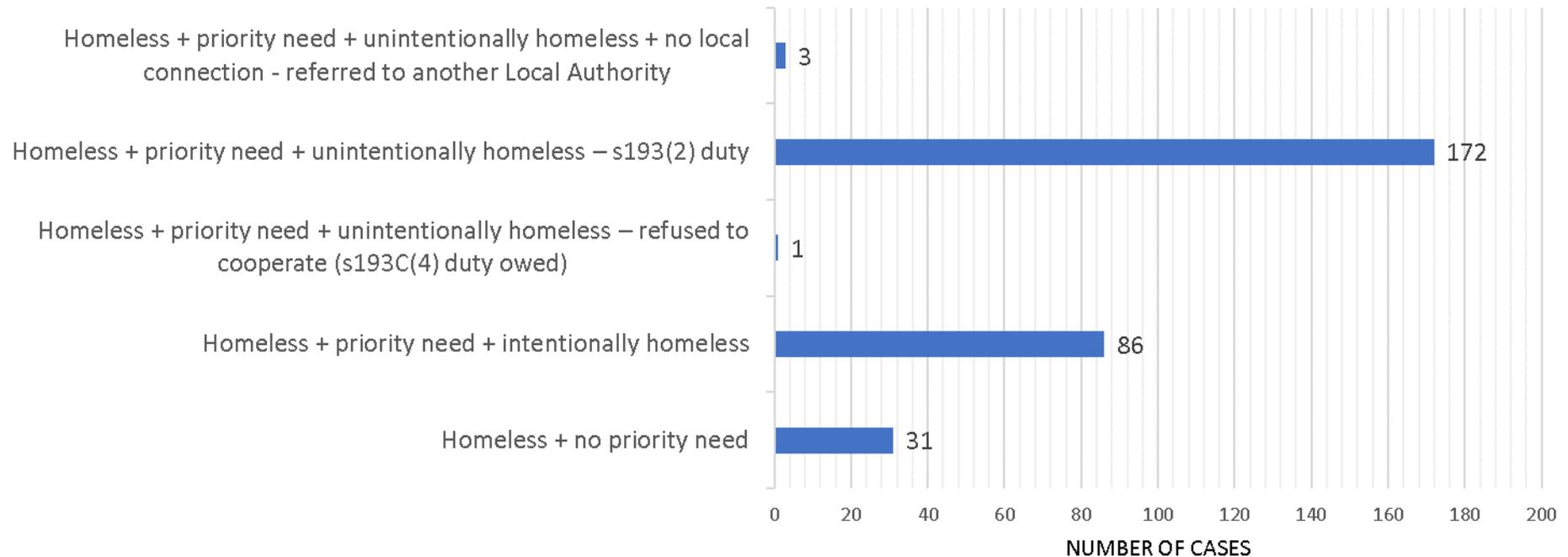
39

A total of 1254 cases had the relief duty owed to them end during the period. 28% had their homelessness successfully relieved (353 cases), by securing accommodation for at least 6 months. The vast majority had the duty end after 56 days elapsed. These cases will then have had a main duty decision made on their case.

Main Duty

## Main Duty Decisions

40



293 cases were recorded as having main duty decisions during the period, far fewer than had their relief duty end due to 56 days expiring. The most common outcome was to be an accepted case owed the s193(2) main housing duty.

Of these cases, 245 were recorded as having a priority need. The reason for their priority need is shown in the table below. Households with dependent children accounted for 76% of these cases. A further 6 % were households that included a pregnant woman, leaving 18% of accepted cases that contained only adults and were mostly in priority need through their vulnerability. Physical disability or ill health was the main reason for priority need for single homeless cases, but mental health issues were also prominent.

<b>Priority Need Category</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Priority need: applicant aged 16 or 17 years	3	1.22%
Priority need: applicant is / household includes a pregnant woman	14	5.71%
Priority need: applicant is care leaver and aged 18 to 20 years	1	0.41%
Priority need: household includes dependent children	186	75.92%
Priority need: vulnerable as fled home because of violence / threat of violence (domestic abuse)	1	0.41%
Priority need: vulnerable as result of mental health problems	12	4.90%
Priority need: vulnerable as result of old age	1	0.41%
Priority need: vulnerable as result of physical disability / ill health	26	10.61%
Priority need: vulnerable for other special reason	1	0.41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	

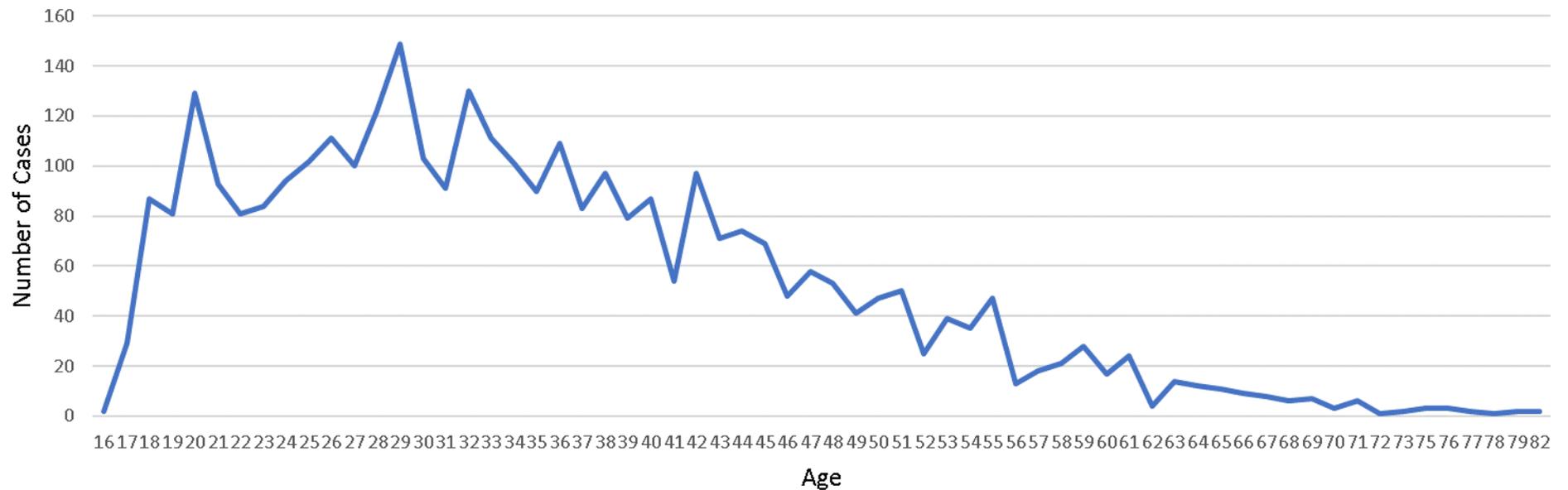
### Demographics of NBC Service Users

This section looks in more detail at the types of households approaching the service with homelessness issues. The data is recorded for the main applicant, so does not include the ages/nationalities of partners, children, or any other household members.

#### Age

Age range of Main Applicants

42

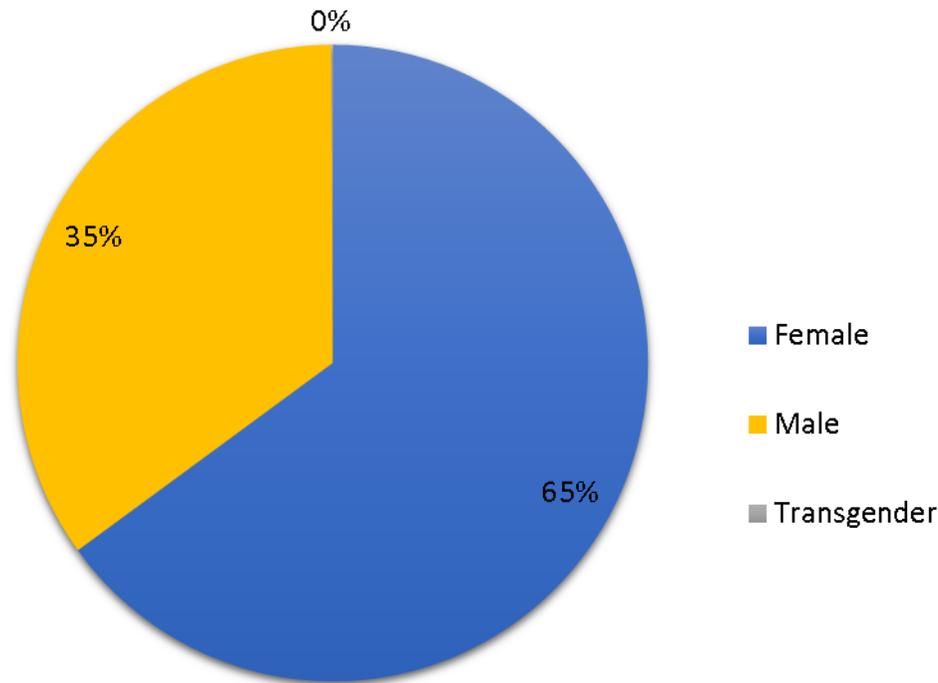


Applicants ranged in age from 16 to 82 years old. As the graph shows, most were young adults of working age, 20s and 30s being most common. The young age profile of applicants represents the insecurity faced by many young people and the difficulty they can have accessing settled housing. There is also a clear spike of people in very early adulthood from 18-20, 20 being the second most common age. This is likely to be due

to breakdown of relationships with families and the upheaval of the transition to adulthood, exacerbated for those not in employment or education

### Gender

43



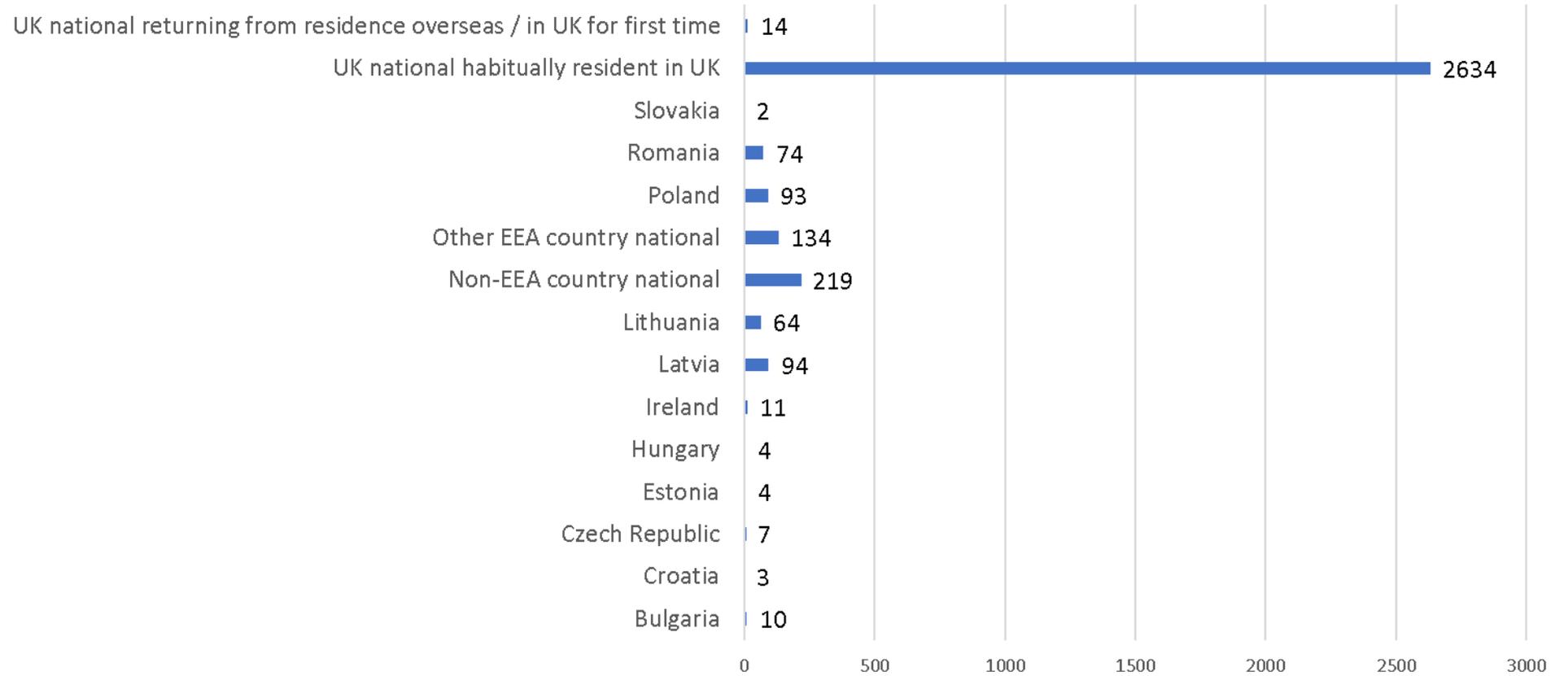
Approximately 2/3 of applicants were female, and 1/3 male.

Only 2 identified as transgender. However, this figure could well be underreported and local services suggest a larger number of transgender people have homelessness problems.

### Nationality

The chart below shows the nationality of main applicants. 79% of applicants were UK nationals. 9% were from the countries of Romania, Poland, Lithuania or Latvia.

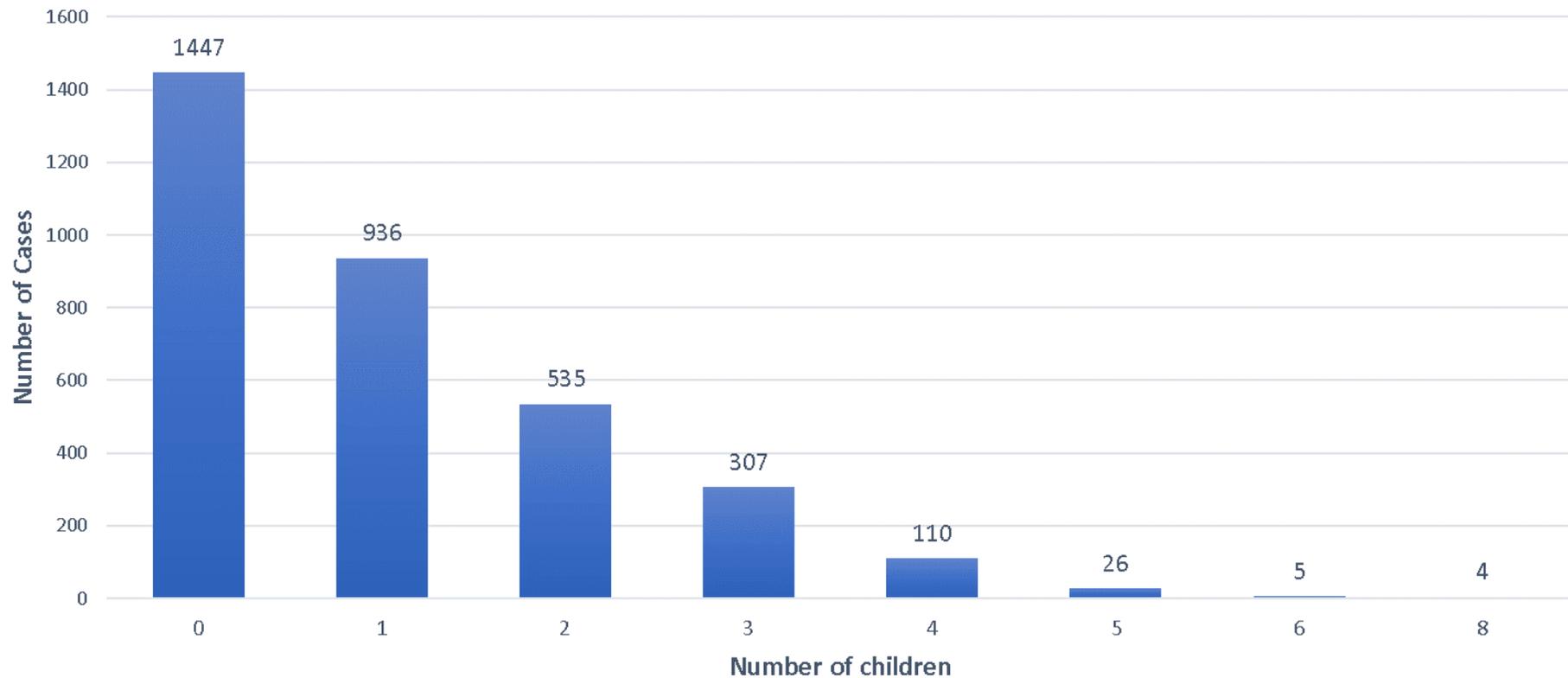
### Nationality of Main Applicants



## Household Composition

### Number of Children in Household

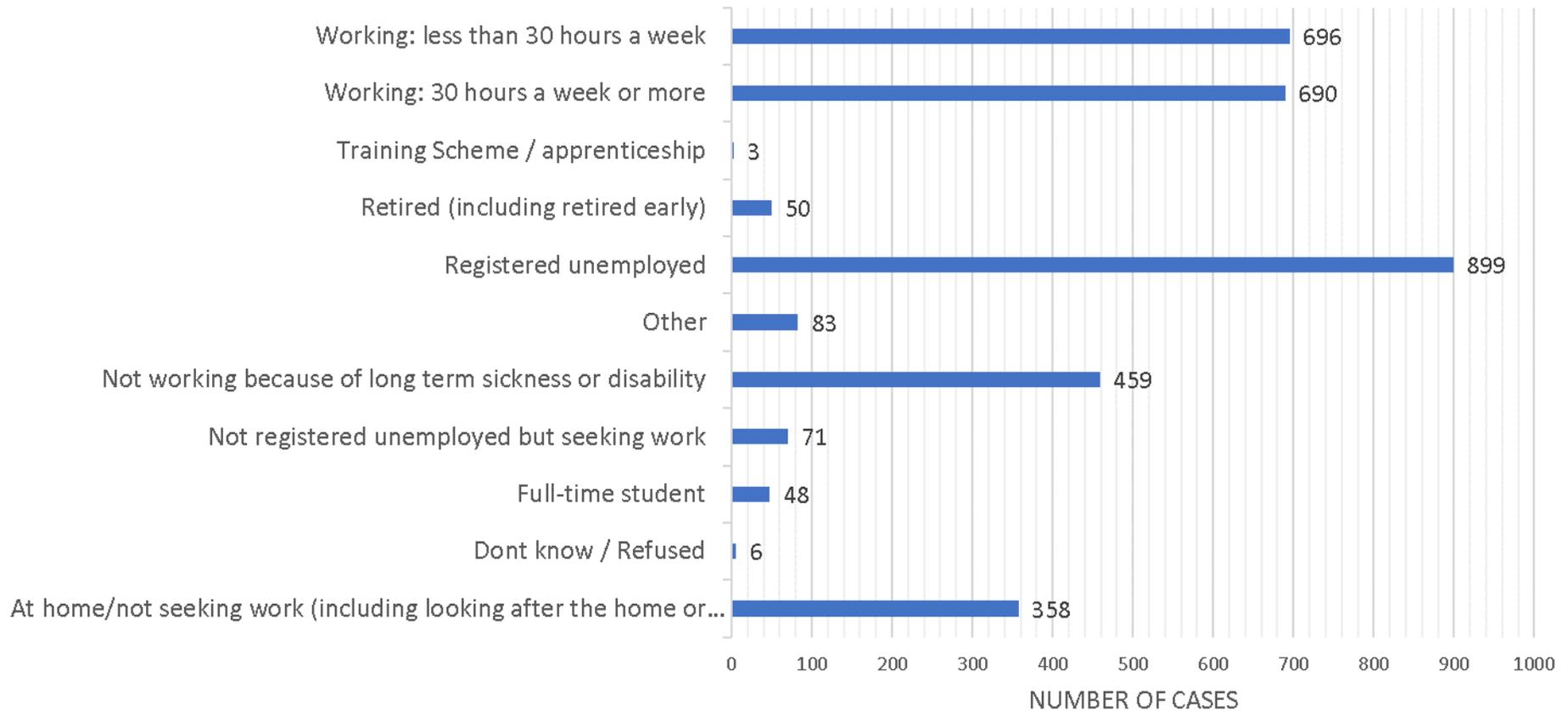
45



The chart above shows the composition of households who approached in terms of how many children were in each household. 43% of approaching households had no children. As additional data shows the vast majority of applicants also had no partner, this demonstrates the very high level of demand from single person households. There were 145 households with 4 or more children, but most families had 1 or two children.

Employment and Benefits

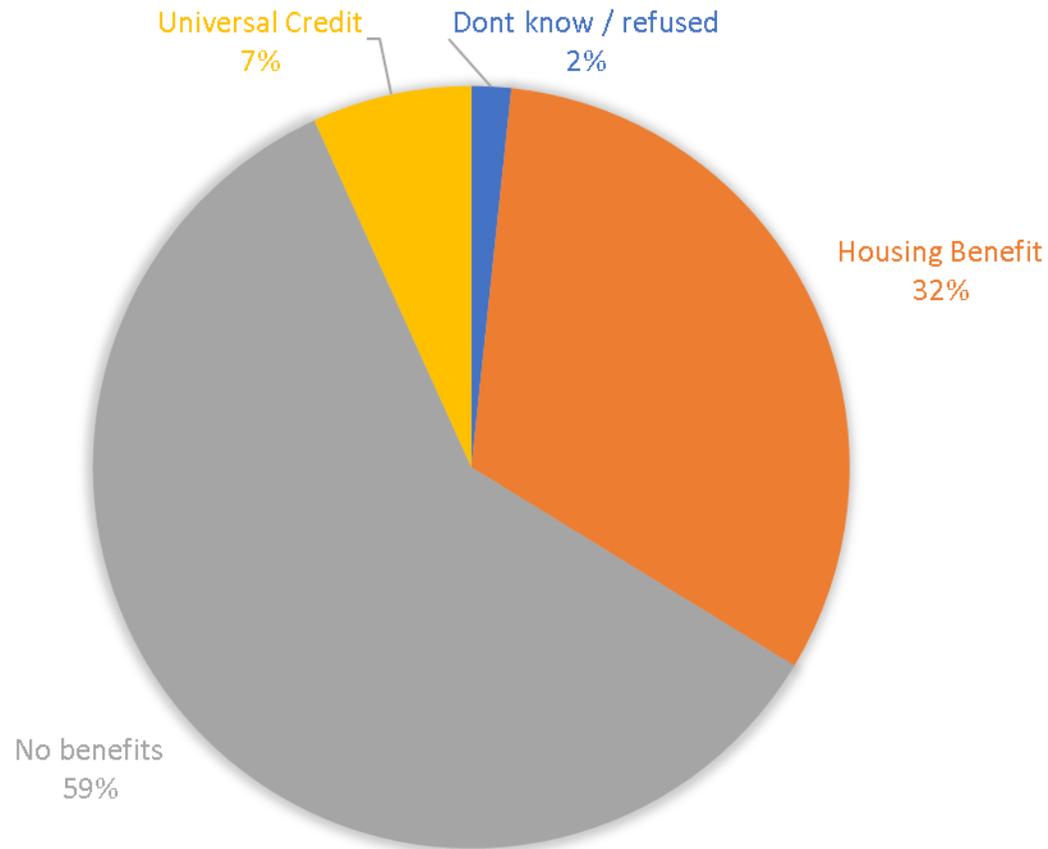
## Employment Status of Main Applicant



46

41% of main applicants were working, either full or part-time. 27% were registered unemployed. 14% were unable to work due to long term sickness or disability and 11% were at home not seeking work (e.g. full-time parents). These categories accounted for 93% of applicants.

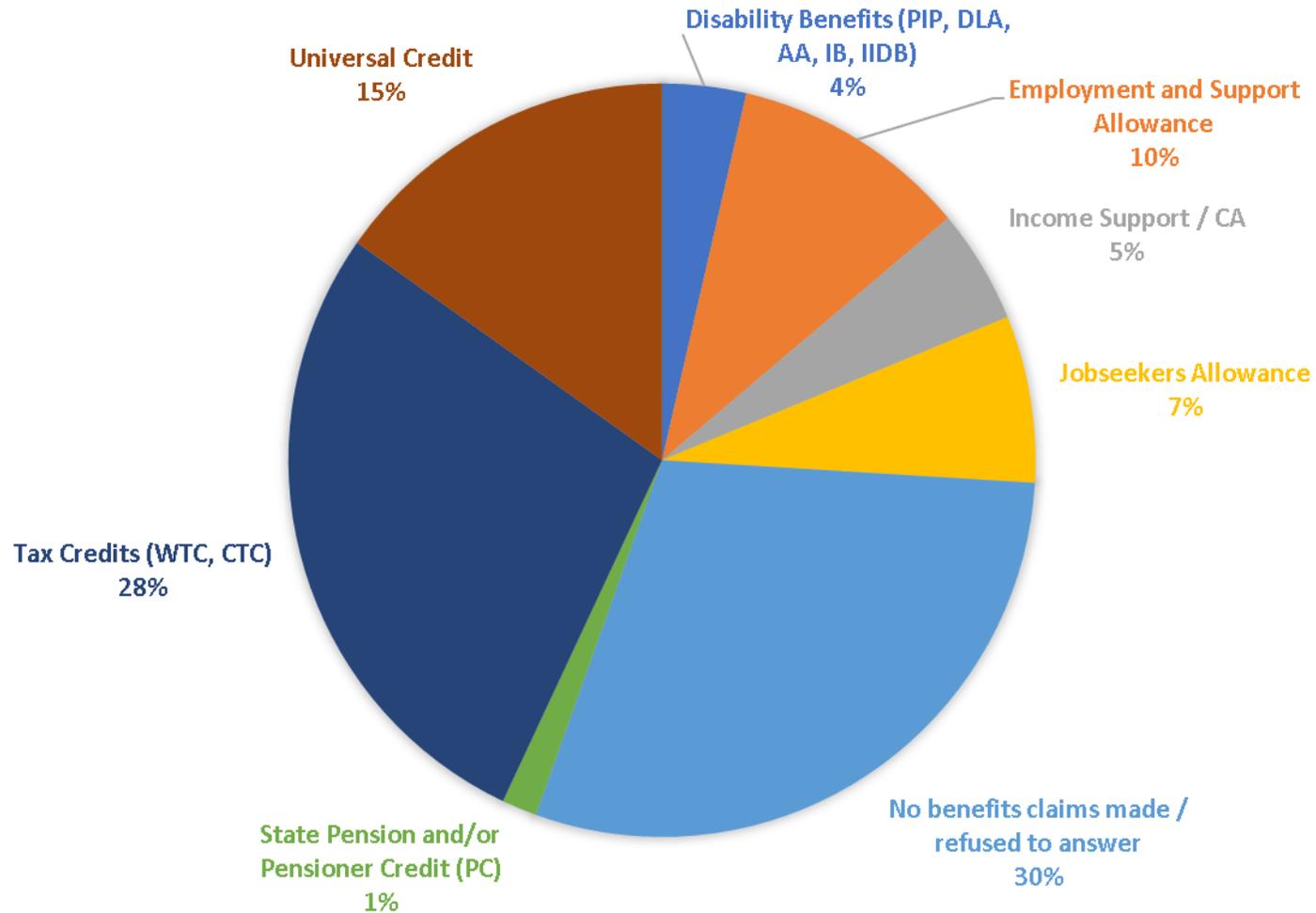
### Benefits towards housing costs



47

Most applicants had no current claim for housing benefit. Many will not have been in a position to have a claim due to their tenure if they were living with family or friends. A small proportion were already claiming Universal Credit for housing costs but this figure will grow as housing benefit cases are migrated over.

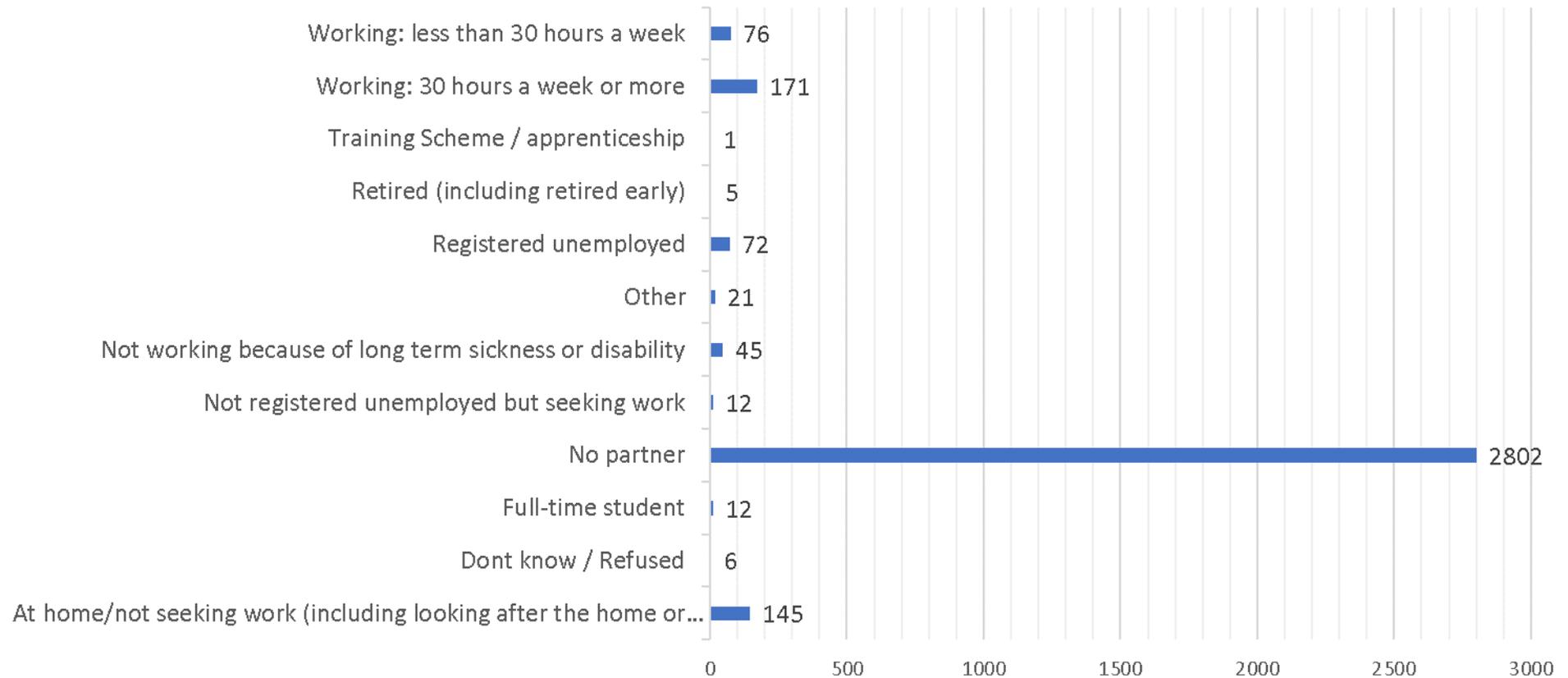
**Other Benefits Claimed**



48

The majority of households were claiming some form of benefits (70%), with Tax Credits being the most common. Tax Credits and Universal Credit are both available to working households to supplement low incomes.

## Employment Status of Main Applicant's Partner



83% of main applicants had no partner, illustrating the predominance of single income households. Only 7% of households had a working partner.

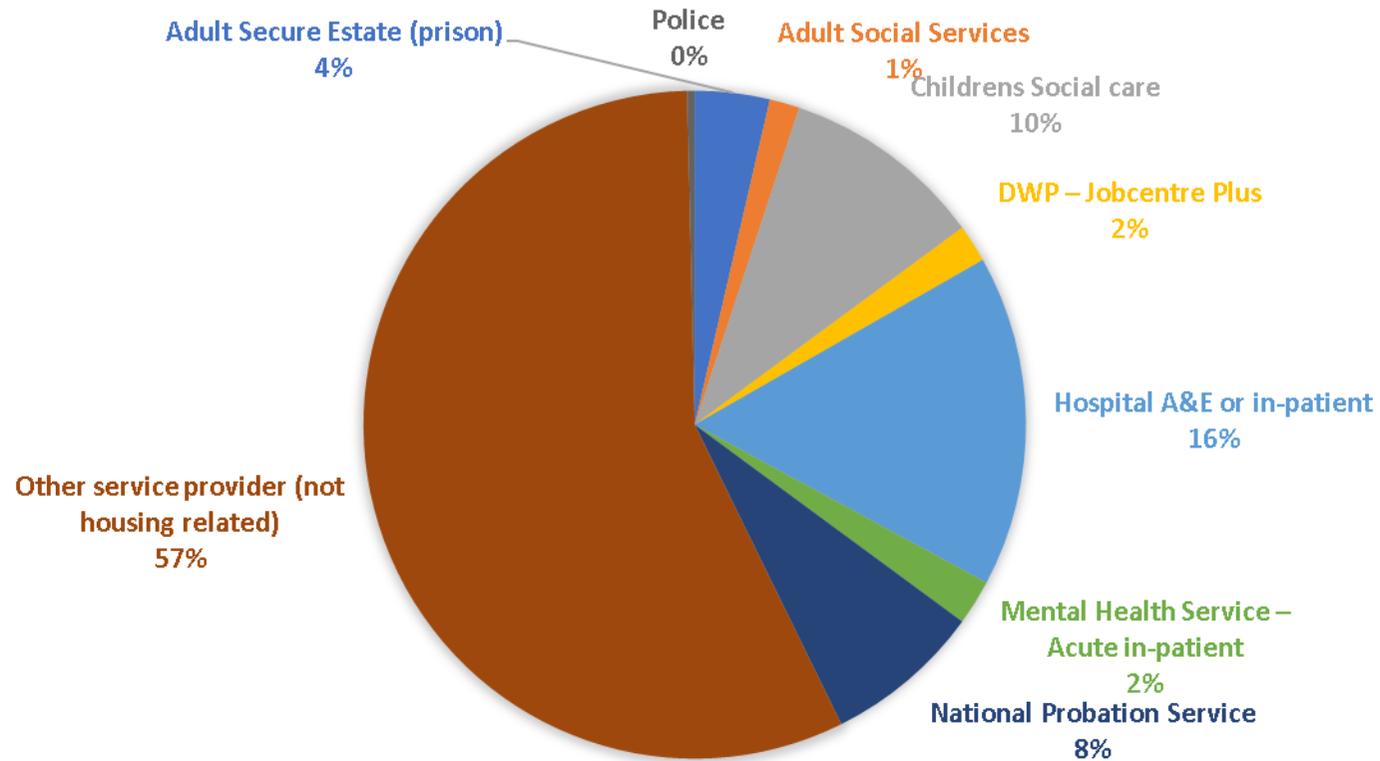
### Support Needs

<b>Support Need (of any household member)</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Access to education, employment or training	44	1.63%
Alcohol dependency needs	57	2.11%
At risk of/has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	5	0.18%
At risk of/has experienced sexual abuse/exploitation	2	0.07%
Care leaver aged Eighteen to Twenty years	8	0.30%
Drug dependency needs	59	2.18%
Former asylum seeker	3	0.11%
History of mental health problems	218	8.07%
History of repeat homelessness	8	0.30%
History of rough sleeping	16	0.59%
Learning disability	29	1.07%
No support needs	2012	74.44%
Offending history	17	0.63%
Old age	8	0.30%
Physical ill health and disability	180	6.66%
Served in HM Forces	6	0.22%
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	19	0.70%
Young person aged Sixteen to Seventeen years	12	0.44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	

Around three quarters of households had no members with support needs. A history of mental health problems was the most common type of support need, followed by physical ill health and disability. The need for mental health support was also evident amongst rough sleepers and accepted homeless cases.

### Referrals into the Authority

The overwhelming majority of cases self-referred (3076 out of 3370), though this does not preclude their involvement with other agencies at the time of their application. 20 cases were referred by another local authority through a local connection referral. Of the 274 cases (8%) that were referred by an external agency or public body subject to the Duty to Refer, the following organisations made the referral:



## Sexual Orientation

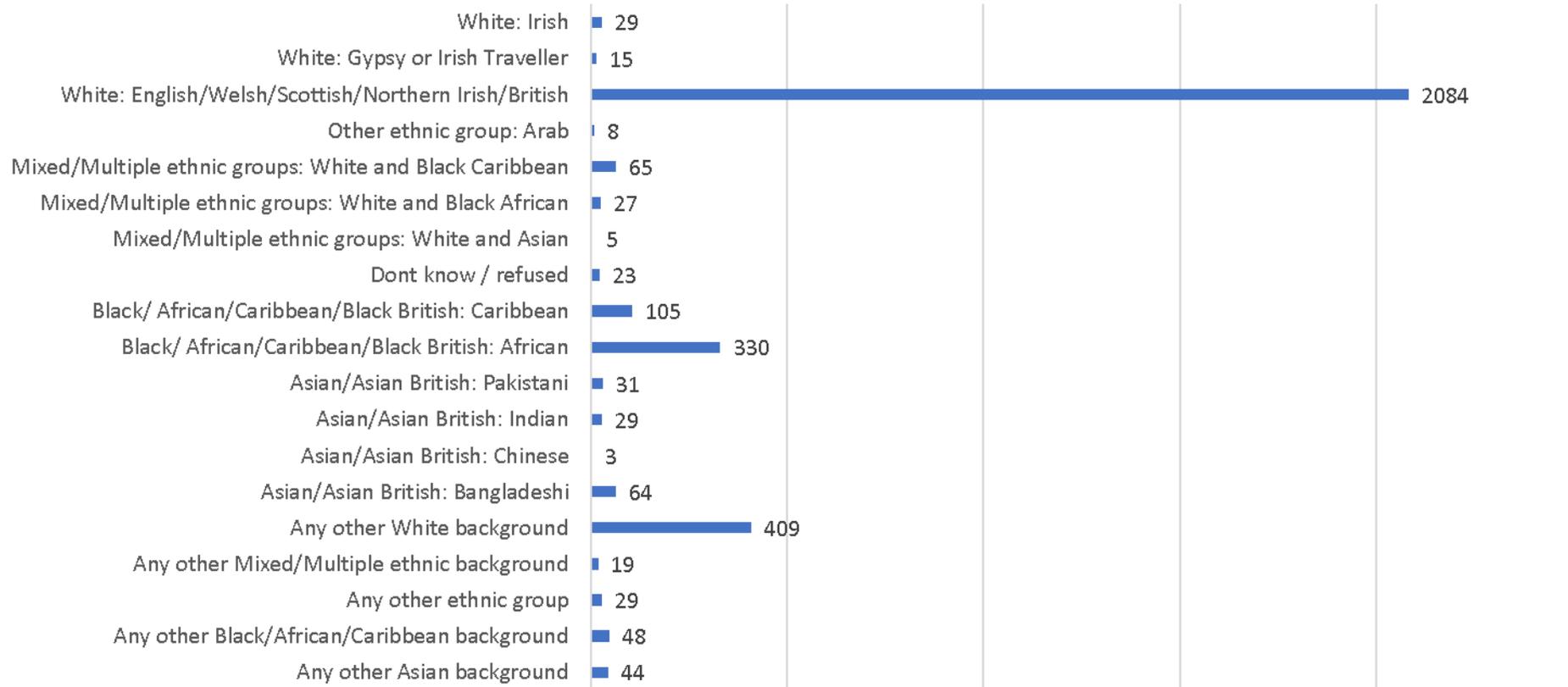
	Number of Applicants	% of Total
Gay / Lesbian	38	1.13%
Heterosexual / Straight	3202	95.10%
Other	34	1.01%
Prefer not to say	93	2.76%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3367</b>	

A small minority of people identified as gay/lesbian or other, though again this figure may be underreported. Of those that did give one of those two categories as their sexual orientation, 74% were women.

58% of people who gave their sexual orientation as gay/lesbian were under 26 years old, 18 being the most common age. As well as being younger, this group were also more likely to face homelessness due to family or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate, albeit this comes from a small data set.

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity of Main Applicant



53

62% of applicants were White British, Any other White Background comprised 12%, and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African 10%, by far the three most common ethnicities. Most other ethnicities comprised less than 1% of applicants.

## Mapping Current Services and Provision

The table below shows organisations in Northampton that work with homeless households or single homeless people in some capacity or can help with support needs. Most do not provide accommodation. Registered Providers of housing offering general needs social lets are excluded as the provision from social lets is detailed separately. The table is not exhaustive, and there may be organisations who work with homeless households when it is not an explicit part of their remit, or who fund or assist the organisations included here. It does not include our statutory partners such as adult or children’s social care. However, it is a summary of the types of services available in the district.

54

Name of Organisation	Organisation Category	Services Offered	Address	Accommodation
Job Centre Plus	Benefits	Claiming benefits & support with seeking work	Frances House, 21 Lower Mounts, NN1 3LY	-
<a href="#">Citizens Advice (Central and East Northamptonshire)</a>	Advice Agency	Advice on debt, benefits, housing, legal issues, discrimination, employment, immigration, consumer and other problems.	Town Centre House 7/8 Mercers Row, NORTHAMPTON, Northamptonshire, NN1 2QL	-
<a href="#">The Community Law Service</a>	Advice Agency	Casework service including representation at court / tribunal if necessary, in: Welfare Benefits, Immigration, Debt and Housing.	Northampton Advice Centre 49-53 Hazelwood Road, NN1 1LG <i>and</i> The Guildhall, NN1 1DE	-
<a href="#">The Bridge Project</a>	Substance Misuse	Peer support for substance misuse (either in recovery or have recovered) – volunteering	63c Gold Street, Northampton, NN1 1RA	-

		opportunities, training, workshops, activities, group work, mentoring, advice on benefits, housing and employment		
<a href="#">Substance 2 Solutions (S2S)</a>	Substance Misuse	Recovery support Peer led activities and key-skills	Spring House, 39 Billing Road, NN1 5BA	-
<a href="#">Alcoholics Anonymous</a>	Substance Misuse	Recovery support – alcoholism	Meetings in various sites across Northampton	-
<a href="#">Narcotics Anonymous</a> and <a href="#">Cocaine Anonymous</a>	Substance Misuse	Recovery support for drug addiction	Meetings in various sites across Northampton	-
<a href="#">Family Support Link</a>	Substance Misuse – Family Support	Support across Northamptonshire; to reduce the harm caused to families and individuals living with or caring for someone who is addicted to drugs and/or alcohol	West End House, 60 Oxford Street, Wellingborough, NN8 4JJ - Support groups in Northampton	-
<a href="#">Eve</a> / Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge	Domestic Violence and Abuse	A domestic abuse charity. They have a refuge for women and their children who have escaped from domestic abuse, plus a domestic abuse recovery programme.	PO BOX 76, Northampton, NN1 5RL	Accommodated 34 women and 25 children in 2017-18. 81% occupancy rate.
<a href="#">NDAS</a> – Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service	Domestic Violence and Abuse	Provide refuge services across Northamptonshire and advice and support – for men and women	13-15 Hazelwood Rd Northampton, NN1 1LG	26 units of refuge accommodation in 2017-18 including 5 units for women substance misuse issues. The male refuge can accommodate 3



				men and 1 child.72 refuge clients accommodated in 2017-18
<a href="#">Voice Northants/Sunflower Centre</a>	Domestic Violence and Abuse	Offer specialist support for people who've experienced domestic abuse. Countywide. Includes safety planning and support for court proceedings.	-	-
<a href="#">Mind - Northampton</a>	Mental Health	1:1 Support and drop in crisis café, counselling, peer support	Anchor House, 6-7 Regent Square, NN1 2NQ and Friends Meeting House, Wellington Street, NN1 3AS	-
<a href="#">Maple Access – GP Surgery</a>	Mental Health/Rough Sleeping	Popular practice for people of no fixed abode (NFA). An armed forces veteran friendly accredited practice.	Maple Access Practice Maple House 17 - 19 Hazelwood Road NN1 1LG	-
<a href="#">Campbell House – NHFT</a>	Mental Health	NHS community mental health services	Campbell House, Campbell Square, NN1 3EB	-
<a href="#">Aquarius</a>	Gambling Addiction	Gambling intervention service offers support to people affected by their own gambling or the gambling of a family member 1:1 sessions or group sessions.	N/A	-

<a href="#">The Hope Centre</a>	Day Centre	Provide food, advice and guidance, employability training, workshops and activities	Northampton Hope Centre Oasis House 35-37 Campbell Street NN1 3DS	-
<a href="#">Jesus Centre</a>	Day Centre	Drop in service for the homeless Clothing, toiletries, blankets and sleeping bags. Food and drink. postal address service, valuable documents' storage and a hot lunch on a Monday. They offer showers, a laundry service and issue food bank vouchers.	Abington Square, Northampton, NN1 4AE	-
<a href="#">Countywide Traveller Unit</a>	Gypsy and Traveller	A county council service that liaises with Gypsies and Travellers through a specialist multi-disciplinary team, including over housing issues.	-	-
<a href="#">Home Start Northampton</a>	Family Support	Voluntary organisation promoting family welfare through support, friendship and practical help. To prevent family crisis and breakdown.	Martin House 24 Hazelwood Road Northampton NN1 1LN	-
<a href="#">RE: STORE Northampton</a>	Foodbank/Crisis Support	Practical support for vulnerable people, including The Northampton Foodbank for families and individuals and Growbaby for families in need.	Central Vineyard 42 Sheep Street Northampton NN1 2LZ	-

<a href="#">The Lowdown</a>	Young People	Counselling, sexual health and LGBTQ support services six days a week in Northampton for 11-25-year olds.	3 Kingswell Street, Northampton, NN1 1PP	-
<a href="#">Springs Family Centre</a>	Young People	Two large youth clubs, a Jobs club for all, a project for young people getting into work, a music recording studio, a cooking course for young people	9 Tower Street, Kingdom Life Church, Northampton, NN1 2SN	-
<a href="#">NGAGE</a>	Young People – drugs and alcohol	Provides information, education, advice and support to young people (10-18 years old) in relation to drug and alcohol use.	81 St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1JF	-
<a href="#">C2C Social Action</a>	Current and ex-offenders	Support for men and women at any stage of the criminal justice system, including work programmes	First Floor, 9 Overstone Road, Northampton, NN1 3JL	-
<a href="#">Goodwill Solutions</a>	Current and ex-offenders, veterans	Back to work programme for homeless including offenders. Run the Work Readiness Action Programme (WRAP), a £1.4 million Building Better Opportunities (BBO) project, engaging, supporting and helping people into employment.	Goodwill Solutions CIC Unit 1056 Moulton Park Deer Park Road Northampton NN3 6RX	-
<a href="#">SSAFA – Northamptonshire</a>	Veterans	Support for all armed forces veterans	N/A – Online	-

<a href="#">Royal British Legion – Northampton</a>	Veterans	Support for all armed forces veterans	N/A	-
100 Ladles (Action for Homelessness and Hunger)	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	A cooked meal every Saturday evening between 6.30-8.30pm in Northampton’s town centre for people who are homeless or sleeping rough.	N/A	-
Project 16:15	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	Daily breakfast provision, mainly in the town centre	N/A	-
<a href="#">Foundation Stones Project</a>	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	Aiming to provide an additional shelter for rough sleepers. Also do street outreach.	N/A	-
Earths Lonely Angels	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	Mon, Wed and Fri meal on Abington Street	N/A	-
<a href="#">Midland Langar Seva Society</a>	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	Sunday evening meal on Abington Street	N/A	-
Other independent street groups	Community Street Services / Rough Sleeping	Ad hoc basis	N/A	-
<a href="#">Oasis House – Midland Heart</a> <a href="#">NAASH</a> – Support	Supported Accommodation	Oasis House services are delivered in partnership with Northampton Borough council Northampton Hope Centre who provide day centre services to the homeless by providing meals,	35-37 Campbell Street Northampton NN1 3DS	48 units, with 9 direct access beds & 39 move on apartments.  Plans to increase the number of units.

		clothing, training & activities. NAASH deliver accommodation related support: housing advice employment support substance misuse support medical services		
<a href="#">Amicus Trust</a>	Supported Accommodation	Provide support and accommodation for single homeless across Northamptonshire. Access to education and training, mental health support	Various	Unknown number of units
<a href="#">Richmond Fellowship</a>	Supported Accommodation	Provides supported housing for people with mental health and substance use problems across Northamptonshire. CAN Housing have 61 places and provide structured interventions through floating support.	William Tarry House 79 Spencer Street, NN5 5JX And 81 St Giles Street Northampton NN1	William Tarry House – 11 self-contained flats
<a href="#">Mayday Trust</a>	Supported Accommodation	Provide support through a Personal Transitions Service, in addition to housing.	4 Broadmead Court St Albans Road Northampton NN3 2RU	Unknown number of units

## Key Findings

- The number of homeless households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty has increased significantly over the past few years. Together with a severe shortage of suitable move-on accommodation, this has resulted in a large increase in the number of homeless households (families and single people) living in temporary accommodation.
- Higher temporary accommodation numbers have resulted in the Council becoming increasingly reliant on expensive nightly-purchased temporary accommodation that is procured from private landlords.
- The increase in the number of homeless households accepted for rehousing is driven by two main causes: the ending of tenancies in the private rented sector and households being excluded by their parents or other members of their own family.
- This in turn is affected by: (a) diminishing affordability in the private rented sector and the structural problems that are making it difficult for households on a low income to access the private rented sector, and (b) the year-on-year decline in general needs social lettings and households' decreasing access to affordable housing.
- Although new homes are being built for affordable rent, this new housing supply has not kept pace with the steady decline in social lettings in recent years.
- Violent and non-violent relationship breakdown remains a main cause of homelessness.
- Since the 2011 Census, the increase in households renting privately and the decline in homeownership have continued, both in absolute numbers and proportionately.
- In line with the main causes of homelessness, most of the households approaching the Council when they are threatened with homelessness are living in the private rented sector or living with family or friends.
- The profile of the households approaching the Council for assistance under the homelessness legislation is disproportionately young (compared to all residents of Northampton) and disproportionately likely to be headed by a female main applicant.
- A notable aspect of the demographic profile of approaching households is the prevalence of single main applicants; only 17% had a partner in their household.
- A large minority of main applicants were in work (41%)
- Three quarters of households had no recorded support needs. Structural homelessness appears to be a bigger driver for approaching households than unmet support needs and personal causes of homelessness.

- Mental health problems are the most common support need overall and were very common among rough sleepers. Most rough sleepers had multiple support needs.
- Rough sleeping has increased and the Nightshelter continues to receive a steady stream of referrals. Although we acknowledge the limitations of the methodology that the Government has set for conducting Rough Sleeper Counts – and the fact that such Counts provide only a ‘snapshot’ figure that does not include everyone who is sleeping rough – we estimate (based on our six-days-a-week Outreach sessions and the intelligence we receive from local services) that, on any one night, 50 - 60 people sleep rough in Northampton.

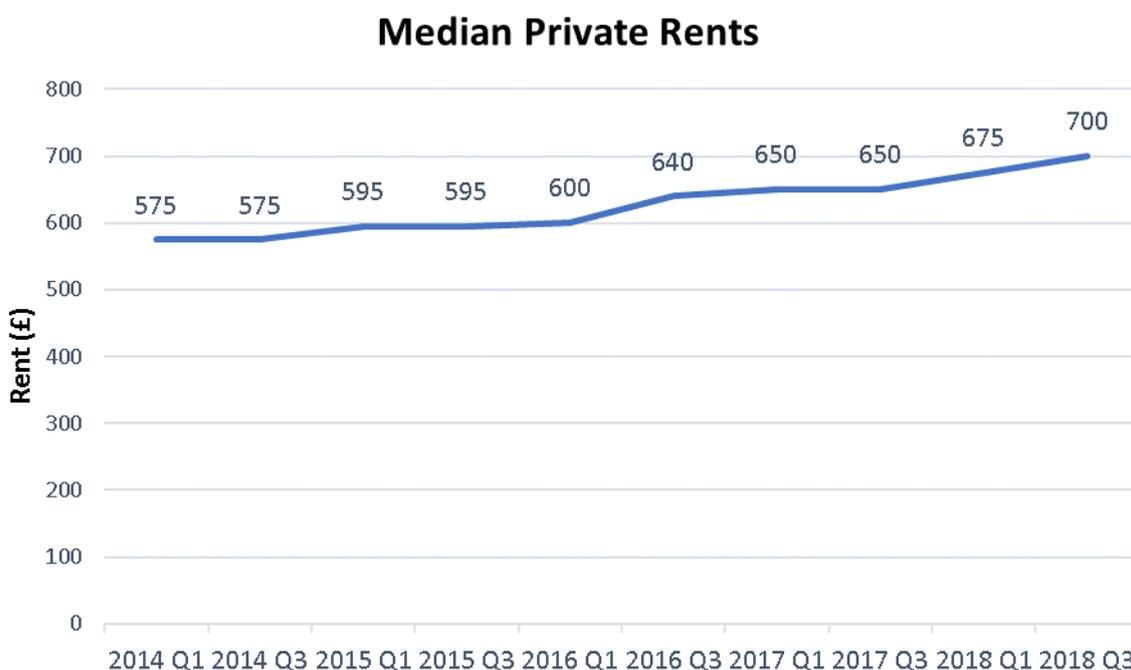
## Future Levels of Homelessness

There are a range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness. They will depend to a large extent on whether the key trends identified in the review are likely to continue over the next few years.

These trends are:

1. Worsening affordability in the private rented sector, leading to the eviction of households reliant on benefits for housing costs or limiting their ability to access the sector in the first place.
2. Lower numbers of general needs social lets, thereby creating fewer options for households affected by (1) and leading them to make a homelessness application and in some instances be accommodated in Temporary Accommodation.

For the first trend, PRS evictions have been driven by landlords seeking to sell or re-let at higher prices. Households becoming homeless due to parents asking them to leave is linked to this because it is affected by the increasing difficulty of household formation; younger households cannot secure their own accommodation in the PRS.



The above chart showing median private rents in Northampton. Together with the increase in house price-income ratios, this data suggests a consistent trend of worsening affordability. The increase in private rents shown above is in nominal terms, showing an increase of 17% from Q1 2016 to Q3 2018. For households dependent on benefits for their housing costs even a nominal increase of this size is significant because of the benefits freeze. Local housing allowance rates have been frozen from April 2016 through to April 2020. At the time of writing, there are indications this may end in 2020 and benefits will revert to increase in line with CPI. However, this is unlikely to increase affordability in the sector in any meaningful

way as LHA rates have fallen so far in relation to rents already. Furthermore, there are additional factors that will continue to affect the ability of lower earning households to rent privately, notably migration to Universal Credit.

The main ‘managed migration’ to Universal Credit is due to be completed by March 2023. The specific effects of the migration will not be known until it occurs, but evidence from the introduction of Universal Credit to date suggests a strong negative impact for tenants renting with benefits. There is a risk of this resulting in even more difficulty for tenants looking to access the PRS on low incomes. Therefore, there appears to be a strong likelihood of the first trend continuing over the lifetime of this Strategy.

For the second trend, reversing the decline in general needs social lets would require a substantial increase in affordable housing completions. An increase of that size is unlikely to occur over a relatively short period of time and would be very difficult over any time scale. As of November 2019, there is no evidence in the planning pipeline that there will be a large sustained increase in affordable housing supply. As a result, the expectation must be that the number general needs social lets will either remain broadly flat or continue to decline over the coming years.

In conclusion, as both main trends behind increasing homelessness look set to continue, future levels of homelessness are likely to be higher, without intervention. The Strategy will be developed with the intention of creating an action plan to address these causes and mitigate their effects on homeless households as far as realistically possible.

## Appendix B: Results and analysis of the public consultation (04/02/20 – 03/03/20)



### Appendix B: Results of the Public Consultation

A 28-day public consultation was held between 4<sup>th</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. People were able to submit a response to a survey asking their views on the Draft Strategy. The consultation period was announced to all the partners who participated in the strategy workshops, and members of the homelessness forums.

In total 18 people submitted a response. The questions and responses are below:

#### Question 1:

Please select which of the following applies to you:

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Northampton Borough Council resident	66.67% 12
Someone who has approached Northampton Borough Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness	0.00% 0
Homelessness support service, charity, or trust	5.56% 1
Registered Provider of housing	0.00% 0
Other landlord	0.00% 0
Public body/organisation	22.22% 4
Other (please specify)	<a href="#">Responses</a> 5.56% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

All 18 responses answered what their status was. 12 people (67%) answered as residents of Northampton Borough Council, the largest group. 6 people answered from the perspective of public bodies or other organisations. These organisations are named in the table below, as the answers to question 2.

The other two Councils that will form West Northamptonshire (South Northants and Daventry) responded, as did Public Health Northamptonshire and adult social services from Northamptonshire County Council. Eve (a Domestic violence and abuse organisation) also responded.



## Q2 Name your organisation (if applicable)

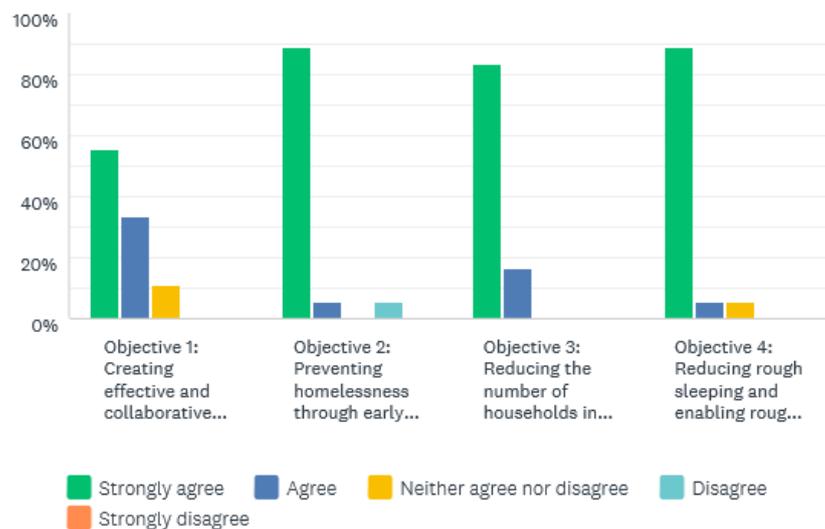
Answered: 7 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Public Health Northamptonshire	3/3/2020 5:46 PM
2	South Northants Council	3/3/2020 3:30 PM
3	Daventry District Council	3/3/2020 8:58 AM
4	NCC NASS	2/28/2020 12:16 PM
5	N/A	2/19/2020 8:23 AM
6	Danelaw Real Estate	2/17/2020 3:52 PM
7	eve	2/6/2020 3:22 PM

### Question 3:

Do you agree with the four main objectives in the Strategy?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Question 3 asked for their overall view on the four main objectives and to what extent they agreed with them.

**Objective 1:** 89% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, none disagreed.

**Objective 2:** 94% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, 1 person disagreed.

**Objective 3:** 100% of people either agreed or strongly agreed.

**Objective 4:** 94% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, none disagreed.

Full results are in the table below. Overall, there was very strong support for all four objectives from the responses, with strongly agree being the most common response for each.



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
Objective 1: Creating effective and collaborative partnerships	55.56% 10	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 2: Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention	88.89% 16	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	18
Objective 3: Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation for homeless households	83.33% 15	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 4: Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive	88.89% 16	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18

**Q4 Are there other main strategic objectives you think should be added to the Strategy? If yes, briefly describe them**

Only 6 responses suggested additional main objectives. 11 did not answer and 1 simply said ‘no comment’.

The themes that emerged from these responses were:

- The importance of not focusing solely on homelessness prevention and dedicating resources to help people who are already homeless, in particular expanding hostel provision and specialist accommodation for those with high needs.
- Provision of free debt advice
- Developing stronger links with health organisations to address the lack of joined up mental health support.
- Reduce the level of temporary accommodation being procured from private landlords as it an expensive use of Council resources.



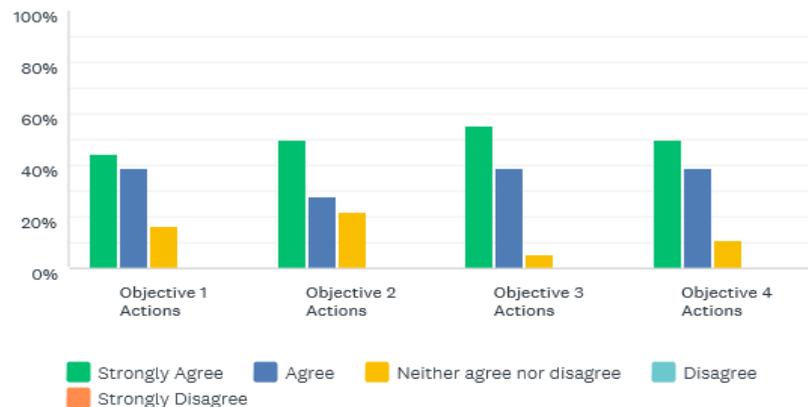
These suggestions are mostly already included within sub-objectives and the action plan:

- Objective 4 contains actions relating to relieving homelessness for those in the greatest need
- Free debt advice is already available through Money Advisers employed by the Council and other external agencies, including national charities
- Objective 1 focuses on partnership and health organisations including mental health agencies are certainly a part of that objectives and relevant actions.
- Reducing the reliance on expensive nightly let temporary accommodation is already a part of the Council’s Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan.

### Question 5:

Overall, do you agree that the actions in each section of the action plan will help us to achieve that objective?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
Objective 1 Actions	44.44% 8	38.89% 7	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 2 Actions	50.00% 9	27.78% 5	22.22% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 3 Actions	55.56% 10	38.89% 7	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 4 Actions	50.00% 9	38.89% 7	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18

Overall, there was overwhelmingly agreement or strong agreement that the actions in each section of the action plan would help us to achieve the relevant objective. No responses disagreed that they would help us to achieve them. All 18 responses answered this question.

**Q6 Are there other specific actions you think should be included in each section of the action plan? If yes, please briefly describe them.**

8 responses suggested specific actions for one or more of the main objectives. 10 people did not answer.

**OBJECTIVE ONE**

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Longer term charity sector funding commitments
- Include ALL the voluntary groups that are trying to help, not just the ones who do as they are told.
- Be sure to contact that person back.
- Improving access to mental health services and communications between health services
- Build more social housing
- Prioritise local Northampton born homeless families

**OBJECTIVE TWO**

- Mental health issues
- We would welcome continued collaborative working with PH NCC on homelessness prevention – particularly where we have a role in prevention of some of the risk factors associated with homelessness and rough sleeping
- Outcomes [*sic*] based/ Social Impact Bonds projects e.g. for the Bridges coaching model
- Interventions must always be appropriate, and devoid of coercion [*sic*]
- Be clear on the options presented to them
- Increase in homeless shelters/hostel for short term intervention. Help with benefits, for example providing a residential address.
- Ensure empty houses are turned round quickly and re-let

### **OBJECTIVE THREE**

- There is a huge problem with unregulated HiMO landlords that needs to be addressed
- Remember you have a persons [sic] life in your hands.
- Quicker transitions from temporary to permanent residency to free up emergency accommodation for homeless individuals/families
- Persons with mental problems are given the correct help

### **OBJECTIVE FOUR**

- Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive will also need strong collaboration with healthcare commissioners (Northants CCG) and providers as well as public health commissioners – both in terms of specific mental health and drug and alcohol service delivery as well as wider health and wellbeing services.
- There is an immediate and urgent need to provide much greater night-shelter capacity, especially for women, children and vulnerable people.
- Have some compassion and be relatable.
- More support for homeless people to access employment/education/healthcare
- Training programmes to get people back into work

These suggested actions are again mostly already adopted within the strategy or are slight variations of existing actions in the plan. For example, with Objective Four expanding work and training access programmes and increasing night shelter provision are already included.

Several of the suggestions relate more to the way we approach our work and engage with service users, something we have also addressed in the person-centred approach we want to apply. Where there are specific suggestions that are not covered in the action plan (e.g. social impact bonds), these are options that can be explored by the Homelessness Forums in future if they want to try new initiatives.

## Q7 Do you have any other comments on the Strategy or action plan?

(7 answered 11 Skipped)

- We welcome this important strategy and action plan – particularly the focus it has on partnerships and a person-centred, strength-based approach. We feel that the final action plan could include a greater emphasis on collaboration with health service commissioners (Northants CCG), as well as PH NCC. Better integration of health and wellbeing services with housing/homelessness services will be important for partnerships to be truly effective in reducing rough sleeping and improving the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers.
- We welcome the commitment to effective partnerships and forums and to enabling collaboration and harnessing the energy and commitment of a wide range of partners to tackle homelessness. We welcome the commitment to adopting a person-centred and strengths-based approach and have found this to be effective in developing and delivering our own prevention services. We look forward to working collaborative and proactively as part of Future Northants’.
- Objective 1: Although the creation of effective and collaborative partnerships is very important, it would be useful for it to be a reoccurring theme that runs through other objectives rather than being a theme itself. 1.10 on the action plan details a commitment to develop, consult and approve a West Northants Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by April 2021. This time frame is ideal however it should be noted that this could happen before the April 2021 vesting day, or, (according to legislation) it could also be following this date. Text could be amended to state that operation of the strategy is intended until a WN strategy is adopted rather than placing a specific date. Having the strategy dated 2020 – 2023 also adds some confusion if you are committing to the April 2021 date, and makes the final paragraph on p3 seem illogical.

Objective 2: Certain processes seem to be targeted at only one cohort. Namely a home visiting officer that only visits those being asked to leave family or friends. Should targeted prevention in this way be used more liberally for other groups threatened with homelessness?

Objective 2: The customer journey seems complex with the new structure, with many different officers playing into the outcome of any one homeless case. It would be beneficial to set out why it has been structured this way e.g. is it the result of the review, is this from feedback, as it is a new design for the service, should a featuring action be the implementation and monitoring of the new structure to see if it delivers what’s expected. 3.3 within the action plan could do with a little more explanation. The action may be seen to provide incorrect information. ‘Include people with lived experience in the design and delivery of homelessness services’, this sounds like they have experience in the design and delivery. This is the same with 4.8.

Objective 4: To ‘thrive’ in the context as written within this title portrays a picture that the wish is for rough sleepers to develop positively, however it doesn’t necessarily encourage them away from rough sleeping. Is this the intention? Do we want those currently street homeless to remain street homeless? 4.11 would be useful to provide further information e.g. Is it primarily for homeless households or for rough sleepers, or both. I.e. donations for those on the streets. General: There is much text about the stakeholder events within the body of the strategy, it would be useful to understand how the homelessness review played into all of the objectives as well as any stakeholder engagement activities. There is little about situations about where homelessness prevention fails. Potentially there are actions that can help with relief e.g. housing advice, housing delivery, financial assistance. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on your proposed strategy.

- A good strategy. I look forward to seeing good implementation.
- I was homeless/rough sleeping for 2 and a half years. I presented myself to the council from the beginning. I found your lack of compassion, non-existent sense of urgency and lack of resources unbelievable. There isn't enough contact between the council and homeless/potentially homeless. You are left weeks and sometimes months in the dark, despite chasing it up every day. Your current strategy is not working. You are tackling homelessness like an infestation upon the town as opposed to a real issue involving real people. A couple clicks on your computer [sic] screen decides if I get to sleep under a roof or in a bush/tent/bus stop etc not fit for human habitation and the lack of responsibility for the situation after is completely astounding. My suggestion for the strategy would be to bring in homeless/previously homeless people for effect of the study. Allow them to express their input because you won't find the current homeless (or many of them) on an online survey. There are no better people to point out flaws in the system than those that have experienced it, so appeal to that audience instead of people so lucky to be online in their own homes.
- None.
- I strongly disagree that large burdens of homelessness fall on the private sector. For the first instance, in a purely pragmatic approach, it sees vast sums of public fund re-directed into private hands, adding to the council's financial burdens. It also ignores the opportunity for the council to establish a purpose designed charitable property trust in which to either build or purchase suitable properties for temporary accommodation purposes which could be guaranteed to be available for those at risk of homelessness. Rather than adding to the financial liabilities of the council, this approach would create a fixed asset of increasing value that also means council funds paid out for the rental costs would remain in council hands. It would also significantly reduce admin costs due to removing multiple layers of communication required to negotiate with a private landlord and their managing agents. As the property value grows annually and the rent would be paid tax free to a charitable trust, it would create a system that reduces the amount of tax payer funds spent on housing the at risk as it would be at least partially self-sustaining financially (and protected from right to buy as they would not be directly owned by the council). It may even be possible to pursue this idea through alternative funding, such as lottery grants as was the case for a similar strategy in Finland that saw a homelessness reduction in Helsinki in the high 90% 's

Seven people provided some considered and detailed critique of the strategy and specific parts that lack clarity or could be expanded. These comments have been taken and amendments made where appropriate.

In addition, it should be noted that several of the comments are complimentary about the strategy and eager to begin implementation. Overall, responses were very positive with strong agreement for the main objectives and corresponding actions. Where useful additions or amendments have been raised these are evident in the final draft of the strategy.

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# Appendix C:

## Northampton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-23



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## Foreword

Homelessness and rough sleeping are unacceptable in modern Britain.

For many people in Northampton, access to affordable housing is very difficult and we recognise that homelessness has a serious impact on people's lives and that vulnerable people are adversely affected and at greater risk of homelessness.

Although this is very challenging, Northampton Borough Council is committed to preventing homelessness, increasing the supply of affordable homes and helping as many people as possible to find suitable housing that meets their needs.

More people than ever before are contacting the Council for help with housing issues and we have recently reorganised and expanded our Housing Advice and Options Service to provide the specialist advice, help and support that is needed to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness.

Tackling and preventing homelessness is everyone's business and requires a holistic, joined-up, multi-agency approach.

Our partners – including housing providers, advice and support agencies, day centres, faith and community groups, statutory services and voluntary sector organisations – play a vital role and we value their expertise, dedication and support in providing accommodation, supporting residents, sustaining tenancies, helping people into employment and improving life chances.

It is with our partners that we have managed to achieve the success we have. We know, however, that there is still much to be done.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been produced with the input and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including members of Northampton's Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum.

It sets out the action we will all take to intervene earlier, prevent more homelessness and support people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Although West Northamptonshire Council is expected to produce its own Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2021, the strategic priorities in that Strategy are likely to reflect the priorities in this Strategy.

**Councillor Stephen Hibbert**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing**

## Development of this Strategy

The Council is required to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy no less than once every five years and to keep it under review.

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out how the Council and its partners will tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness in the area.

In recent years, substantial amendments have been made to the primary homelessness legislation – most notably the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) which came into effect in 2018 – and the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has published its [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018](#).

In August 2018, the MHCLG also published its national [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#).

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy takes into account the new legislation and guidance and is based on the results of a Review of Homelessness in Northampton that was undertaken during autumn 2019.

The Review of Homelessness is available in full on the Council's website, but the key findings have also been included in the next section of this Strategy.

In developing this Strategy, the Council organised a series of stakeholder events:

- On 24 July 2019, a half day multi agency Rough Sleepers Workshop was attended by 50 representatives from local services and organisations
- On 1 October 2019, a second half day multi agency Rough Sleepers Workshop took place, attended by representatives from a wide range of services and organisations, to review Northampton's strategy for tackling rough sleeping
- On 15 November 2019, a half day multi agency Family Homelessness Workshop was attended by 40 people from 16 different organisations. This included Registered Providers, Northamptonshire County Council and a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations.

During these events, stakeholders identified the strategic priorities and how all services and organisations can work better together to tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in Northampton.

Some of the strategic objectives – such as improving collaborative working – apply to all aspects of homelessness whilst others relate specifically to families, or single people or childless couples, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

## **Future of this Strategy**

Local government in Northamptonshire is in the process of being re-organised.

In May 2019, the Government announced the creation of two new Unitary Councils in Northamptonshire: one in West Northamptonshire and one in North Northamptonshire.

The West Northamptonshire authority will cover the existing districts of Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire, and is due to come into effect in April 2021.

Officers from the three Councils and the County Council are already working together to develop a new Strategy that will ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible and Northampton's approach to homelessness is continued and improved in conjunction with the other authorities.

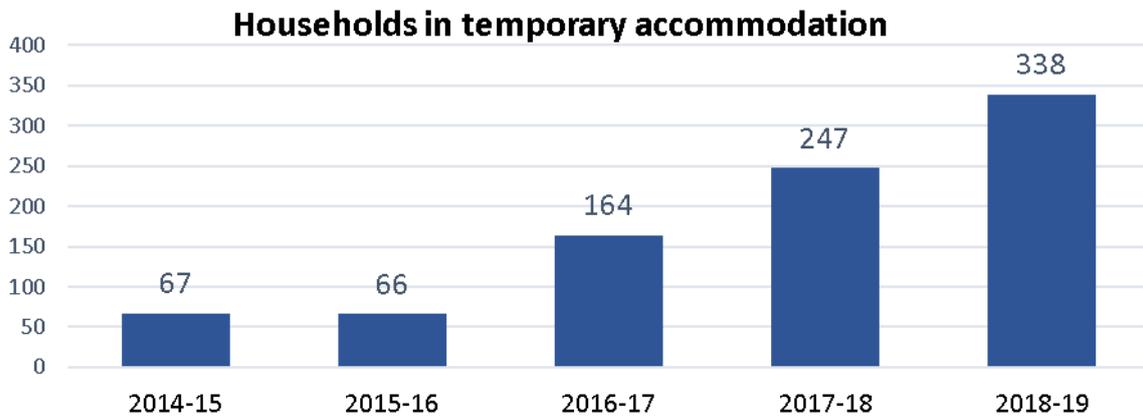
This Strategy will be in effect until the transition to Unitary and a joint Strategy is created. At present this is set for April 2021 but is subject to change. This why the Strategy is dated 2020-2023 to account for a possible extension in the Unitary date.

# The Review of Homelessness

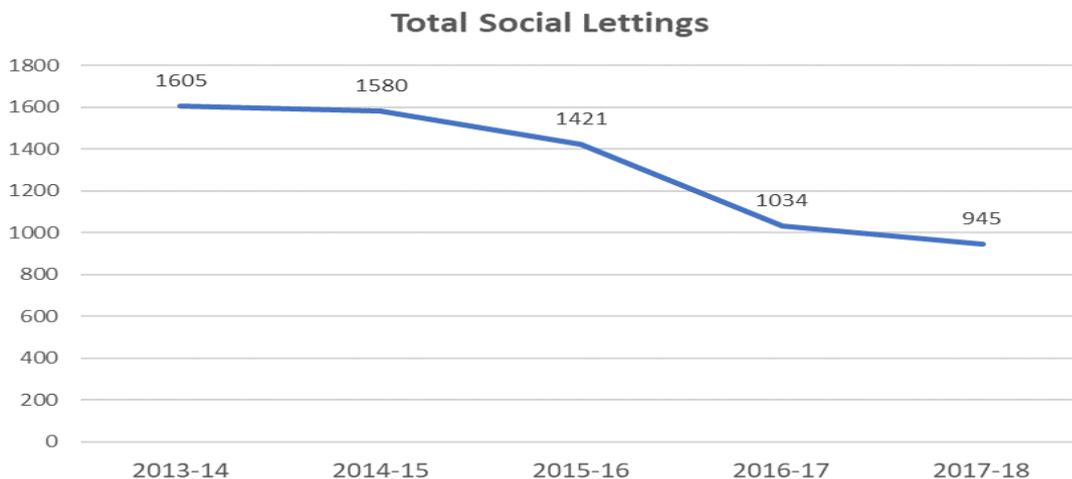
Full details of the Review of Homelessness are contained in Appendix A.

In summary, the key findings are as follows:

- The number of homeless households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty has increased significantly over the past few years. Together with a severe shortage of suitable move-on accommodation, this has resulted in a large increase in the number of homeless households (families and single people) living in temporary accommodation:



- Higher temporary accommodation numbers have resulted in the Council becoming increasingly reliant on expensive nightly-purchased temporary accommodation that is procured from private landlords.
- The increase in the number of homeless households accepted for rehousing is driven by two main causes: the ending of tenancies in the private rented sector and households being excluded by their parents or other members of their own family.
- This in turn is affected by: (a) diminishing affordability in the private rented sector and the structural problems that are making it difficult for households on a low income to access the private rented sector, and (b) the year-on-year decline in general needs social lettings and households' reducing access to affordable housing.



- Although new homes are being built for affordable rent, this new housing supply has not kept pace with the steady decline in social lettings in recent years.
- Violent and non-violent relationship breakdown remains a main cause of homelessness.
- Since the 2011 Census, the increase in households renting privately and the decline in homeownership have continued, both in absolute numbers and proportionately.
- In line with the main causes of homelessness, most of the households approaching the Council when they are threatened with homelessness are living in the private rented sector or living with family or friends.
- The profile of the households approaching the Council for assistance under the homelessness legislation is disproportionately young (compared to all residents of Northampton) and disproportionately likely to be headed by a female main applicant.
- A notable aspect of the demographic profile of approaching households is the prevalence of single main applicants; only 17% had a partner in their household.
- A large minority of main applicants were in work (41%)
- Three quarters of households had no recorded support needs. Structural homelessness appears to be a bigger driver for approaching households than unmet support needs and personal causes of homelessness.
- Mental health problems are the most common support need, even more so among rough sleepers. Most rough sleepers had multiple support needs, including addiction issues.
- Rough sleeping has increased and the Nightshelter continues to receive a steady stream of referrals. Although we acknowledge the limitations of the methodology that the Government has set for conducting Rough Sleeper Counts – and the fact that such Counts provide only a ‘snapshot’ figure that does not include everyone who is sleeping rough – we estimate (based on our six-days-a-week Outreach sessions and the intelligence we receive from local services) that, on any one night, 50 - 60 people sleep rough in Northampton.

<b><i>Rough Sleepers Count</i></b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<i>Total</i>	19	25	14	13	26	28
<i>% change from previous year</i>	+111%	+32%	-44%	-7%	+100%	+8%

## Strategic objectives

From the findings of the Review of Homelessness and the Workshops held with partners, four strategic objectives were identified for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, each with several sub-objectives and actions.

### **① Creating effective and collaborative partnerships**

A recurring theme during the Strategy development process was the importance of instilling a culture of homelessness prevention within all organisations and not just the statutory services. Everyone agreed that more can and should be done to harness the full potential of all services and organisations in the borough.

Creating effective and collaborative partnerships is essential in order to assist the sharing of information and resources. This way of working will have a positive impact on the other strategic objectives and the implementation of the Action Plan.

### **② Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention**

Together with the creation of effective partnerships, early and targeted intervention are regarded as essential in the approach to tackling, preventing and reducing homelessness.

The priority is to enable households and any organisations they are engaging with to take appropriate action to prevent homelessness at an early stage when more options are available. This needs to focus on the main causes of homelessness: the loss of private rented accommodation and relationship breakdown (including family exclusion).

### **③ Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable housing for homeless households**

Managing a large number of homeless households in temporary accommodation takes up a lot of time and can have an adverse effect on the amount of time that the Council is able to spend on preventing homelessness and meeting households' housing needs.

As well as the impact that being without settled accommodation has on the lives and life chances of the hundreds of households living in temporary accommodation, the financial impact on the Council's budget of having such a large number of homeless households in expensive form of temporary accommodation requires urgent action.

### **④ Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive**

Rough sleeping has increased and represents the most visible form of homelessness.

The Council is committed to reducing rough sleeping in line with the commitments that the Government has made in its national Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Objectives One and Two – and the corresponding actions in the Action Plan – will contribute positively to the achievement of this objective. However, the Workshops also emphasised the need to create an environment in which rough sleepers can thrive, realize their full potential and escape a cycle of homelessness.

Addressing the high level of support needs among rough sleepers will be an important factor in a) helping people to access accommodation, but also b) to help those currently unable to do that manage better, and access services they need regardless of their housing situation.

## **Overarching principles**

During the Strategy Workshops, stakeholders were keen for certain governing principles to be adopted when the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is implemented.

Although separate from the strategic objectives, these overarching principles are instrumental to the development of a common approach that is applied to all priorities and, where appropriate, to the way in which local services are delivered.

- **A person-centred approach**

A recognition that everyone is different and has their individual needs and capabilities, and that a ‘one size fits all’ approach may not work for them.

Although it can be useful to analyse data to draw out common trends amongst people needing support and to develop appropriate actions, it is important to remain focused on individual circumstances and preferences and, wherever practicable, involve people in the design and delivery of the support they are receiving.

- **Strengths-based practice**

To avoid a deficit-based approach that focuses wholly on risk and what individuals are lacking, services should focus on individuals’ assets (skills, resources, goals and aspirations) and do everything they can to enable people to help themselves as much as they can and develop their own resources and resilience.

Both principles are consistent with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the accompanying Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018: to take a holistic view of an individual’s circumstances and encourage and support them to resolve their own housing issues as far as they are able.

Our intention is that these principles will be evident in the Strategy and Action Plan and the forums that emerge to develop further ideas and actions.

## Objective One: Creating effective and collaborative partnerships

During the development of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, there was strong support for the idea of creating a more collaborative environment in which all services and organisations communicate better with one another, there is a lot less duplication, and effective and collaborative partnerships are able to flourish.

It was agreed that the establishment of a **Single Homelessness Forum** and a **Family Homelessness Forum** – which will meet regularly and will be attended by relevant organisations and interested parties – will encourage collaboration and partnership working.

Regular meetings of the Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum will afford stakeholders the opportunity to exchange ideas and good practice, identify solutions, provide comment, express concerns and make recommendations. They will also provide a platform for the continuous development of Northampton's approach to homelessness.

Although the Single Homelessness Forum and the Family Homelessness Forum have different memberships and points of discussion, they share the same broad objectives:

- Strengthening the relationships between the Council and local services and organisations by creating a platform for the voluntary and community organisations to develop relationships with one another and improve the way in which they co-ordinate their work, independently of statutory services.
- Sharing best practice and striving to improve standards. The forums provide the opportunity for stakeholders to discuss what is and is not working, and to identify common issues and frustrations that can be addressed and resolved together.

The Single Homelessness Forum held its inaugural meeting on 15 October 2019 and is scheduled to meet quarterly from 14 January 2020.

The Family Homelessness Forum is due to hold its inaugural meeting in the spring of 2020.

### **Enabling collaboration: Improving access to services and support**

Everyone attending the Strategy Workshops agreed that the creation of a shared directory of services – containing details of the services available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Northampton – would improve everyone's understanding of the services, what they offer, what they don't offer and how people can access them.

Everyone agreed, also, that a shared directory of services would provide all organisations with the understanding of one another's services that they will need in order to work more collaboratively and prevent homelessness through early and targeted intervention.

A directory would also improve awareness of services available for specific and vulnerable groups, ensuring these people can access targeted support. A visual flow diagram displaying

the different pathways available would complement the directory, so that agencies can have a visual aid to easily understand the options.

It will be for the two Forums to determine the contents of the directory of services and how the information should be kept up to date.

## **Joint Protocols**

The Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum have attracted the support of Registered Providers, including the Council's arms-length management organisation, Northampton Partnership Homes.

The meetings will afford the opportunity for members of the Forums to talk directly with Registered Providers about housing allocations, tenancy sustainment and pre-eviction protocols, and to raise any concerns. It is hoped that this will result in better tenancy sustainment and fewer evictions.

It is anticipated that Adult Social Care and Children's Services will be actively involved in the Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum respectively, and in the drafting or updating of Joint Protocols. A substantial amount of the service improvement work will be undertaken, between meetings, by 'Task and Finish Groups'.

Members of the Forums will also be able to address specific areas of concern affecting homeless households, such as the migration to Universal Credit which is expected to take place during the lifetime of this Strategy. The Duty to Refer will also be a point of discussion, so that members can contribute to the continuous improvement of the referral process.

## **Future Northants**

To ensure that Northampton continues to benefit from the time and effort that is invested in the establishment of effective and collaborative partnerships in the borough, we will continue to work collaboratively and proactively with South Northants Council and Daventry District Council – by inviting them to send representatives to the Forums and producing a joint or merged Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy that will be in place by April 2021.

The Housing and Wellbeing Service at Northampton will also continue its active engagement with programme teams overseeing the transition to Unitary, ensuring that our influence is felt in the reshaping of local government. Particular attention will be paid to services currently provided and commissioned by Northamptonshire County Council to try to maximise the quality and availability of the support available.

Work is already being undertaken by several Councils to develop a 'whole-county' approach to preventing families becoming intentionally homeless, in conjunction with Children First Northamptonshire. We will ensure this work is not lost and carries over as the Councils transition to Unitary and with the creation of a new Children's Trust.

## **Objective Two: Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention**

For most people who are threatened with homelessness – and the services that are working with them – the best outcome is achieved by acting quickly to prevent them becoming homeless in the first place.

Early and targeted intervention to prevent homelessness is a primary focus of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which created a new Prevention Duty, owed to all eligible households threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

Acting quickly to prevent homelessness is important for everyone (single people, childless couples and families with children) and, over time, it will help to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and the number of people sleeping rough.

### **Changes to the Housing Advice & Options Service**

A new staffing structure in the Borough Council has already been agreed and will have been fully implemented by the time this Strategy comes into effect. During the lifetime of the Strategy, regular monitoring will ensure that the Service is meeting its objectives and achieving its potential.

The Housing Advice & Options Service is being re-organised but also expanded, and improved homelessness prevention is an important driver behind the changes and the new roles created. A Homelessness Reduction Manager will oversee the Homelessness Prevention and Homelessness Assessment teams, and these teams will no longer be generic but have specialised roles to work with certain types of cases.

Two Housing Triage Officers will undertake initial enquiries and help guide households along appropriate housing pathways. Dedicated Private Sector Housing Advisers will provide tenants in the private rented sector with the expert advice and assistance they need to avoid homelessness and either remain where they are or find suitable alternative accommodation. A Home Visiting Officer will work proactively with households that have been asked to leave by their friends or family.

### **Creating self-serve Housing Advice**

Enabling people to help themselves as much as they can is another principle of the Homelessness Reduction Act and accompanying Code of Guidance.

There is scope to create more interactive and user-friendly web pages on the Council's website to encourage their use, especially amongst younger people and certain vulnerable group such as care leavers and people leaving prison.

During the Strategy Workshops, stakeholders said that they felt that younger people were often unaware of the assistance that is available, and that action is needed to increase awareness. Creating mobile friendly tools to access this information will help to address this

problem and improve our offering to younger people, who represent a large proportion of those who approach the Housing Advice & Options Service for help.

### **Accessing and sustaining tenancies in the private sector**

In addition to the creation of new dedicated roles in the Housing Advice and Options Service, there are other measures that are required to ensure that we are making the most of Northampton's large private rented sector.

As the loss of private rented accommodation is one of the main causes of homelessness in Northampton and there is not enough social / affordable rented accommodation to meet demand, it is essential that the Council is even more proactive in its engagement with the private rented sector in order to prevent homelessness and meet housing need.

The Landlord Forum has been meeting regularly since 2015, but could play a more pivotal role in building stronger and more effective relationships with a broader range of landlords.

The meetings already provide local landlords with the opportunity to learn about the Council's services and what they can offer to private landlords. The meetings could also be used to provide the Council with an insight into the barriers and difficulties that landlords experience when they let to households on low incomes who are claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to help them to remain in their homes or find suitable alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.

We will raise awareness of the Council's social lettings agency, Guildhall Residential Lettings, and the benefits for landlords of the various landlord packages. These packages will be reviewed at certain points during the life of the Strategy to determine how successful they have been and whether they can be improved.

### **Tackling family exclusions**

One of the main causes of homelessness is the exclusion of the household from the home of a family member or friend. Most often, it will be a young person or family who is asked to leave by their parents.

The new Housing Advice & Options Service will help to address this by ensuring that a Home Visiting Officer is available to work with these households. After completing a holistic assessment of the household's housing needs and financial resources, the Officer will work with the household to address their needs and help them secure suitable settled housing.

Experience has shown that excluders can be open to keeping people in their homes ('Homeless at home') if there is a longer-term plan and a realistic prospect of finding their family member or friend alternative accommodation.

There is also some evidence from the Review of Homelessness that young adults of 18-21 and LGBT+ people are at higher risk of family exclusion. We will work with local partners to ensure vulnerable groups can access targeted support to tackle this increased threat of homelessness.

## **Domestic Abuse and Violence**

Domestic abuse and violent relationship breakdown are a major cause of homelessness.

Where possible and appropriate, we will continue to work with our partners to ensure people are able to remain safely in their homes. We will also take steps to maximise the number of refuge spaces, and improve move-on from the refuges to free up spaces.

We will ensure specific attention is given to the different needs of families and single homeless people and that there are appropriate options for both.

## **Raising Awareness of Homelessness**

To foster a culture of early prevention we want to ensure there is an education and outreach initiative to increase awareness of homelessness among Northampton residents and services. The Single and Family Homelessness Forums will consider the best ways the Council and local partners can inform and engage with the public.

This may involve creating and sharing materials to share or accompany other workstreams. For example, the Single Homelessness Forum is exploring the potential for an alternative giving scheme. This would be an opportunity to connect with and inform the public, as well as tackling myths and stigma around rough sleeping.

The initiative will also specifically try to address the needs of young people, through approaching schools and youth services. We want to ensure that people know about local services and the support that is available or how they can help others.

## **Objective Three: Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation for homeless households**

The sharp rise in the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation was highlighted as one of the main issues in the Review of Homelessness in Northampton.

Not only has the overall number increased, but there has also been an increase in the length of time that homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.

Although it is hoped that this Strategy will improve the way in which services and organisations work together to prevent homelessness, the speed with which households are able to move out of temporary accommodation will primarily be affected by the amount of social / affordable rented accommodation that is let to homeless households.

### **Increasing the supply of affordable housing**

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is the most effective way of improving homelessness prevention and relief rates. Increased supply will also provide more move-on for households that are already in temporary accommodation and reduce the average length of time that households spend in temporary accommodation.

Our ambition is to continue delivering a Housing Revenue Account housebuilding programme of 150 – 200 new homes a year.

### **Improving move-on into social housing**

As part of our plans for reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation, we have increased the proportion of general needs properties that are allocated to households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty.

We have also identified the need to intervene more proactively in certain cases when a household's move into social / affordable rented housing due to over-running construction or void works. We will work with partners to address these delays on a case by case basis and, where appropriate, we will make alternative offers to speed up their move.

### **Using more suitable and cost-effective temporary accommodation**

The large increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation has increased the use of expensive nightly-purchased accommodation.

Although the use of self-contained, nightly-purchased temporary accommodation helped to improve the quality of temporary accommodation and reduce the Council's reliance on out of borough accommodation and B&B, there is an urgent need to reduce its use.

One of the options is to increase the number of council homes that are used for temporary accommodation. Other options include making optimum use of 'Homeless at home'. We are

also interested in working with Registered Providers to try to increase the supply of affordable good quality temporary accommodation.

### **Improving the standard of local housing**

The Council's Housing Enforcement Team plays an important role in ensuring the suitability of housing in the private rented sector.

An Additional HMO licensing scheme came into effect in February 2020 and criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords who knowingly let out substandard, unsafe, unlicensed housing are being targeted through enforcement action.

The Council is committed to making sure that the supply of accommodation in the private rented sector is of a good standard and that all landlords are complying with the law.

## Objective Four: Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive

In Northampton, rough sleeping remains persistently high. It is unsafe and unacceptable for anyone to be homeless and on the streets. Together with our partners we want to reaffirm our commitment to doing everything we can to reduce, and ultimately eliminate the need for people to sleep rough on the streets of Northampton.

We also want to ensure that whilst people remain street homeless they can access appropriate services that address their immediate needs, and help them overcome the challenges they face in getting off the street.

The Government's target is to have zero rough sleeping nationwide by 2027. This Strategy sets out our plan to work towards this objective in the borough over the next few years.

This Strategy will continue with many of the themes of the Multi-Agency Strategy 2016-19, adapting and enhancing agreed measures wherever possible. The lessons learned from that Strategy and the agreed objectives will inform our approach from 2020.

The development process involved multiple workshops with the express purpose of renewing and improving our partnerships and to learn from the past few years.

### **Single Homelessness Forum**

Developing and implementing the required actions to reduce rough sleeping is an ongoing process that needs continual input and co-operation.

During the Workshops there was widespread support for re-establishing a Single Homelessness Forum that will improve communication, engage stakeholders and provide partners with the opportunity to formulate specific actions.

Some of the actions put forward in the Action Plan are purposefully broad and are not 'SMART', reflecting the need to jointly develop ideas further to make them workable.

The Single Homelessness Forum will be independently chaired and will meet every three months. It will seek to attract a wide membership and to engage with all relevant organisations that can contribute positively to the discussions and improve the outcomes.

Within the Forum there will be Task and Finish Groups assigned specific projects to tackle between meetings. This will ensure the Forum can achieve progress in manageable smaller groups to feedback clear recommendations to the wider members.

The Task and Finish groups will be flexible and different work programmes will emerge over the lifespan of the Strategy, but key concerns will include; street distribution of food and other items, night shelter provision, and alternative giving schemes.

As well as developing and implementing actions, the Forum will be able to explore additional sources of funding, for extra provision or innovative practice delivered by partners. There may be funding opportunities available to voluntary and community

organisations, and the Forum can be a platform to discuss and develop bids, potentially in partnerships.

## **Communities of Practice**

Homeless Link's Partnership Team facilitate Communities of Practice (CoP) to harness the experience, ideas, and energy of people working in homelessness services. It offers the opportunity for more frontline workers to have their say and it ensures that staff working at all levels can contribute to continuous improvement.

Establishing a Community of Practice in Northampton will enhance our work by encouraging frontline workers from different organisations to come together to find creative solutions for the issues they face. These issues will include working with rough sleepers with high and complex needs, such as mental health problems, a history of offending, and drug or alcohol dependency.

Between the Single Homelessness Forum and the CoP, we will ensure that partners are engaged from senior management to the frontline, and that strategic and operational issues are both discussed on a regular basis.

## **Funding for specialised roles and outreach**

The Single Homelessness Pathway Service has already been established through the restructure of the Housing Advice & Options Service.

For 2019/20, Government funding was secured through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) (£215,400) and Rapid Rehousing Pathway (£265,400) to fund 11 posts:

- Rough Sleepers Co-ordinator
- Housing Transitions Officer (Prisons & Approved Premises)
- 2 x Street Outreach Workers
- Mental Health Outreach Worker
- 4 x Rough Sleeper Navigators
- 2 x Tenancy Sustainment Officers

Our aim is to secure an extension of this funding in order to continue providing a Street Outreach Service six days a week and continue tackling, preventing and reducing rough sleeping in the borough.

During the past year, we have been able to gather detailed information about the specific needs of rough sleepers in the area.

We know, for example, that of the 51 rough sleepers known to the service:

- 38 (75%) have mental health problems
- 34 (67%) have offending behaviour
- 26 (51%) have drug problems
- 22 (43%) have alcohol problems

A large proportion of this cohort of rough sleepers fit into more than one of the above categories, demonstrating the multiple and complex needs of many rough sleepers. A similar pattern of need is shown for people using the Night Shelter.

## **Offending Behaviour**

Given the prevalence of ex-offenders among rough sleepers, it is important to improve work in this area. Through our Single Homelessness Pathway service and the members of the Forum we will review the specific support available and consider how it can be improved.

Increasing access to employment, volunteering, and training schemes will be a key consideration, as well as peer support. Several local partners already offer assistance in these areas but there is scope to expand and improve provision.

## **Shared working**

As well as expressing an interest in establishing a shared directory of local services, the stakeholders who attended the Strategy Workshops were very keen to explore the merits and feasibility of developing shared assessment forms and processes. Subject to client consent, there is scope to share more information and assessments and save time.

We have established a multi-agency Tenancy Sustainment Panel that meets weekly to discuss former rough sleepers who are living in supported housing but are at risk of becoming homeless again due to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or their failure to comply with the other tenancy / licence conditions.

Shared working through the Tenancy Sustainment Panel will enable us to identify these problems and to intervene early to prevent homelessness.

## **Peer support**

The stakeholders who attended the Strategy Workshops felt that existing and former rough sleepers – and other people who have lived experience of homelessness – remain a largely untapped resource. Many local services already have staff and volunteers with lived experience of homelessness, but we want to make even better use of their knowledge and pathways out of rough sleeping.

By increasing integrated peer support within existing services, rough sleepers will be able to get help from people who know their circumstances and can share what worked in their own lives.

There is an opportunity to increase engagement with services and their impact by getting the input of people with lived experience of homelessness. The Single Homelessness Forum will be able to consider how best to enhance this further across services, and the challenges and risks posed.

## **Increasing provision for women**

Specific support and accommodation for women was a gap in provision that was highlighted in feedback in the Strategy Workshops. For instance, the Nightshelter currently only provides bed spaces for men. Therefore, we want to address this and develop more services designed specifically to meet the needs of women.

A winter shelter for women will be open in Northampton from December 2019 until the end of March 2020, providing bed spaces for up to 11 women. In the longer term, we would like to set up a Women's Shared Housing Project that would be operated by NAASH. Other organisations -such as the Hope Centre- have also expressed an interest in developing this type of provision.

## **Specific groups**

Evidence gathered through the Review of Homelessness raised the issue of certain hard to reach groups, including up to 25 Eastern Europeans who sleep in makeshift shelters or tent encampments on the outskirts of Northampton. The profile of rough sleepers from annual Counts also shows a consistent sizeable minority of EU nationals sleeping rough. They can face additional obstacles such as a language barrier or having no recourse to public funds.

The new Single Homelessness Pathway Service already includes a Rough Sleeper Navigator who speaks Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian. The Hope Centre is working with specialist Polish language providers to offer help with applications for settled status and other support. This has helped us to build relationships and gain a better understanding of these groups. We want to ensure this capability continues and that we are always able to engage effectively with all rough sleepers, and they are able to access the required support and understand their options.

In addition to these groups, we will continuously gather information through street services to discover if other rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping require specific support or face greater difficulties. For example, young people, ethnic minorities, or LGBT+ people. Where needed, Task and Finish Groups within the Forum will be formed to consider the needs of these groups, and feedback required actions.

## **Day Centres and Provision**

Feedback from workshops highlighted the role of day centres, and the day activities and services available to rough sleepers both through these centres and elsewhere in the town. We know that how people spend their days can have a big impact of how they manage at the Night Shelter, or indeed any settled accommodation they can eventually access.

We will ensure adequate day provision continues to help rough sleepers manage better on the streets, and wherever possible prepares people to sustain suitable accommodation. For entrenched rough sleepers, for whom leaving the streets may be more difficult, day activities and services can make a big difference to their lives.

We acknowledge that for certain rough sleepers the pathway to settled accommodation can be long and challenging. Sleeping rough should not prevent people getting access to appropriate provision for their health, including addiction issues, or any other needs they have.

Given the high levels of dependency to alcohol or drugs, and mental health problems, a large part of this provision will focus on treatment services. Our approach to addiction and mental health treatment services will be in two parts:

1. Maximising the availability of treatment services by working with partners and Future Northants to influence future commissioning, as well as exploring any funding opportunities.
2. Maximising engagement with available services by supporting rough sleepers. The outreach service already has a mental health worker to help link people with appropriate treatment. We aim to build on this, and through outreach and day centres provide a suitable platform for people to get the help they need.

Another aspect of provision that can be developed further is support for accessing training and employment. This is an important part of helping rough sleepers develop the capability to function in settled accommodation and be able to sustain a life off the streets.

This may include access to a computer and 1-1 assistance through a day centre, and other activities such as skills workshops and interview training. The Single Homelessness Forum will consider how best to improve the help available, and where it can be delivered.

### **Better Use of Supported Housing**

We want to ensure there is a pre- eviction protocol in place for supported housing in addition to general needs, and it is adhered to by Registered Providers. The Tenancy Sustainment Panel will be able to monitor this and make sure every opportunity is taken to help people keep their accommodation.

Equally, for those able to live independently, we recognise the need to improve move-on from supported housing. Currently, some people who may be able to move on from supported housing are spending too long there due to a lack of move on options. This leads to fewer vacancies for those in higher need.

The Single Homelessness Forum will be tasked with considering how to improve the flow through supported housing, improving access for current rough sleepers and other single homeless.

### **Strengths-based practice**

We want to explore commissioning joint training in trauma informed care, motivational interviewing and developing strengths-based practice. As this approach would be most effective if practiced by all services throughout Northampton, this will involve a shared commitment and the training of a number of different organisations. How this can be delivered will be discussed by the Single Homelessness Forum.

## Action Plan 2020

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<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE: Creating effective and collaborative partnerships</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Target and Outcomes</b>	<b>Lead(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<b>1.1. Set up a Family Homelessness Forum</b>	Attract representatives from a range of organisations (including Social Care, Registered Providers, private landlords and voluntary and community sector organisations) and promote best practice and collaborative working through better communication.	Housing Advice and Options Manager -NBC	Members of the Family Homelessness Forum	(Meets quarterly)  First meeting to be held by June 2020.
<b>1.2. Invite 'Future West Northants' local authorities to participate in the Single Homelessness Forum and the Family Homelessness Forum</b>	Assist the smooth transition to the new unitary authority by involving Daventry District Council, South Northants Council and Northamptonshire County Council in the work of the Forums.	Housing Advice and Options Manager – NBC	Daventry DC, South Northants Council and Northamptonshire County Council	June 2020
<b>1.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of Northampton's 'Duty to Refer' arrangements, taking into account the feedback obtained from the Single Homelessness Forum and the Family Homelessness Forum</b>	Ensure that the 'Duty to Refer' arrangements are fit for purpose and that all referrals are responded to by the end of the next working day. Amend the arrangements after taking into account the feedback from the Forums.	Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC  Chairs of the Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum	Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum	June 2020

<p><b>1.4. Produce an online directory of local services</b></p>	<p>Agree on what is required in relation to the online directory / database (and who will maintain and edit it) and consider potential platforms to use. Create complementary visual flow diagrams for different pathways.</p> <p>Collect, validate, approve and publish the information about local services.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
<p><b>1.5. Ensure Northamptonshire’s Housing Protocol for Care Leavers is kept up-to-date and that all parties that have signed up to it are complying with it</b></p>	<p>Review (and amend, as appropriate) the Care Leavers   Protocol and put in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure that all parties are complying with it.</p>	<p>Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC</p> <p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Leaving Care Team</p> <p>Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>August 2020</p>
<p><b>1.6. Ensure Northamptonshire’s Pre-Eviction Protocol is kept up-to-date and all of the largest Registered Providers in the borough have signed up to it and are complying with it.</b></p>	<p>Review the Pre-Eviction Protocol and put in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure that Registered Providers are complying with it.</p> <p>Protocols should also extend to supported housing in addition to general needs.</p>	<p>Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Registered Providers</p>	<p>September 2020</p>

<p><b>1.7. Ensure Northamptonshire’s Housing Protocol for Homeless 16 &amp; 17 Year Olds is kept up-to-date and that all parties that have signed up to it are complying with it</b></p>	<p>Review (and amend, as appropriate) the Homeless 16 &amp; 17 Year Olds Protocol and put in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure that all parties are complying with it.</p>	<p>Homelessness Assessment Team Leader – NBC  Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders – NBC</p>	<p>Children First Northamptonshire  Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
<p><b>1.8. Review the impact of the managed migration of Housing Benefit claimants to Universal Credit</b></p>	<p>Work with Registered Providers (through the Single Homelessness Forum and the Family Homelessness Forum) to assess ongoing migration to Universal Credit and explore options for mitigating any negative outcomes. Any agreed steps will be added to future versions of the Action Plan.</p>	<p>Housing Benefit Manager-NBC  Homelessness Reduction Manager - NBC</p>	<p>Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Ongoing – until 2023</p>
<p><b>1.9. Actively engage with Future Northants to influence the reshaping of homelessness services in West Northants</b></p>	<p>To maximise the quality and availability of services for homeless households, including provision of refuges and mental health, drug and alcohol services and a focus on health service commissioning.</p>	<p>Director of Housing and Wellbeing – NBC</p>	<p>Daventry DC, South Northants Council and Northamptonshire County Council  Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p><b>1.10. Work with Daventry DC, South Northants Council and key stakeholders to develop, consult on and approve a West Northamptonshire Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy</b></p>	<p>To ensure that a new Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy is in place when West Northamptonshire Council comes into effect. At present this date is intended for April 2021 but this is subject to change.</p>	<p>Housing Advice and Options Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Daventry DC and South Northants Council</p> <p>Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>April 2021</p>
<p><b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO: Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention</b></p>				
<p><b>Action</b></p>	<p><b>Target and Outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Lead(s)</b></p>	<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<p><b>Target Date</b></p>
<p><b>2.1 Implement the restructure of the Housing Advice &amp; Options Service</b></p>	<p>Complete the recruitment and induction of all staff, ensuring that a personal development plan is produced for all staff and managers who are taking on a new or substantially different role.</p> <p>Ensure that, with the provision of additional management capacity, the restructure improves performance, productivity and outcome.</p>	<p>Director of Housing &amp; Wellbeing – NBC</p> <p>Housing Advice and Options Manager – NBC</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>April 2020</p>

<p><b>2.2 Improve the housing and homelessness pages on the Council's website, and provide customers with comprehensive and interactive advice in line with Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018</b></p>	<p>Increase awareness and use of online homelessness advice, particularly for young people, and promote a self-serve approach to housing issues.</p> <p>Receive positive feedback from MHCLG about the quality of advice offered.</p>	<p>Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC</p> <p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders -NBC</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum</p> <p>People with lived experience of homelessness</p>	<p>August 2020</p>
<p><b>2.3 Make optimum use of H-CLIC homelessness data collection and reporting to identify and evaluate common trends and causes</b></p>	<p>Provide the Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum with regular reports on homelessness trends and the main causes of homelessness.</p> <p>Invite the Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum to provide the Council with additional data that can then be used to provide a fuller picture of the homelessness situation in Northampton.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders – NBC</p> <p>Homelessness Assessment Team Leader – NBC</p> <p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum and Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>September 2020 – then ongoing periodically</p>
<p><b>2.4 Maximise private landlords' take-up of the management and lettings options offered to private landlords by the social lettings agency</b></p>	<p>Publicise and promote the options and financial incentives available in order to encourage private landlords to let their housing to households nominated by the Council and, in doing so, enable the Council to prevent homelessness and discharge its homelessness duty.</p>	<p>Social Lettings Agency Manager - NBC</p> <p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders - NBC</p>	<p>Private landlords</p> <p>Landlord Forum</p>	<p>June 2020</p>

<p><b>2.5 Review and evaluate the success of the management and lettings options offered to private landlords by the social lettings agency</b></p>	<p>Determine which options and incentives are most effective in encouraging private landlords to let their housing to households that are nominated by the social lettings agency.</p>	<p>Social Lettings Agency Manager - NBC  Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders – NBC</p>	<p>Landlord Forum  Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
<p><b>2.6 Ensure that the Home Visiting Officer visits every household that is threatened with homelessness by family exclusion</b></p>	<p>Identify and target cases with family relationship breakdown and exclusion in order to make the most of the opportunities to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders – NBC</p>	<p>Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>2.7 Consider the merits and feasibility of introducing a joint mediation procedure for households whose threatened homelessness is due to the breakdown in family relationships</b></p>	<p>Evaluate the impact that the joint mediation procedure has had on homelessness prevention in South Northants, identify best practice and assess the merits and feasibility of introducing such a scheme in Northampton.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders - NBC</p>	<p>Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>October 2020</p>
<p><b>2.8 Identify the main barriers to timely move-on from refuges and propose appropriate solutions</b></p>	<p>Recommend solutions to the lack of suitable and timely move on from refuges in order to ‘free up’ space for other households that are in urgent need of a safe place to stay.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders-NBC</p>	<p>Family Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>October 2020</p>

<b>2.9 Develop educational/outreach initiative for single and family homelessness.</b>	To raise awareness of homelessness among residents, businesses and local services. Including where they can access help, and how they can best help themselves and others.	Homelessness Reduction Manager – NBC	Single and Family Homelessness Forums	December 2020
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE: Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation for homeless households</b>				
Action	Target and Outcomes	Lead(s)	Partners	Target Date
<b>3.1 Ensure that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) housebuilding programme delivers at least 150 new council homes a year</b>	Build at least 150 new affordable rented council homes each year from 2019/20.	Director of Housing & Wellbeing - NBC	Northampton Partnership Homes	Ongoing
<b>3.2 Implement all of the actions in the Temporary Accommodation Action Plan (2020/21)</b>	Develop procedure of reviewing all cases where move-on from temporary accommodation to social housing nomination has been delayed by 4 weeks.	Housing Advice and Options Manager – NBC  Social Lettings Agency Manager – NBC  Temporary Accommodation Team Leader – NBC	Private landlords, Registered Providers and Northampton Partnership Homes	Ongoing

<b>3.3 Include people who have lived experience of homelessness in the design and delivery of homelessness services</b>	Improve service user engagement and the impact of homelessness services (including the action required to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation) by involving people with lived experience of homelessness in the design of services.	Homelessness Prevention Team Leaders – NBC  Homelessness Assessment Team Leader – NBC  Temporary Accommodation Team Leader - NBC	Family Homelessness Forum	October 2020
<b>3.4 Enforce the Mandatory and Additional HMO licensing schemes.</b>	Improve standards in the private rented sector and maximise the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that are licensed.	Private Sector Housing Manager - NBC  Housing Enforcement Manager – NBC	Landlord Forum, DASH, University of Northampton, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Northampton Student Landlord Network	1 February 2020 for five years
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR: Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Target and Outcomes</b>	<b>Lead(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<b>4.1 Hold regular meetings of the Single homelessness Forum</b>	Attract representatives from a range of organisations (including the churches and voluntary and community sector organisations) and promote best practice and collaborative working through better communication.	Chair of the Single Homelessness Forum  Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC	NBC, Northampton Hope Centre, Churches Together in Northampton and members of the Single Homelessness Forum	(Meets Quarterly)  Ongoing

<p><b>4.2 Explore the options for introducing ‘shared’ single homelessness assessment forms and processes</b></p>	<p>Assess the merits and feasibility of introducing a single assessment process to collect information about service users’ circumstance which can then be shared (with the person’s expressed consent) with other organisations when needed.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>
<p><b>4.3 Identify the main barriers to timely move-on from Oasis House, other hostels, and supported housing, and propose appropriate solutions</b></p>	<p>Recommend solutions to the lack of suitable and timely move on from Oasis House and supported housing in order to ‘free up’ space for other homeless people in urgent need of a place to stay.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>June 2020</p>
<p><b>4.4 Develop an evidence-based strategy for future night shelter provision in Northampton, together and agree on the principles we will apply in relation to sustainability, safeguarding and governance.</b></p>	<p>Agree on the scale and type of nightshelter provision that is needed in Northampton – and a set of priorities and principles that everyone will adhere to in relation to new and existing provision.</p> <p>This evidence-based strategy will be used to support future funding bids.</p>	<p>Director of Housing &amp; Wellbeing – NBC</p> <p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>Northampton Hope Centre, Churches Together in Northampton and members of the Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>June 2020</p>

<p><b>4.5 Review and evaluate the role and effectiveness of Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter in tackling, preventing and reducing rough sleeping in Northampton</b></p>	<p>Publish an evidence-based appraisal (including the lessons learned) of the role and effectiveness of the Shelter in helping to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in Northampton.</p>	<p>Director of Housing &amp; Wellbeing – NBC  Nightshelter Co-ordinator - NBC</p>	<p>Northampton Hope Centre, Churches Together in Northampton and members of the Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>August 2020</p>
<p><b>4.6 Provide dedicated housing and support specifically for women</b></p>	<p>Provide a shared house that is designed to meet the specific needs of women who are sleeping rough.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC</p>	<p>NAASH  Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>June 2020</p>
<p><b>4.7 Deliver joint training in trauma informed care, motivational interviewing and strengths-based practice</b></p>	<p>Provide frontline staff with skills and understanding to deliver strengths-based practice and adopt a consistent, person-centred approach.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>December 2020</p>
<p><b>4.8 Include people who have lived experience of homelessness in the design and delivery of rough sleeper services</b></p>	<p>Improve service user engagement and the impact of rough sleeping services by involving people with lived experience of homelessness in the design of services.</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Pathway Manager</p>	<p>Single Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>October 2020</p>

<b>4.9 Establish a Community of Practice that meets quarterly</b>	Provide frontline staff who are working in homelessness services with the opportunity to share ideas, information and good practice, and work together to solve problems and improve services.	Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC	Homeless Link	(Meets Quarterly) From April 2020
<b>4.10 Secure continuation funding from MHCLG’s Rough Sleeping Initiative to support the work that is already being done to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in Northampton</b>	Government funding secured to enable Northampton to continue employing the additional staffing (recruited in 2019/20) throughout 2020/21, and to fund some new rough sleeping services.	Director of Housing & Wellbeing – NBC  Single Homelessness Pathway Manager – NBC	Single Homelessness Forum	April 2020
<b>4.11 Review and improve provision of food and other donations on the street for rough sleepers</b>	Task and finish group will make recommendations for best practice and effective systems	Hope Centre/ Single Homelessness Pathway Manager	Single Homelessness Forum	June 2020
<b>4.12 Evaluate help available for young people (under 25) and make recommendations for improvement</b>	A Task and Finish Group will consider how to address the needs of young single homeless people, giving specific actions for improvement.	Single Homelessness Pathway Manager	Single Homelessness Forum	October 2020
<b>4.13 Evaluate specific support available for ex-offenders and make recommendations for improvement</b>	A Task and Finish Group will consider how to address the needs of ex-offenders on the streets, giving specific actions for improvement.	Single Homelessness Pathway Manager	Single Homelessness Forum	October 2020
<b>4.14 Evaluate move on from supported housing and make recommendations for improvement</b>	A Task and Finish Group in the Forum will be tasked with evaluating problems with move on. To pinpoint what is causing people to get stuck in supported accommodation and how to reduce this.	Single Homelessness Pathway Manager	Single Homelessness Forum	October 2020

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**Appendices**

1



## CABINET REPORT

**Report Title**

**Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy**

**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	20 May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	Yes
<b>Directorate:</b>	Housing and Wellbeing
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Hibbert
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to approve an updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy which takes into account government guidance, new legislation, changes to existing legislation and the effect of recent case law.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (attached to this report as Appendix A) with effect from 1 June 2020.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In Northampton, the private rented sector has doubled in size during the past ten years and there are now more people living in the town's private rented sector than are living in social rented housing.

- 3.1.2 The severe shortage of social rented housing, together with the difficulty that many people are experiencing in buying a home of their own, has increased the number of people who are seeking private rented accommodation in the borough.
- 3.1.3 Although Northampton has some excellent landlords and letting agents, it also has a significant number of criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords who knowingly rent out accommodation that is unlicensed, substandard and/or unsafe.

#### Housing enforcement powers

- 3.1.4 The Council has statutory powers and duties to regulate private sector housing and these are assisted by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and, in designated parts of the borough, the Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 3.1.5 The Government has pledged to crack down on rogue landlords and has introduced a number of measures, under and amended Housing Act 2004 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016, to help local authorities deal more robustly with criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords:
- Introduction of civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences (these came into force on 6 April 2017);
  - Extension of rent repayment orders to cover illegal eviction, breach of a banning order, failure to comply with an improvement notice and certain other offences (these came into force on 6 April 2017);
  - Introduction of a database of rogue landlords and property agents who have been convicted of certain offences or received multiple civil penalties (this came into force in April 2018); and
  - Introduction of banning orders for the most serious and prolific offenders (these came into force in April 2018).
- 3.1.6 The Government has also provided local housing authorities with the power to impose financial penalties on landlords and/or managing agents who:
- Undertake lettings agency / property management work, but fail to become a member of a Redress Scheme;
  - Fail to comply with a remedial notice requiring them to install appropriate smoke and/or carbon monoxide detection;
  - Fail to comply with the ban on tenants' fees and/or the rules affecting the holding of deposits;
  - Fail to belong to a client money protection scheme; and/or
  - Fail to undertake the necessary inspections and/or repairs in relation to the electrical system.

## The Council's approach to housing enforcement

- 3.1.7 The Council's approach to housing enforcement is intelligence-led, risk-based and targeted, and based on the principle that it should be the offender (rather than good landlords or council tax payers) who pays for enforcement and no-one who breaks the law should gain a financial advantage over someone who complies with the law.
- 3.1.8 This approach – which enjoys widespread support from local landlords who want the Council to create a level playing field for all landlords by dealing robustly with offenders – is reflected in three of the Council's Private Housing Policies:
- Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy (updated 11 December 2019)
  - Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy (updated 1 May 2020)
  - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (last updated 1 August 2017)
- 3.1.9 The Housing Enforcement Policy has been reviewed and updated (see Appendix A) to reflect government guidance, case law and changes to legislation. It also mirrors the changes recently made to the Civil Penalties Policy and Fees & Charges Policy.

## **3.2 Issues**

### Purpose of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

- 3.2.1 The purpose of the Housing Enforcement Policy are to provide transparency and ensure that everyone who is affected by the Council's housing enforcement process understands what action the Council will take and when.
- 3.2.2 Most importantly, the Housing Enforcement Policy will also ensure that:
- Tenants of private landlords and registered social landlords live in homes that are free of unacceptable hazards and risks to their health and safety;
  - All Houses in Multiple Occupation are safe and well managed and all relevant Management Regulations are adhered to;
  - All licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed and all licensing conditions are met;
  - Private housing is not left empty for an unreasonable amount of time and/or becomes an eyesore and nuisance to neighbouring properties;
  - Privately owned property and land does not present a statutory nuisance to other landowners, and does not directly or indirectly present an unacceptable risk to public health, safety or the environment; and
  - The Council meets its statutory obligations in relation to private housing.

### Principles underpinning enforcement action

- 3.2.3 The Housing Enforcement Team's enforcement activity will be:
- **Targeted** – Enforcement action will target the properties and people that pose the greatest risk, including the owners and landlords that evade licensing and regulation, and those whose properties cause a nuisance or put people's health and safety at risk.

- **Proportionate** – Enforcement action will be proportionate and reflect the nature, scale and seriousness of any breach or non-compliance.
- **Fair and objective** – Enforcement action will be based on the individual circumstances of the case, taking all available facts into account. Officers will carry out investigations with a balanced and open mind.
- **Transparent** – Enforcement action will be undertaken in accordance with clearly defined policies and procedures that are readily available. All communications will be easy to understand, with clear reasons being given for any enforcement action taken.
- **Consistent** – Enforcement action will be undertaken by well-trained investigators, and the Housing Enforcement Team will ensure consistency in the interpretation and enforcement of legislation, work with other regulatory agencies and share and develop good practice.
- **Accountable** – Enforcement action will be undertaken in a responsible manner that has a clear purpose. Where appropriate, the Housing Enforcement Team will work closely with landlords, tenants and other stakeholders that have an interest in private sector housing.

### 3.3 Choices (Options)

#### Option 1 (recommended)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet can choose to approve the updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Appendix A). This option is recommended because the Housing Enforcement Policy needs to take into account recent case law and changes in legislation, and complement the Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy and the Civil Penalties Policy which were updated in November 2019 and May 2020 respectively.
- 3.3.2 Approval of the updated, overarching Housing Enforcement Policy will make it clear that the Council will consider imposing civil penalties on landlords who are in breach of their legal obligations in relation to the redress schemes, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, client money protection, electrical safety and Tenants Fees Act.

#### Option 2 (not recommended)

- 3.3.3 Cabinet can choose not to approve the updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Appendix A). This option is not recommended because the existing Policy was approved in July 2017 and requires updating.
- 3.3.4 If the Housing Enforcement Policy is not updated, it will not make reference to the Civil Penalty Scoring Matrix – a robust 9-stage assessment process that is used to determine the level of civil penalty that should be imposed – or, indeed, the extension of the range of offences for which civil penalties can be imposed (including electrical safety, carbon-monoxide detection and tenants' fees).
- 3.3.5 The absence of an up to date Housing Enforcement Policy will hamper the Council's efforts to improve everyone's understanding of its housing enforcement process and what action the Council will take and when.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

4.1.1 The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is in line with Council policy and will help the Council to meet its policy objectives of raising housing standards in the private sector, keeping the town and people safe, and putting the customer first.

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

4.2.1 The Council's current Housing Enforcement Policy was produced in 2017 when civil penalties were new and there was no significant case law. It was based on the best available advice and guidance from central government at the time.

4.2.2 It is expected that the activity will be delivered within existing expenditure budgets. The budgeted income generated from imposition of civil penalty fines has been under pressure due to the risk mentioned in the paragraph 4.2.3 below. It is anticipated that the change in the Civil Penalties Policy will help mitigate some of these pressures. Budgets will continue to be monitored closely.

4.2.3 A current key risk is the lack of certainty around the decisions that will be made by the First Tier Tribunal when it considers appeals against the imposition of a civil penalties. The updated Civil Penalties Policy, which came into effect on 1 May 2020, has taken into account recent published decisions of the Tribunals and is designed, as far as possible, to mitigate the risks of a successful challenge

4.2.4 Another key risk is that, if there is a substantial increase in the number of investigations, this is likely to result in a corresponding increase in the number of cases requiring legal advice and assistance and this may, in turn, put extra pressure on the existing staffing resources within the Council's Legal Services team.

4.2.5 The updated Housing Enforcement Policy refers to the robust 9-point Civil Penalty Scoring Matrix that will be used to determine the level of the financial penalty that is to be imposed. This will reassure the Council that the civil penalty is proportionate.

### **4.3 Legal**

4.3.1 Section 126 and Schedule 9 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 inserted section 249A and Schedule 13A into the Housing Act 2004 and amended sections 30, 72, 95, 139 and 234 to allow for the imposition of a financial / civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution for offences created by those provisions.

4.3.2 The amended Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy at Appendix A makes it clear that the standard of proof that the Council must satisfy in order to be able to propose financial penalties for relevant housing offences is "beyond reasonable doubt". The wording in the existing August 2017 policy describing the standard that must be applied to all evidence is, with the benefit of hindsight, equivocal and imprecise. As First-Tier Tribunals must now give appropriate weight and consideration to the Council's Civil Penalties and Housing Enforcement Policies in any future appeals against the imposition of financial penalties by it, tightening up the phrasing used in the Policies to better reflect the legislatively mandated standard of proof ought to reduce the risk of Tribunals granting appeals on spurious and insubstantial grounds.

4.3.3 There is no statutory requirement to conduct a consultation exercise when amending a Housing Enforcement Policy. Case law makes it clear that there is no legitimate expectation that the public will be consulted about policy proposals for the exercise of local authority regulatory enforcement functions. Accordingly, there is a low risk that the amended policy could be successfully challenged by way of judicial review on the ground of a lack of public consultation if approved.

4.3.4 The amended Policy also complies with the statutory Regulator's Code introduced by the Government in 2014, which sets out the principles-based framework for how regulators should engage with those they regulate which must be taken into account when developing policies and procedures that guide their regulatory activities.

#### **4.4 Equality**

4.4.1 The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy will continue to support the Council's efforts to improve residents' housing conditions and life chances in Northampton.

4.4.2 It will reduce inequality and discrimination by ensuring that those in greatest need are not victims of criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.

4.4.3 A Community Impact Assessment has been completed to assess the likely impact of the Housing Enforcement Policy on Equality and Diversity.

4.4.4 It is anticipated that the updated policy will have a positive impact on:

- **Responsible landlords and managing agents** – by helping them to keep their business compliance processes to a minimum;
- **Tenants living in the private rented sector** – by making their homes safer and healthier to live in by improving physical standards and management; and
- **The wider community** – by ensuring that the private rented sector is better regulated and better managed.

4.4.5 The updated Policy is part of the Council's commitment to improving communities and our town as a place to live. In implementing the policy, the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty and will continue to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and contribute to the development of a fairer society.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

4.5.1 Despite having no statutory duty to do so, in April 2017, the Council hosted 3 focus groups to obtain the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the Council's proposals in relation to housing enforcement. The focus groups were attended by Council Officers, the Northampton Student Landlords Network, the East Midlands landlord accreditation scheme, and local landlords and letting agents.

4.5.2 In June 2017, the Private Sector Housing Manager briefed a well-attended meeting of the town's Landlord Forum on the Council's proposals in relation to enforcement.

4.5.3 Everyone who attended the focus groups, and the vast majority of the landlords and letting agents that attended the Landlord Forum, were extremely positive about the Council's plans for using its new powers under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

## 4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 As well as contributing to the delivery of a number of the borough's key strategies and policies, the new Housing Enforcement Policy (together with the updated Civil Penalties Policy and Fees & Charges Policy) will help create resilient communities and meet the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2019 - 21:

- **More homes, better homes:** They will help the Council to increase the supply of good quality, well managed private rented housing and make effective use of its enforcement powers to ensure good standards.
- **Improving the health and wellbeing of local people:** They will help the Council to raise standards in private rented housing and, in doing so, improve the health and wellbeing of tenants.
- **Exceptional services to be proud of:** The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy will enable the Council to provide high quality, value for money services that generate income that can be used to fund its housing enforcement activity and related services.

### Appendices

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Appendix A – Updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

### Background Papers

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Community Impact Assessment

Civil Penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Guidance for Local Housing Authorities (Department for Communities and Local Government) April 2017

Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy (11 December 2019)

Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy (1 May 2020)

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**Phil Harris**  
**Director of Housing and Wellbeing**  
**01604 837871**

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## APPENDIX A



# Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

for the Regulation of Housing Standards

Updated 1 June 2020

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## Introduction

- 1.1 Northampton Borough Council is committed to improving standards in private sector housing, bringing empty homes back into use and ensuring that all private rented accommodation is well managed, properly maintained and safe and habitable.
- 1.2 To improve standards in private sector housing, the Council's Housing Enforcement Team will request information, carry out inspections, process licence applications, provide owners and landlords with advice and information, encourage and promote good practice, investigate possible offences and, where appropriate, take enforcement action and prosecute offenders.
- 1.3 The Council has statutory powers and duties to regulate private sector housing and these are assisted by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and, in designated parts of the borough, the Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 1.4 Although Northampton has some excellent landlords<sup>1</sup>, it also has a significant number of criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords who knowingly rent out accommodation that is unlicensed, substandard and/or unsafe.
- 1.5 The Council regards managing and letting rented housing as a business and expects everyone involved in it to be familiar with their legal obligations. It also believes that it should be the offender (rather than good, responsible landlords or the local council taxpayers) who pays for the cost of housing enforcement, and that no-one who breaks the law should gain a financial advantage over someone who does not.
- 1.6 This approach enjoys widespread support from local landlords who want the Council to create a level playing field for all landlords by dealing robustly with criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.
- 1.7 The Council welcomes the action that the Government is taking to crack down on criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords and it is committed to making full use of its powers to improve standards in Northampton's private rented sector.
- 1.8 Northampton's intelligence-led, targeted approach to housing enforcement – together with its expectation that all members of its Housing Enforcement Team will study for the Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice or an equal equivalent – means that the Council is well placed to competently detect and investigate possible offences.
- 1.9 This Housing Enforcement Policy describes the Council's approach to enforcement, including serving statutory notices, making orders, issuing financial penalties, carrying out works in default and pursuing enforced sales, compulsory purchase and prosecution. It takes into account the statutory guidance that has been issued by the Government under paragraph 12 of Schedule 13A of the Housing Act 2004.
- 1.10 This Policy replaces the previous Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (1 August 2017) and relates to all enforcement action taken on or after 1 June 2020. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy and Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy.

**Note** <sup>1</sup> – In this Policy, the term “landlords” also includes “property agents”, “managing agents” and “letting agents” unless otherwise specified

## **2. Housing Enforcement Team**

- 2.1 The Housing Enforcement Team's multi-agency approach to housing enforcement is intelligence-led, risk-based and targeted.
- 2.2 Working closely with other local authorities, HMRC and a diverse range of regulatory and law enforcement services – including the Police, Trading Standards, the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority and the Fire & Rescue Service – the Housing Enforcement Team is responsible for the administration and enforcement of HMO licensing and enforcement of the law relating to housing conditions, overcrowding, illegal eviction, harassment and aspects of public health.
- 2.3 All of the Officers in the Housing Enforcement Team will be fully trained, competent and authorised by Northampton Borough Council. Authorised Officers will carry an Identity Card (displaying their name and photograph) and, where appropriate, a Warrant Card (displaying their name, job title and a list of the legislation in respect of which they are authorised to act).
- 2.4 The Housing Enforcement Team will use all available powers to achieve its objectives, including powers of entry, the power to require a person to produce documents and/or information about their identify and interest in property or land, and the power to require certificates regarding gas and electrical safety.
- 2.5 Although the Housing Enforcement Team will work with owner-occupiers and Registered Providers to ensure that their homes meet minimum standards and are not causing a danger or statutory nuisance to other households in the area, it will prioritise and target resources to raise standards in the private rented sector.

## **3. Purpose of the Housing Enforcement Policy**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is to provide transparency and ensure that everyone who is affected by the Council's housing enforcement process understands what action the Council will take and when.
- 3.2 Most importantly, the Housing Enforcement Policy will also ensure that:
  - Tenants of private landlords and registered social landlords live in homes that are free of unacceptable hazards and risks to their health and safety;
  - All Houses in Multiple Occupation are safe and well managed, and all relevant Management Regulations are adhered to;
  - All licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed, and all licensing conditions are met;
  - Private housing is not left empty for an unreasonable amount of time and/or becomes an eyesore and nuisance to neighbouring properties;

- Privately owned property and land does not present a statutory nuisance to other landowners, and does not directly or indirectly present an unacceptable risk to the occupier, public health, safety or the environment;
- Lettings and property management businesses are registered with a government-approved redress scheme and comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice and
- The Council meets its statutory obligations in relation to private housing.

#### **4. Principles of Good Enforcement**

4.1 When discharging its duties in relation to private sector housing, the Council will take into account the principles of good enforcement set out in:

- Part 2 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006; and
- The Regulators' Code

4.2 The Council will also comply with the following when exercising its enforcement powers

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Codes of Practice issued under sections 60, 60A and 66.
- The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- The Code for Crown Prosecutors
- Civil Penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Guidance for Local Housing Authorities
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System - Enforcement Guidance Housing Act 2004

4.3 The Housing Enforcement Team will enforce the law efficiently and effectively without imposing unnecessary burdens on responsible owners and occupiers. In doing so, it will have regard to the role of inspections, compliance visits and advice and guidance, and the principles underpinning enforcement activity.

#### **Benefits to the Local Economy**

4.4 Northampton Borough Council aims to create neighbourhoods of choice: areas where people want to live, bring up their children and work. Maintaining healthy housing and attractive neighbourhoods will benefit the local economy.

## Property Inspections and Compliance Visits

- 4.5 The Housing Enforcement Team will undertake proactive property inspections, based on risk and intelligence, and ensure that its resources are targeted at the worst properties first including, for example, licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation that are avoiding Mandatory and Additional HMO licensing.
- 4.6 Officers will target 'eyesore' empty properties and land in order to end the blight the empty properties have of neighbourhoods and increase the supply of housing.
- 4.7 The Housing Enforcement Team will respond to residents' complaints on a risk assessed basis about substandard, unsafe and problematic private housing and adopt an escalating regulatory approach to enforcement.

## Advice and Guidance

- 4.8 Wherever possible, the Housing Enforcement Team will work with landlords to resolve problems before escalating the situation to more formal enforcement action.
- 4.9 The Council will provide clear, accessible advice and guidance to make it easier for businesses to understand and meet their responsibilities.
- 4.10 Key information can be found on the Council's website: [www.northampton.gov.uk](http://www.northampton.gov.uk)

## Principles underpinning Enforcement Action

- 4.11 The Housing Enforcement Team's enforcement activity will be:
  - **Targeted** – Enforcement action will target the properties and people that pose the greatest risk, including the owners and landlords that evade licensing and regulation, and those whose properties cause a nuisance or put people's health and safety at risk.
  - **Proportionate** – Enforcement action will be proportionate and reflect the nature, scale and seriousness of any breach or non-compliance.
  - **Fair and objective** – Enforcement action will be based on the individual circumstances of the case, taking all available facts into account. Officers will carry out investigations with a balanced and open mind.
  - **Transparent** – Enforcement action will be undertaken in accordance with clearly defined policies and procedures that are readily available. All communications will be easy to understand, with clear reasons being given for any enforcement action taken.
  - **Consistent** – Enforcement action will be undertaken by well-trained investigators, and the Housing Enforcement Team will ensure consistency in the interpretation and enforcement of legislation, work with other regulatory agencies and share and develop good practice.

- **Accountable** – Enforcement action will be undertaken in a responsible manner that has a clear purpose. Where appropriate, the Housing Enforcement Team will work closely with landlords, tenants and other stakeholders that have an interest in private sector housing.

## 5. Regulation of Private Sector Housing

### Dealing with Complaints

- 5.1 The Housing Enforcement Team will respond to complaints from tenants and other residents about private housing, prioritising the complaints on the basis of an assessment of the risk and seriousness. If enforcement action is necessary, a variety of regulatory powers may be used to address and resolve the problem.

### Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 5.2 The HHSRS is set out in Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. It is a risk-based assessment that is used to determine the level of risk (from 29 defined hazards) that residential property poses to the health and safety of the occupants and visitors.
- 5.3 There are two categories of possible hazards:
- **Category 1 hazards** represent a serious risk to health and safety. The Council has a legal duty to take appropriate action to deal with these.
  - **Category 2 hazards** represent a lesser risk and, although it has no legal duty to take action, the Council will exercise its power to reduce category 2 hazards where appropriate.
- 5.4 In most cases, the Council will follow a pre-formal process in which it will seek to work with landlords to reduce hazards. However, it will avoid actions that may encourage owners, landlords and agents to be non-compliant, such as carrying out costly works in default where it may be difficult for the Council to recover its costs.
- 5.5 When considering what action should be taken in relation to Category 2 hazards, the Council will have regard to national guidance and take into account whether or not there are also any Category 1 hazards present. It will also consider the presence of two or more Category 2 hazards which, when taken together, amount to neglect of the property or disregard for the tenant's health, safety and wellbeing.
- 5.6 Where the responsible person has a history of disregarding previous enforcement advice or action, formal enforcement action may need to be taken.
- 5.7 Reasonable charges will be made for any formal enforcement action that the Council takes under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004, as provided for by section 49 of that Act. (see separate Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy for further information).

## Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- 5.8 In Northampton, there are many hundreds of Houses in Multiple Occupation: properties that are occupied by more than one household that share facilities.
- 5.9 As HMOs are higher risk than single family homes, the conditions, facilities and management are regulated. Some HMOs are subject to licensing:
- **Mandatory HMO Licensing** – An HMO licence is required for HMOs (situated anywhere in the Northampton Borough) that are occupied by 5 or more persons where there is some sharing of facilities and comprise 2 or more households.
  - **Additional HMO Licensing** – An HMO licence is required for HMOs that are situated in the Additional HMO area, are occupied by at least 3 persons who are sharing facilities and comprise 2 or more households or are self-contained units that are not compliant with Building Regulations 1991 or later.
- 5.10 The HMO licensing regime includes arrangements for assessing the suitability of the premises for the number of occupants, including the adequacy of the amenities. It also provides for the assessment of the fitness of a person to be the licence holder and the potential management arrangements of the premises.
- 5.11 It is a criminal offence if a person controlling or managing a licensable HMO does not have the required licence. Failure to comply with any condition attached to a licence is also an offence. The Council will consider all available enforcement options when dealing with unlicensed HMOs and breaches of the licence conditions.

### Licensable HMOs operating without a licence

- 5.12 The Council has an intelligence-led, targeted approach to housing enforcement and the identification of licensable HMOs that are operating without a licence. It will vigorously pursue anyone who is controlling or managing a licensable HMO without a licence and, where appropriate, it will prosecute them or impose a civil penalty.
- 5.13 Consideration will be given to any representations that are received from landlords in relation to exceptional circumstances that may have resulted in a 'duly made' HMO licence application not being submitted on time.
- 5.14 If a landlord responds quickly to the Council's notification that an HMO requires an HMO licence and they co-operate fully with the Council to ensure that the HMO is licensed as soon as practicable, the Council may decide (at its sole discretion) not to prosecute the landlord or impose a civil penalty. Each case will be determined on its individual merits and circumstances.
- 5.15 Where a licensable HMO is operating without a licence, any eviction notice that is served on the tenants under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 will be invalid. Such notices will continue to be invalid for as long as the HMO remains unlicensed.
- 5.16 The Council will provide tenants with information and advice on how and when they can apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a rent repayment order.

### Renewal of HMO licences

- 5.17 It is the responsibility of the landlord to ensure that their HMO licence is renewed on time. Failure to do so will result in the loss of any 'early bird' discount and may result in prosecution or the imposition of a civil penalty.
- 5.18 Where a licensable HMO is operating without a licence, any eviction notice that is served on the tenants under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 will be invalid. Such notices will continue to be invalid for as long as the HMO remains unlicensed.
- 5.19 The Council will provide tenants with information and advice on how and when they can apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a rent repayment order.

### HMO licence fees

- 5.20 The Council charges fees for licensing HMOs.
- 5.21 The HMO licence fees cover the administration and enforcement of the licensing schemes and are subject to regular review. For further information, please refer to the Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy.

### Duration of HMO licences

- 5.22 HMO licences will normally be granted for the full 5-year period.
- 5.23 The length of the HMO licence may be reduced, from 5 years to an appropriate lesser period, where any of the following apply:
- Where building control and/or planning consent is required before the property can be used as an HMO;
  - Where there are concerns that the proposed management arrangements may not be satisfactory and evidence is required to show that management is satisfactory before a longer licence period can be agreed;
  - Where it is necessary to remove any advantage that the applicant might gain over those licence holders who applied at the appropriate time.
  - Where a scheme, for example, an additional or selective HMO licensing requirement, is time limited by law.
- 5.24 Following the expiry of an HMO licence, a new application and fee will be required.

### The 'fit and proper person' test

- 5.25 In deciding to grant an HMO licence, the Council must be satisfied that the proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person to be the licence holder, the proposed manager of the HMO is a fit and proper person to be the manager of the HMO, and everyone involved in the management of the property are fit and proper persons to be involved in its management.

- 5.26 This requirement is to ensure that those responsible for operating the licence and managing the HMO are of sufficient integrity and good character to be involved in the management of the residential property and as such they do not pose a risk to the welfare or safety of persons occupying the property.
- 5.27 The licence holder and the manager can be two different people. Where this is the case, a decision must be made for each individual about whether they are a fit and proper person. When making this decision, the Council will take into account their fitness to hold the licence or to manage the property.
- 5.28 When considering whether a person is ‘fit and proper’, the Council will consider each case on its merits and must have regard to whether the applicant has:
- Previous convictions involving fraud or other dishonesty, violence, drugs or sexual offences;
  - Practised unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sex, colour, race, ethnic or national origins or disability in, or in connection with, the carrying out of any business
  - Contravened any provision of housing or landlord and tenant law; and
  - Acted otherwise than in accordance with an approved code of practice with regard to the management of HMOs or of excepted accommodation.
- 5.29 When considering whether a person is ‘fit and proper’, the Council must also have regard (among other things) to the following:
- The nature of any convictions and the relevance of those convictions to the management of the HMO (Convictions relating to fraud, running unlicensed HMOs or violence, for example, may affect someone’s ‘fit and proper’ status, and a conviction based on the existence of a Category 1 hazard would give an indication of an applicant’s approach to health and safety in a property).
  - The weight of any convictions. (An administrative breach of the HMO Management Regulations, such as not displaying the Code of Good Management Practice, is unlikely to affect a person’s ‘fit and proper’ status).
- 5.30 The Council is entitled to take into account other factors in so far as they are relevant to the fitness and propriety of the relevant person. It would not normally consider a landlord with a criminal record for unlawful evictions and harassment of tenants to be ‘fit and proper’ person.
- 5.31 Although discretion may be appropriate if an offence is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances, multiple offences – or a series of offences over a period of time – are likely to give greater cause for concern and may demonstrate a pattern of inappropriate behaviour which should be taken into account. A particularly serious view may be taken where the victim is vulnerable.

5.32 A person's "fit and proper" status may be reviewed at any time. Removal of the status may lead to a refusal and/or revocation of the HMO licence(s).

### HMO Management Regulations

5.33 The HMO Management Regulations place requirements on landlords and managers of HMOs to maintain and manage the HMOs they run.

5.34 The Regulations also place requirements on occupiers of HMOs to not obstruct or interfere with the management and maintenance of the HMO.

5.35 There are two sets of Regulations:

- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

5.36 Although both sets cover the same requirements, they relate to different types of HMOs. The Regulations cover the following:

- Duty of the manager to provide information to occupier.
- Duty of the manager to take safety measures.
- Duty of the manager to maintain water supply and drainage.
- Duty of the manager to supply and maintain gas and electricity.
- Duty of the manager to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances.
- Duty of the manager to maintain living accommodation.
- Duty to provide waste disposal facilities.
- Duties of occupiers of HMOs.

5.37 Breaching any of the Regulations is an offence under section 234 of the Housing Act 2004, which carries an unlimited fine or the imposition of a civil penalty of up to £30,000 for each breach.

5.38 If the HMO is licensed, the Council will inform the landlord and/or manager of the breaches of the HMO Management Regulations and provide them with a reasonable amount of time (usually 10 days) to remedy the breaches. Formal enforcement action will then be considered if the breaches are not remedied.

### **Overcrowding**

5.39 Overcrowding is a difficult issue to deal with because, unlike other hazards, there is often very little that the landlord can do to resolve the problem unless the tenant has moved other people into the accommodation since the start of the tenancy.

5.40 In cases of severe overcrowding, the Council will explore the housing options available to the tenant, including a move to alternative accommodation.

- 5.41 When a tenancy expires, the Housing Enforcement Team may require the landlord to reduce or limit the number of people living in the property when it is re-let.

### **Empty Properties**

- 5.42 There is a high demand for accommodation in Northampton. As well as being a wasted source of housing, empty properties can be an eyesore, damage adjoining properties, blight neighbourhoods and attract anti-social behaviour.
- 5.43 The Council will identify, risk assess and prioritise long-term, problematic and nuisance empty properties, using the full range of informal and formal action (including enforced sales and compulsory purchase) to bring them back into use.

### **Illegal eviction and harassment**

- 5.44 The Council is committed to enforcing tenants' rights under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, and its Tenancy Relations Officer will work proactively to prevent illegal evictions and harassment, reinstate tenants who have been evicted illegally and, where tenants are unable to return, investigate alleged offences.
- 5.45 Depending on their tenant's security of tenure, most landlords are normally required to give notice and obtain a court order for possession after the notice has expired.
- 5.46 Illegal eviction occurs when the tenant is unlawfully prevented from entering all or part of their accommodation. Examples include:
- The use of violence (or threats of violence) to force the tenant to leave;
  - Preventing the tenant from entering accommodation they have the right to occupy;
  - Changing the locks while the tenant is out; and
  - Evicting a tenant before the proper legal procedures have been followed.
- 5.47 Harassment occurs when a landlord (or someone acting on their behalf) does something that is likely to interfere with the tenant's peace and enjoyment or persistently withdraws or withholds services that the tenant reasonably requires for the occupation of the premises in the knowledge that this is likely to cause them to leave the property or refrain from exercising their tenancy rights. Examples include:
- Forcing the tenant to sign agreements which take away their legal rights;
  - Removing or restricting essential services such as hot water or heating, or failing to pay bills in order that these services are cut off;
  - Constant visits to the property (especially if late at night or without warning);
  - Entering the accommodation when the tenant is not there, or without the tenant's permission; and
  - The use of violence or threats of violence.

- 5.48 The Tenancy Relations Officer will work closely with the Police and the Council's Housing Advice & Options Team to investigate and prosecute offences of illegal eviction and harassment. They will also provide tenants with help and support in applying for injunctions, compensation and rent repayment orders.

### **Charging for Enforcement**

- 5.49 The Housing Act 2004 allows local housing authorities to make a reasonable charge to recover administrative and other expenses incurred when taking certain enforcement action. Other legislation allows them to recover the cost of Officers' time and expenses incurred when determining what works need to be carried out as works in default.
- 5.50 The Housing Enforcement Team will recover all costs and fees when formal action is taken and it is satisfied that it is reasonable for the responsible person to bear the cost. The full costs (Officers' time, expert reports and overheads, etc) will be charged and, in some cases – where it is reasonable and proportionate – the enforced sale of the property will be considered in order to recover costs.

### **Deciding on an Appropriate Sanction**

- 5.51 The criminal standard of proof is required to be met in order to justify either the imposition of a civil penalty or a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court for a relevant housing offence. This means that, before taking formal action, the Council needs to satisfy itself beyond reasonable doubt that, if the case were to be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, a person's conduct amounted to a relevant housing offence described in Paragraphs 6.13 of this Housing Enforcement Policy.
- 5.52 To achieve a conviction in' Court, the Council must be able to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a relevant housing offence has been committed by the accused. The same principle applies in respect of civil penalties issued in accordance with section 249A and Schedule 13A of the Housing Act 2004 so, where a civil penalty is imposed and an appeal is subsequently made to the First-Tier Tribunal Property Chamber, the Council will need to be able to prove to the Tribunal that the relevant housing offence has been committed beyond a reasonable doubt.
- 5.53 Prosecution may be the most appropriate option where an offence is particularly serious or where the offender has committed similar offences in the past. However, that does not mean that civil penalties may not be issued in cases where serious offences may have been committed and the Council believes that the most disruptive sanction to impose on a criminal, rogue or irresponsible landlord is a financial penalty (or penalties if there have been several breaches) rather than prosecution.

## **6. Options to Regulate and Ensure Compliance**

- 6.1 The following table contains some examples of situations where different types of action may be taken. Decisions are made, however, on a case-by-case basis.

ACTION	GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES
<b>No Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where formal action may not be appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>In such cases, customers may be directed to other sources of advice and support.</p>
<b>Informal Action and Advice</b> includes verbal advice and advisory letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where it may be appropriate to deal with the issues through informal action and advice.</li> </ul> <p>In such cases, the pre-formal stage of the HHSRS may be followed, with the Council working collaboratively with responsible landlords to address and resolve any problems.</p>
<b>Service of Notice</b> requiring repairs or specific legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a person refuses or fails to carry out works through the pre-formal HHSRS process;</li> <li>• Where there is a lack of confidence or there is positive intelligence that the responsible individual or company will not respond to a pre-formal approach;</li> <li>• Where there is risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of a household or a member of the public (dangerous gas or electrical services; no heating in the winter; no hot water for personal hygiene or to wash and prepare food safely; etc);</li> <li>• Where standards are extremely poor and the responsible individual or company shows little or no awareness of the management regulations or statutory requirements;</li> <li>• Where the person has a history of non-compliance with the Council and/or other relevant regulators;</li> <li>• Where the person has a record of criminal convictions for failure to comply with the housing requirements (which may include housing management);</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to safeguard and protect the occupiers' future health and safety; and/or</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to bring an empty property back into use and informal requests either fail or are not appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Powers of Entry</b> (for more information, see Paragraphs 6.2 - 6.5 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where it is necessary to carry out a statutory duty or power;</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to investigate an offence;</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to prevent the obstruction of Officers; and/or</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of any person, or to protect the environment, without delay.</li> </ul>
<b>Powers to Require Information and/or Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where it is necessary for information to be provided to enable Officers to carry out their powers and duties;</li> <li>• Where it is necessary for documents to be provided to enable Officers to carry out their powers and duties under the Housing Act 2004;</li> </ul>

ACTION	GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES (continued)
<b>Powers to Require Information and/or Documents</b> (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where it is necessary for electrical certificates, gas safety certificates and fire risk assessments to be provided in relation to HMOs;</li> <li>• Where it is necessary for insurance documents and energy performance certificates to be provided in relation to privately rented properties; and/or</li> <li>• Where it is necessary for any person with an interest in a property to provide details about its ownership and occupation, etc.</li> </ul>

ACTION	EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
<b>Emergency Remedial Action / Emergency Prohibition Order</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the health and safety of any occupiers of the premises or any other residential premises</li> </ul>
<b>Works in Default for failing to comply with a Notice</b> (for more information, see Paragraphs 6.6 - 6.9 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where works are required – in accordance with a Notice – to address a serious hazard, but these are not carried out within the permitted time.</li> </ul> <p>In such cases, these works may be carried out by the Council, as works in default, prior to any prosecution.</p>
<b>Injunctive Action</b> (for more information, see Paragraph 6.10 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the situation is dangerous and/or there is significant public detriment, and the offenders have repeatedly been found guilty of similar offences; and/or</li> <li>• Where it is necessary to prevent further offences and/or the harassment of tenants, witnesses or other people.</li> </ul>
<b>Revocation of HMO Licenses and Approvals</b> (for more information, see Paragraph 6.11 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the Manager is not a “fit and proper person”; and/or</li> <li>• Where there are serious breaches of the licensing conditions and/or serious management offences.</li> </ul>

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EMERGENCY SITUATIONS (continued)</b>
<p><b>Civil Penalties</b> (for more information, see paragraphs 6.12 – 6.19 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an individual or company has endangered the health, safety or wellbeing of occupiers, visitors or members of the general public;</li> <li>• Where an individual or company has deliberately, negligently or persistently breached their legal obligations, especially where the economic advantages of breaking the law are substantial and, compared to them, those businesses that comply with the law are disadvantaged;</li> <li>• Where an individual or company has deliberately or persistently ignored written warnings or formal notices / orders or no reasonable progress has been made in relation to the carrying out of the requirements;</li> <li>• Where the alternative means of achieving compliance (works in default, for example) are considered inappropriate;</li> <li>• Where the defendant has assaulted or obstructed an Officer in the course of their duties or provided false information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Simple Caution</b> (for more information, see Paragraphs 6.20 - 6.22 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an offence is less serious and the person who has committed the offence has admitted their guilt.</li> </ul> <p>In such cases, a Simple Caution may be offered (as an alternative to Court or Civil Penalty action, and on the understanding that the Council's costs will be paid by the offender) where it is likely that they will heed a warning about their behaviour and the legal consequences if they commit further offences.</p>
<p><b>Prosecution</b> (for more information, see Paragraphs 6.23 – 6.26 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the offence is not covered by applying a Civil Penalty.</li> <li>• Where the case also involves offences applied by other agencies i.e. Trading Standards, Northampton Fire and Rescue Service etc. as well as Private Sector Housing Offences and the case is multi agency set of prosecutions heard on the same day.</li> <li>• Where an individual or company has endangered the health, safety or wellbeing of occupiers, visitors or members of the general public.</li> <li>• Where an individual or company has deliberately, negligently or persistently breached their legal obligations, especially where the economic advantages of breaking the law are substantial and, compared to them, those businesses that comply with the law are disadvantaged.</li> <li>• Where an individual or company has deliberately or persistently ignored written warnings or formal notices / orders or no reasonable progress has been made in relation to the carrying out of the requirements;</li> <li>• Where the alternative means of achieving compliance (works in default, for example) are considered inappropriate;</li> <li>• Where a simple caution is considered inappropriate or the defendant has refused to accept a simple caution; and/or</li> <li>• Where the defendant has assaulted or obstructed an Officer in the course of their duties or provided false information.</li> </ul>

## **Powers of Entry**

- 6.2 In certain circumstances, Powers of Entry into a property are provided to authorised Officers in accordance with the legislation. In general, the powers will allow an Officer at any reasonable time to:
- Enter a property to carry out an inspection
  - Take any appropriate persons with them
  - Take equipment or materials with them
  - Take measurements, photographs or make recordings
  - Take samples of articles or substances
  - Sometimes carry out works
- 6.3 In many cases, prior notice will be given to owners and to occupiers. Although the notice will normally be given in writing or by e-mail, it may sometimes be given verbally, depending on the relevant statutory notice. The amount of notice given will depend on the legislation being enforced and can range from 24 hours to 7 days.
- 6.4 Powers of Entry can (and, in some circumstances, will) be enforced with a Warrant, obtained from a Magistrate. Police and/or other regulatory agencies – including but not limited to Planning Enforcement, the Immigration Service, the Fire Service, the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority and Trading Standards.
- 6.5 It is an offence to obstruct an Officer in the course of their duty. Officers exercising their Power of Entry will carry identification and details of their authorisation to carry out their action.

## **Carrying out Works in Default**

- 6.6 The Council has been given powers under the Housing Act 2004 and other legislation to carry out works in default where a person has been required to do works but has failed to do so or carry out emergency remedial action where there is imminent risk to occupants.
- 6.7 In most circumstances, a person will be given notice of the Council's intention to carry out works in default. As soon as the Council has commenced the works, it is an offence for any person to obstruct the Council or any of the contractors or agents that have been employed to carry out the works.
- 6.8 The full cost of the works will be recovered in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions. A Charge will be placed on the property and the debt will be pursued. If interest can be charged while the debt remains unpaid, this will be added to the debt. (For further information, see the Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy).

- 6.9 The Council is not obliged to carry out the works and reserves the right not to do so where the cost of the works is likely to be high or there may be difficulties recovering the costs. Works may be considered to remove serious hazards only.

### **Revocation of HMO Licences and Approvals**

- 6.10 The Council may revoke an HMO licence or the approval of an HMO licence in the following circumstances:

- Breach(es) of license condition(s).
- Where the licence holder and/or the manager are no longer considered fit and proper person(s).
- By agreement with the license holder because, for example, they have disposed of their interest in the property.

### **Civil Penalties**

- 6.11 The power given to local authorities to impose a civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution for certain specified housing offences was introduced by section 126 and Schedule 9 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

- 6.12 Civil penalties are intended to be used against landlords who commit one or more of the following offences under the Housing Act 2004:

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice;
- Offences in relation to the licensing of HMOs;
- Contravention of an overcrowding notice; and
- Failure to comply with the HMO Management Regulations.

- 6.13 Civil penalties are also intended to be used against landlords and managing agents who commit one or more of the following offences:

- Failure to belong to a Redress Scheme for lettings agency work and property management work, under The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014;
- Failure to comply with a remedial notice requiring them to install appropriate smoke and/or carbon monoxide alarms, The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
- Failure to comply with the Tenant Fees Act 2019;

- Failure to belong to a client money protection scheme under The Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019
  - Failure to inspect and repair electrical systems in private rented accommodation, under The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.
  - Renting in the Private Rented Sector a property with poor energy efficiency ratings, under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015
- 6.14 When deciding to apply a civil penalty, the Council must be satisfied that there is sufficient, admissible and reliable evidence to prove before a criminal court that an offence has been committed beyond a reasonable doubt by an identifiable individual, company or officer of that company
- 6.15 Where the Council is satisfied 6.15 is met, the Council will consider the impact and severity of the offences in deciding the most appropriate course of action.
- 6.16 Any decision to apply a civil penalty will be fully considered at a case conference attended by the relevant Officers and either the Housing Enforcement Manager or the Private Sector Housing Manager. Legal advice regarding the sufficiency of the evidence against an individual will also be sought from the Council's in-house legal service prior to a decision being made whether to issue a penalty. If a civil penalty is deemed appropriate, then the Council will fully adhere to the process as set out in section 249A and Schedule 13 of the Housing Act 2004.
- 6.17 In deciding the level of civil penalty that will be applied, the Council will have regard to the Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy and use the 9-stage Civil Penalty Scoring Matrix which will make adjustments to the charge, as appropriate, by taking into account any reasonable aggravating or mitigating factors.
- 6.18 Above all, in determining the level of civil penalty, the Council will ensure that the penalty removes any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the offence. The guiding principle will be to ensure that the offender does not benefit as a result of committing an offence: it should not be cheaper to offend than to ensure that a property is well maintained and properly managed.

### **Simple Cautions**

- 6.19 Where someone has committed an offence or offences and fully accepts responsibility for the offence(s), Officers may offer a Simple Caution where the circumstances suit a Simple Caution rather than a prosecution or civil penalty.
- 6.20 Simple Cautions will be considered where:
- The defendant has admitted their guilt; and
  - The defendant is aged 18 or over; and
  - The defendant agrees to be given a Simple Caution; and
  - Civil Penalties are not appropriate or cannot be applied

6.21 If the defendant agrees to receive a Simple Caution, the Council will seek to recover the costs of the investigation as part of the Simple Caution process. If they do not agree to receive a Simple Caution, they will be prosecuted.

### **Prosecution**

6.22 When deciding whether to prosecute, the Council must take account of the Code for Crown Prosecutors and be satisfied that there is sufficient, admissible and reliable evidence beyond all reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed by an identifiable individual company or representative of that company. It must also be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of conviction.

6.23 The Code also requires that a decision must also be made as to whether a prosecution would be in the public interest. Where there is evidence, Officers will consider prosecution and, as part of their investigation, they will take into account, amongst other things, the following:

- Any reasonable explanation provided by the individual or company.
- Evidence that the individual or company intends to prevent any recurrence of the problem.
- An individual's state of health.
- The offender's attitude to the offence.

6.24 Any decision to prosecute will initially be considered at a case conference attended by the Officers and either the Housing Enforcement Manager and/or Private Sector Housing Manager. If a prosecution is deemed appropriate, then the case will be fully prepared and referred to the Council's in-house legal service for consideration of the evidence with a view to prosecuting.

6.25 Prosecutions will be brought without unavoidable delay and generally there is a requirement to lay an Information for summary only offences at the Magistrates' Court within six months of the offence being committed. To ensure fair and consistent decisions in relation to prosecutions, any decision to prosecute will take into account the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

## **7. Management Orders**

### **Interim Management Orders (HMOs)**

7.1 If the Council is satisfied that there is no reasonable prospect of a licensable HMO being licensed (with appropriate conditions) in the near future, or if it is necessary to take immediate steps to protect the health, safety or welfare of the occupiers of the property or properties in the vicinity, it must make an Interim Management Order in respect of the HMO. These Orders also enable the Council to take any other appropriate steps to ensure the management of a licensable HMO.

- 7.2 The Council must also make an Interim Order if they have revoked an HMO license, but that revocation has been appealed or not yet come into force and, if it were in force, there will be no reasonable prospect of the house being licensed in the near future or if it would necessary to protect the health, safety or welfare of the occupiers of the property or properties in the vicinity if it were in force.
- 7.3 Although the Council may delegate the management of the HMO to another agency or partner – and there are provisions to vary, revoke and appeal against an Interim Management Order – an Interim Management Order will be in force for 12 months or until an HMO licence is granted if this happens within 12 months.
- 7.4 An Interim Management Order allows the Council to manage the property with many of the rights of a landlord, including the right to collect rent and to use that rent to pay for work to the property.

### **Special Interim Management Orders (All privately rented dwellings including HMOs)**

- 7.5 Where the Council is satisfied that a significant and persistent problem of anti-social behaviour in an area is attributable, in full or in part, to the anti-social behaviour of an occupier of an HMO or other privately rented dwelling and that the landlord is failing to take appropriate action to combat the problem and the making of a Special Interim Order will lead to its reduction or elimination, it can apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a Special Interim Management Order for that dwelling.
- 7.6 The Council must also be satisfied that a Special Interim Order is necessary for protecting the health and safety or welfare of persons occupying, visiting or otherwise engaging in lawful activities in the vicinity of the house before making an application to the Tribunal.
- 7.7 These Orders operate in the same way as Interim Management Orders (see Paragraphs 7.3 – 7.5).

### **Final Management Orders (HMOs)**

- 7.8 If the Council is satisfied (on the expiry of any Interim Management or Special Management Order) that the HMO still requires a licence but it is still not able to grant the HMO a licence, it must make a Final Management Order in order to secure the proper management of the house on a long term basis in accordance with a management scheme.
- 7.9 A Final Management Order is similar to an Interim Management Order in that there are provisions to vary, revoke and appeal against a Final Management Order, the Council may delegate the Management of the HMO to another agency or partner, and the Council continues to manage the property with many of the rights of the landlord. However, it must review the arrangements from time to time but Final Orders may last up to 5 years. If the conditions that led to it being made still apply, then the Council may have to make a new Final Order for another maximum period of 5 years.

## 8. Rent Repayment Orders

- 8.1 A rent repayment order is an order made by the First-tier Tribunal requiring a landlord to repay a specified amount of rent.
- 8.2 The Housing Act 2004 introduced rent repayment orders to cover situations where the landlord of a property had failed to obtain a licence for a property that was required to be licensed, specifically the offences in relation to licensing of HMOs.
- 8.3 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 extended rent repayment orders to cover a much wider range of offences, described below:
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice (under section 30 of the Housing Act 2004)
  - Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order (under section 32 of the Housing Act 2004)
  - Breach of a banning order made under section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016
  - Using violence to secure entry to a property (under section 6 of the Criminal Law Act 1977)
  - Illegal eviction or harassment of the occupiers of a property (under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977)
- 8.4 Rent repayment orders can be granted to either the tenant or the local housing authority. If the tenant paid their rent themselves, then the rent must be repaid to the tenant. If rent was paid through Housing Benefit or through the housing element of Universal Credit, then the rent must be repaid to the local housing authority. If the rent was paid partially by the tenant with the remainder paid through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, then the rent should be repaid on an equivalent basis
- 8.5 A rent repayment order can be made against a landlord who has received a civil penalty in respect of an offence, but only at a time when there is no prospect of the landlord appealing against that penalty.
- 8.6 The Council must consider a rent repayment order after a person is the subject of a successful civil penalty and in most cases the Council will subsequently make an application for a rent repayment order to recover monies paid through Housing Benefit or through the housing element of Universal Credit.
- 8.7 The Council will also offer advice, guidance and support to assist tenants to apply for a rent repayment order if the tenant has paid the rent themselves.

## **9. Compliance with Guidance and Legislation**

- 9.1 A wide range of guidance on enforcement has been issued by the Government and other agencies, and the Council will continue to have regard to all relevant statutory guidance when reviewing its policies and procedures and updating as appropriate.
- 9.2 The Council will comply with all relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act 2000, the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 and the Codes of Practice made under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

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**Appendices**

2



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House for affordable rented housing</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Expected date of decision:</b>	20 May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Housing and Wellbeing
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Hibbert
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Rushmills

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to approve the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House in order to increase the supply of affordable rented housing and help reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 It is **recommended** that Cabinet:
- (a) Approves the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House, funded through the Housing Revenue Account at a total cost set out in Exempt Appendix A to this report, in order to provide a total of 60 apartments (16 one-bedroom and 44 two-bedroom) that will be let to eligible households on the Housing Register;

- (b) Approves the use of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme to complete the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House;
- (c) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Borough Secretary, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing – the authority, on being satisfied with the results of the due diligence exercise undertaken by NPH on the Council’s behalf, to purchase and redevelop Riverside House as affordable rented housing.
- (d) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and the Chief Finance Officer, the authority to determine the rent levels and services charges for the new homes in Riverside House; and
- (e) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and Northampton Partnership Homes, the authority to develop and approve a Local Lettings Policy that determines how the homes in Riverside House are allocated.

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report background**

3.1.1 Riverside House (see photo below) is a detached, five-storey office building comprising two rectangular wings and a central core. It is situated in Bedford Road, less than a mile from Northampton’s town centre.



3.1.2 Overall, the building is approximately 57,105 square feet (5,307 square metres) in size and is offered for sale with 127 parking spaces. The ground floor of the building is currently leased to, and used by, a renal dialysis company.

- 3.1.3 Barwood Capital, the owner of Riverside House, has obtained planning consent to convert the four upper floors of the building into 60 apartments (16 x one-bedroom and 44 x two bedroom).
- 3.1.4 On behalf of the Council, and in order to help increase the supply of affordable rented housing in the borough and reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) has been negotiating with Barwood Capital with a view to the Council purchasing Riverside House.
- 3.1.5 Through NPH, the Council has negotiated the cost of the scheme, appointed an external legal team to undertake legal due diligence and, subject to Cabinet approval, agreed Heads of Terms with Barwood Capital.
- 3.1.6 If approval is given, NPH will conclude the negotiations and recommend that the Council proceeds with the exchange of contracts. It will also develop the technical design and specification to enable it to procure a main contractor to undertake the conversion works to the property
- 3.1.7 It is anticipated that, if contracts are exchanged in July 2020, the redevelopment of Riverside House will be able to commence in December 2020 and will take approximately 15 months to complete. This programme is subject to any ongoing impact from Covid-19 in relation to elongated programmes (to enable contractors to manage social distancing) and lead in times for materials.

## **3.2 Issues**

### Housing Revenue Account

- 3.2.1 It is proposed that the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and that the new homes will be owned and managed within the HRA.
- 3.2.2 This will afford the Council the opportunity to subsidise the acquisition and redevelopment, and minimise the amount of borrowing required, by investing Right to Buy receipts or securing a grant from Homes England.
- 3.2.3 In common with other applicants, new tenants will be provided with Introductory Tenancies for the first year and, as long as they comply with their tenancy conditions, their tenancies will then be converted into secure tenancies.
- 3.2.4 It is proposed that the homes will be let at affordable rents (up to 80% of the market rent) but 'capped' at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

### Purchase and management of the freehold

- 3.2.5 It is proposed that the Council acquires the freehold of Riverside House.
- 3.2.6 This is important because it will provide NPH (as the managing agent) with full control over the management and security of Riverside House, and it will avoid any liability for the payment of ground rent and freeholder service charges.
- 3.2.7 On completion of the purchase, the Council will be the landlord of Renal Services (which leases the ground floor of Riverside House) and will receive, from Renal Services, rent for the space occupied by the dialysis unit and a proportion of the overall service charges relating to estate services such as the cleaning of communal areas and window cleaning.

- 3.2.8 On completion of the conversion works, the Council will also become the landlord of 60 council tenants who will pay rent for their homes and a proportion of the overall service charges relating to estate services such as the cleaning of communal areas and window cleaning.

#### Planning matters

- 3.2.9 After more than 40 years of almost continuous use as office accommodation, Riverside House has struggled to attract commercial tenants in recent years and its owners have considered other options for its use:

- In 2014, planning consent was given for a change of use of the ground floor of Riverside House from offices (Use Class B1) to a renal dialysis medical centre (Use Class D1). This resulted in the ground floor being leased to Renal Services from 2014 for an initial period of 10 years.
- Several residential options were considered, with a range in density and tenure. The planning consent that is relevant to the Council's proposed purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House is the Prior Notification of Change of Use from Offices (Use Class B1a) to Residential comprising 60 no units (Use Class C3)

- 3.2.10 Riverside House is for sale with the benefit of 127 parking spaces. A large adjacent piece of land at the rear of the site – which is not included in the sale of Riverside House and includes land owned by Northampton General Hospital – has outline planning permission for student accommodation and a reserved matters application has been submitted for this.

#### Design and construction

- 3.2.11 It is proposed that, on completion of the purchase of Riverside House, the redevelopment of Riverside House will be undertaken by NPH, on behalf of the Council, as the Council's Development Agent.

- 3.2.12 NPH has an in-house team of quantity surveyors, building surveyors and project managers, and a supply chain for design and construction. It will appoint a design team to develop the technical design for the building, including any additional reports (such as fire safety and mechanical and engineering) that are required. These will address key issues, including:

- The drainage and water supply / pressure which often present challenges in new build developments, conversion schemes and brownfield sites; and
- Fire safety, to include the installation of a fire sprinkler system and appropriate compartmentalisation between floors.

- 3.2.13 Although the internal configuration of Riverside House will change considerably, the external appearance of the building will remain unchanged.

- 3.2.14 The scheme has 127 parking spaces, of which 90 will be designated for the tenants in the apartments and the remainder will be designated for the Renal Unit on the ground floor. This is equivalent to 1.5 spaces per apartment, which is a lot more than other council-owned town centre apartment schemes.

- 3.2.15 After appointing a main contractor to undertake the works, NPH will manage the construction contract, oversee the works and manage the cost, programme and quality. Before and during the works, NPH will maintain regular dialogue with Renal Services in order to minimise any disruption to the dialysis unit.
- 3.2.16 An 18-month construction period has been allowed for. Although the programme is subject to any ongoing impact from Covid-19 in relation to elongated programmes (to enable contractors to manage social distancing) and lead in times for materials, the programme is prudent and will help minimise any disruption to the dialysis unit. It will also allow for some out of hours working, subject to the agreement of the Council's Planning Service.
- 3.2.17 Throughout the construction, NPH will monitor the programme and the quality of work before making staged payments to the value of the works completed.
- 3.2.18 On completion of the development, the Council will have the benefit of a 12-months defect period and, during this period, regular site visits will be carried out jointly by NPH and the contractor (to deal with any defects as they arise) and the Council will hold a 2.5% retention of the final contract sum until the defect period is complete.
- 3.2.19 The works will be covered by a 10-year NHBC (or similar) warranty. Certain products may have longer warranties which the Council can also benefit from should the need arise.
- 3.2.20 At the end of the defect period, NPH's Maintenance Team will take on the responsibility for all repairs and maintenance at Riverside House.

#### Local Lettings Policy

- 3.2.21 It is proposed that Riverside House is let as permanent accommodation as part of a wider initiative to maximise the supply of affordable housing and reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation.
- 3.2.22 Riverside House has a useful mixture of one and two-bedroom apartments and is in a good location due to its proximity to local services, employment and public transport. To help establish a mixed and sustainable community at Riverside House, it is proposed that a Local Lettings Policy is introduced to determine the way in which the homes in Riverside House are allocated.
- 3.2.23 Modelled on other housing schemes – such as Centenary House – the Local Lettings Policy will aim to strike the right balance between existing council tenants, homeless households and other applicants on the Housing Register.
- 3.2.24 As it is likely that only one third of the 60 apartments in Riverside House will be let to homeless households, the Council and NPH will ensure that, where reasonable and practicable, homeless households living in temporary accommodation are offered the tenancies of homes that are vacated by the existing council tenants who move into Riverside House.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

#### Option 1 (recommended)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet can choose to approve the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House. This option is recommended because Riverside House offers the Council and NPH an excellent opportunity to increase Northampton's supply of affordable rented accommodation – in a sustainable location and within a relatively short timescale – and help to reduce, directly and indirectly, the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

#### Option 2 (not recommended)

- 3.3.2 Cabinet can choose to do nothing. This option is not recommended because there is an urgent need to increase the supply of affordable rented housing and reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

- 4.1.1 The purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House as affordable rented housing for households on the Housing Register will help the Council to meet its policy objectives of maximising the supply of affordable housing and reducing, directly and indirectly, the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

- 4.1.2 It supports the three strategic priorities in the Corporate Plan 2019 –2021:

- A stronger economy;
- Resilient Communities; and
- Exceptional services to be proud of.

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 As reported in Exempt Appendix A, the financial viability of the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House has been appraised by NPH and reviewed by the Council's Finance Team, using the ALMO Appraisal Model and based on current assumptions, taking into account the following:

- The total scheme costs (detailed in Exempt Appendix A);
- A 30% subsidy provided by the use of Right to Buy receipts. Alternatively, the Council could use its Registered Provider status to bid for Homes England funding to support the Beaumont House scheme;
- Interest on borrowing;
- Management and maintenance costs; and
- Affordable rents (up to 80% of the market rent, based on an independent valuation) but 'capped' at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

- 4.2.2 The appraisal results of the purchase and conversion of 60 units with continuation of the Renal facility show that the Riverside House scheme has a Net Present Value (NPV) of £469k over 30 years, an Internal Rate of Return of 4.44% and a payback period of 17 years.
- 4.2.3 It is proposed that the scheme costs are funded through two sources: firstly, the use of Right to Buy receipts or grant funding from Homes England and, secondly, the £25m extra borrowing capacity that Cabinet approved (for new council homes) in June 2019.
- 4.2.4 The acquisition and development costs are included in the Exempt Appendix A.

### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 The Council has power pursuant to Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or acquisition or disposal of any property or rights which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.
- 4.3.2 It is noted from paragraph 3.2.11 to paragraph 3.2.20 above that NPH will undertake the redevelopment of Riverside House in so doing the Council must satisfy itself that NPH have undertaken all necessary steps with its chosen contractors, through the contractual process to mitigate the level of exposure and/or risk the Council may be subject to as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, (particularly around the issue of force majeure), and that all appropriate steps have been taken as part of the contractual process to limit so far as is possible the impact of same on the redevelopment of Riverside House.
- 4.3.3 Legal Services have been advised that pursuant to a letter provided to the Council, (addressed to NPH dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020 from the valuers instructed by NPH) that the letter confirms that the valuers have agreed that the report provided to NPH (see Appendix B) can be relied upon by the Council for the purposes of acquisition only and that that the Council as a third party accepts the report in its presented form and is subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the Scope of Works letter agreed previously between NPH and the valuers. It is therefore important to note that the liability with respect to the Council in relation to the valuation report has been both qualified and is also subject to a liability cap in the event that the Council wish at a future date to pursue a claim against the valuers with respect to the valuation provided.
- 4.3.4 It is noted with respect to the valuation report (see Appendix B) that the valuation conducted was a Desktop Valuation completed on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, just before the government lockdown which began on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. A Desktop Valuation is performed without a physical inspection and is based on consideration of publicly available documentation on the assumption that the property is in good condition. Allied to the recent government guidance issued and referred to at paragraph 4.3.6 below an assessment of the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the valuation of Riverside House and the effect on government funding should form part of the due diligence exercise to be undertaken.

- 4.3.5 As part of its role in this project, NPH has instructed and funded an external legal firm to support the project's legal requirements. A letter of reliance has been provided to the Council confirming that the Council as a third party can rely on the advice provided by them as part of this project, subject to the external legal firm's terms and conditions. For the Council this means that in the event but in advance of same the position for the Council remains as follows. As a third party, the Council will not be in a position to pursue a claim against the external legal firm in the event of any erroneous or negligent professional advice received by NPH in respect of this transaction, which would or could, impact the Council in the future. This is because NPH will be the instructing client, and only NPH would be able to make such a claim if such circumstances occurred.
- 4.3.6 Consideration of any impact that the Covid-19 pandemic may have on government funding and the valuation of Riverside House should form part of the due diligence exercise to be undertaken.
- 4.3.7 The Government has recently issued guidance on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on local authority decision making and the guidance suggests that local authorities should consider any decision to be made (which is likely to have a significant impact on its community) from the perspective of whether the decision to be made can still be considered to be the proper utilisation of available Council resources in light of the pandemic. A consideration of this issue should form part of the due diligence exercise referred to at paragraph 2.1 (c) above, and the issue referred back to Cabinet for determination if deemed necessary.

#### **4.4 Equality and Health**

- 4.4.1 The action proposed in this report will help to improve the housing conditions and life chances of people with protected characteristics, including people with disabilities and families with children. They will therefore have a positive impact on Equality and Diversity.
- 4.4.2 Maximising the supply of new homes is part of the Council's commitment to improving communities and our town as a place to live.
- 4.4.3 When developing the Local Lettings Policy, the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Duty and will continue to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and help to create a fairer society.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

- 4.5.1 The Senior Management Teams of the Council and NPH have worked collaboratively on the proposed redevelopment of Riverside House.
- 4.5.2 Consultation on the proposed redevelopment of Riverside House was carried out in relation to the owner's application for planning consent.

## **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

4.6.1 The action proposed in this report will help meet 5 of the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2019 - 2021:

- More homes, better homes
- Shaping place and driving growth
- Creating a thriving and vibrant town
- Spending your money wisely
- Putting the customer first

## **4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)**

4.7.1 Although the external appearance of Riverside House is to remain unchanged, NPH will be replacing the windows with windows that are more thermally efficient and have a thermal break; a continuous barrier between the inside and outside window frames that prevent conductive thermal energy loss.

4.7.2 Although parking spaces are available in the proposed scheme, the town centre location is likely to reduce the need for car use.

4.7.3 Secure bicycle storage is to be included in the proposed scheme.

4.7.4 NPH will work with the developer to produce a 'new home' pack which will include energy saving tips for new residents.

## **4.8 Other Implications**

4.8.1 There are no other implications.

## **5. Background Papers**

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Corporate Plan 2019 - 2021

## **6. Appendices**

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Appendix A: Exempt Information (including acquisition & development costs)  
Appendix B: Exempt Riverside House Red Book Valuation Report

## **7. Next Steps**

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7.1 The following table provides an indicative summary of the next steps if Cabinet approves the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
<b>June – July 2020</b>	Exchange of contracts and completion of freehold acquisition
<b>June – July 2020</b>	Design Team appointed
<b>September – November 2020</b>	Tender and contract award for main contractor
<b>December 2020</b>	Main contractor starts on site
<b>February 2022</b>	Practical completion
<b>March – April 2022</b>	Phased occupation
<b>February 2023</b>	Defects period complete

**Phil Harris**  
**Director of Housing and Wellbeing**  
**01604 837871**

<b>Appendices</b>
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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Redevelopment of Belgrave House for affordable rented housing</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	20 May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Housing and Wellbeing
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Hibbert
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Castle

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to approve the leasehold acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House (an empty office block) to provide 122 affordable rented homes for households on the Housing Register.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 It is **recommended** that Cabinet:
- (a) Approves the acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House, by the Council entering into a 35 year full repairing and insuring finance lease with Legal & General's Limited Price Inflation Fund (LPI Fund) in order to enable Belgrave House to be converted from office use into a residential scheme of 122 apartments, called 'The Clock House', which will be let at affordable rents to eligible households on the Housing Register;

- (b) Approves the use of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, including the use of Right to Buy receipts to subsidise 30% of the costs, in order to complete the acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House;
- (c) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Borough Secretary, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, the authority, on being satisfied with the results of the due diligence exercise undertaken by Northampton Partnership Homes, to enter into a 35 year finance lease with Legal & General's LPI Fund;
- (d) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and the Chief Finance Officer, the authority to determine the rent levels and service charges for the new homes in The Clock House;
- (e) Delegates to the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and Northampton Partnership Homes, the authority to develop and approve a Local Lettings Policy that determines how the homes in The Clock House are allocated.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report background

- 3.1.1 Belgrave House (see photo below) is an empty office block, built in the 1970s and situated in Northampton's town centre. It is owned by Legal & General and, despite the owner's best efforts to attract commercial tenants, Belgrave House has been unoccupied for a number of years.



- 3.1.2 In January 2019, Cabinet considered a report that set out the strategic benefits of the Council acquiring and redeveloping Belgrave House, including:

- Regeneration of a large town centre building and an adjacent alleyway;

- An increase in the number of homes situated in the town centre, resulting in a boost for the town centre businesses and economy; and
  - An increase in the supply of affordable rented housing that can be let to eligible households on the Housing Register, including key workers in the public sector and town centre retail and leisure sectors who are currently unable to buy or rent a home in the area in which they work.
- 3.1.3 At its meeting in January 2019, Cabinet approved the principle of Belgrave House being converted into affordable rented apartments, the Council entering into a finance leasing arrangement with Legal & General, and the new homes being retained within the Housing Revenue Account and managed and maintained, on the Council's behalf, by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).
- 3.1.4 During the past 15 months, NPH has been progressing the Belgrave House scheme (on the Council's behalf) in relation to the design, planning consent and the process and cost of the acquisition and redevelopment.
- 3.1.5 Through NPH, the Council has negotiated the terms of the finance leasing scheme, appointed an external legal team to undertake legal due diligence and, subject to Cabinet approval, agreed Heads of Terms with Legal & General.
- 3.1.6 If approval is given, NPH will conclude the negotiations and recommend that the Council proceeds with the exchange of contracts. It will also develop the technical design and specification to enable it to procure a main contractor to undertake the conversion works to the property
- 3.1.7 It is anticipated that, if contracts are exchanged in July 2020, the redevelopment of Belgrave House will be able to commence in September 2020 and will take approximately 18 months to complete. This programme is subject to any ongoing impact from Covid-19 in relation to elongated programmes (to enable contractors to manage social distancing) and lead in times for materials.

## **3.2 Issues**

### Housing Revenue Account

- 3.2.1 It is proposed that the acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and that the new homes will be owned and managed within the HRA.
- 3.2.2 This will afford the Council the opportunity to subsidise the acquisition and redevelopment, and minimise the amount of borrowing required, by investing Right to Buy receipts or securing a grant from Homes England.
- 3.2.3 It is proposed that the homes will be let at affordable rents (up to 80% of the market rent) but 'capped' at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

### Acquisition of Belgrave House

- 3.2.4 Belgrave House is owned by Northampton (General Partner) Limited which is a company owned and controlled by Legal & General (L&G) and is held in L&G's Northampton Shopping Centre Limited Partnership Fund, an annuity fund that also includes the Grosvenor Shopping Centre.

3.2.5 In order to facilitate the Council's acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House, the transaction will involve the following parties:

- Northampton Shopping Centre Limited Partnership [**The Vendor**];
- Legal and General Assurance (Pensions Management) Limited Price Inflation Fund ('LPI Fund') [**The Investor**]; and
- Northampton Borough Council [**The Tenant / Purchaser**]

3.2.6 The transfer to the Council will involve four stages:

- Stage One: Legal & General will transfer (within the L&G group) control of Belgrave House from the Northampton Shopping Centre Fund to L&G's LPI Fund. (It will provide the LPI Fund with a 971 year lease until 2991);
- Stage Two: Legal & General's LPI Fund will provide the Council with a full repairing and insuring finance lease of 35 years;
- Stage Three: At the end of its 35 year lease with the Council, Legal & General's LPI Fund will assign the remainder of its lease (936 years until 2991) to the Council for £1. At that point, the Council will be leasing the Belgrave House site (at no cost) directly from L&G's Northampton Shopping Centre Fund; and
- Stage Four: In 2991, L&G's 999 year lease for the Grosvenor Centre and Belgrave House site will come to an end and, as freeholder, Northampton Borough Council (or its successor) will take possession of the site.

#### Index-linked finance lease

3.2.7 It is proposed that Belgrave House is acquired, developed and owned within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) using a long-term finance lease. Legal opinion has been sought on this and is attached as Appendix A to this report.

3.2.8 Index-linked finance leases are used widely in the housing sector as a way of funding development and, in the case of Belgrave house, this will enable the Council to draw down the capital from its Right to Buy receipts first (before drawing down the funding from Legal & General) to minimise interest costs.

3.2.9 Although the finance lease will start on the commencement of the works, no lease payments will be made for the first two years to allow time for the construction and the phased occupation of the 122 apartments.

3.2.10 The acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House will be funded through:

- A minimum of 30% funding from the HRA, of which a minimum of 30% will be in the form of Right-To-Buy receipts or a grant from Homes England; and
- A maximum of 70% funding from Legal & General, secured through an index-linked finance lease that is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and repayable over 35 years.

- 3.2.11 A contingency, proportionate to a scheme of this size and complexity, has been allowed for in the costing of the scheme.
- 3.2.12 The finance lease will be treated as a loan and will be accounted for within HRA borrowing. As the Government has removed the HRA debt cap, finance leases such as this can now be considered on their individual merits.
- 3.2.13 At the end of the 35 year lease term, the loan will have been repaid and the LPI Fund will assign its 936 year Belgrave House lease to the Council for £1.
- 3.2.14 The biggest risk of the index-linked finance lease model is ‘convergence’: when the lease costs are equal to, or more than, the rental stream and there is not enough income to cover the lease commitment and management costs.
- 3.2.15 For the Belgrave House scheme, this risk has been minimised by:
- Limiting the L&G investment to no more than 70% of overall scheme costs;
  - Ensuring that the starting interest rate is competitive and viable;
  - Applying an upper (4%) and lower limit (1%) to the annual inflationary rise;
  - Ensuring that there is sufficient headroom (42%) for maintenance, void loss, bad debt, housing management and a sinking fund for major works; and
  - Ensuring that appropriate warranties are in place to minimise major works during the lease period.
- 3.2.16 It is proposed that the homes will be let at affordable rents (up to 80% of the market rent) but capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. This will appeal to local people who are living on a low income and might otherwise have only limited housing options.
- 3.2.17 As the rents will be competitive, it is unlikely that the 122 apartments will suffer from a lack of demand and the associated lettings risk.

#### Planning and designing The Clock House

- 3.2.18 Belgrave House is situated in a very prominent position and its existing external elevations are dated. For these reasons, considerable thought has been given to how the elevations of the building and the internal layout can be significantly improved and the internal layout optimised in order to create a great place that people are proud to call home.
- 3.2.19 Although it has taken some time to reach agreement on a design that is acceptable to all of the key stakeholders (including housing, planning, highways, the police and the fire and rescue service) – with pedestrian access proving to be an especially difficult issue to resolve – agreement has been reached on the scheme design and it is hoped that the Planning Committee will be able to make a decision on the planning application in June 2020.

- 3.2.20 To create extra space and improve its overall appearance, the building will be extended vertically to provide two extra storeys, using a light gauge steel frame construction. The existing brickwork will also be cleaned.
- 3.2.21 With its strong branding and prominent location, The Clock House will have signage and wall art that introduce vibrant colours to soften the exterior of the building and help to create a focal point.



- 3.2.22 A new, lit pathway and crossing will be constructed on Greyfriars Road to enable the existing entrance to be used and provide safe pedestrian access.
- 3.2.23 The top floor of the Grosvenor Shopping Centre car park will be upgraded to enable it to be designated to the residents of The Clock House. Programmable fobs will control access to the residents' parking, the communal doors and the lifts, and residents will only be provided with fob access to their own floor.
- 3.2.24 A roof garden growing area will be established to meet the needs of people who want to grow their own food.
- 3.2.25 Internally, the layout of The Clock House will be reconfigured to create 122 apartments (70 x one-bedroom and 52 x two-bedroom), all of which will have large windows with Juliette balconies in order to maximise natural daylight.



3.2.26 The Clock House will have a staffed concierge reception area with provision for the collection of parcels and post. CCTV will cover all communal areas, including the entrances to the building.

#### Construction of The Clock House

3.2.27 It is proposed that, on completion of the Council's leasehold acquisition of Belgrave House, the redevelopment of Belgrave House will be undertaken by NPH, on behalf of the Council, as the Council's Development Agent.

3.2.28 NPH has an in-house team of quantity surveyors, building surveyors and project managers, and a supply chain for design and construction. It has appointed a design team to develop the technical design for The Clock House as soon as planning consent has been given.

3.2.29 A number of surveys have already been carried out to inform the design and construction, and to mitigate the risk of any unforeseen costs. These include topographical surveys for the external works (pathway and crossing) and structural, asbestos and drainage (CCTV) surveys.

3.2.30 Due to the interface with the rest of the Grosvenor Shopping Centre – and Sainsbury's in particular – NPH has appointed a Party Wall Surveyor who will liaise with Trowers & Hamlins (the external legal team that NPH has appointed as its legal advisors for this project) on a range of matters including the following:

- Existing and new drainage which pass through areas of the building that are not included in the area leased by the Council but need to be maintained;
- Party walls that are included in the construction programme, such as those on the ground floor of Belgrave House; and
- Areas that both parties will require shared access to on an ongoing basis.

3.2.31 As the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Logistics Plan need to be appended to the lease and be approved by L&G to mitigate any concerns regarding the continuation of operations in the Grosvenor Shopping Centre, NPH will need to enter into a pre-construction contract with the contractor ahead of the main contract.

3.2.32 NPH will instruct a Dunn and Bradstreet Credit check for assurance on the financial standing of its chosen main contractor.

3.2.33 After appointing a main contractor to undertake the works, NPH will manage the construction contract, oversee the works and manage the cost, programme and quality. NPH will maintain regular dialogue with the Grosvenor Shopping Centre Management Team to minimise disruption to the shopping centre while the construction works are being carried out.

3.2.34 Acting as the Council's Employer's Agent, NPH will enter into contract with the contractor and ensure that the contract protects the interests of the Council, L&G as the funder and NPH as the employer. It will do this in a variety of ways, not limited to but including the following:

- Collateral warranties with the main contractor and the sub-contractors, providing for a duty of care to be extended to the Council and L&G
  - A performance bond
  - Step-in rights if the contractor is unable to complete the works
  - A 2.5% retention during the 12 months defect liability period
- 3.2.35 On completion of the development, the Council will have the benefit of a 12-months defect period and, during this period, regular site visits will be carried out jointly by NPH and the contractor (to deal with any defects as they arise) and the Council will hold a 2.5% retention of the final contract sum until the defect period is complete.
- 3.2.36 The works will be covered by a 10 year NHBC (or similar) warranty. Certain products may have longer warranties which the Council can also benefit from should the need arise.
- 3.2.37 At the end of the defect period, NPH's Maintenance Team will take on the responsibility for all repairs and maintenance at The Clock House.
- 3.2.38 An 18-month construction period has been allowed for. Although the programme is subject to any ongoing impact from Covid-19 in relation to elongated programmes (to enable contractors to manage social distancing) and lead in times for materials, the programme is prudent and will help minimise any disruption to the Grosvenor Shopping Centre. It will also allow for some out of hours working, subject to the agreement of the Council's Planning Service.
- 3.2.39 NPH will lease from the Council a piece of land on the opposite side of the road (on the former bus station site) to use as a site compound.

#### Housing management

- 3.2.40 On completion of the redevelopment, NPH will act as the Council's managing agent for the 122 homes in The Clock House, undertaking the letting, management, maintenance and rent collection functions for the Council.
- 3.2.41 In view of the scheme's town centre location, the high density of the apartments and the anticipated service needs of the tenants, a concierge model of housing management is proposed for The Clock House.
- 3.2.42 Additional security measures will be in place for the safety and reassurance of residents, staff and visitors. These measures include CCTV, security lighting and programmed fob access to the car park, the building and each floor.

#### Local Lettings Policy

- 3.2.43 Due to its proximity to local services, employment and public transport, The Clock House is situated in a good location and ideally suited to people who are working within walking distance of Northampton's town centre.

- 3.2.44 When the construction works are complete, The Clock House will provide 70 one-bedroom apartments and 52 two-bedroom apartments for eligible households on the Housing Register.
- 3.2.45 In order to help establish a mixed and sustainable community in The Clock House, it is proposed that a Local Lettings Policy is introduced to determine the way in which the 122 homes are allocated.
- 3.2.46 The homes will be allocated to people working for key employers (in the public sector and private sector) who are working within walking distance of the town centre. These employers will include, for example, Northampton General Hospital, Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, West Northamptonshire Council and local retail and leisure businesses.
- 3.2.47 It is anticipated that, in addition to helping to meet the need for an increased supply of affordable rented housing, the Local Lettings Policy will support the local economy – by increasing the number of people who are living in the town centre and using local shops and leisure facilities – and reduce car use by enabling people to walk or cycle to work.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

#### Option 1 (recommended)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet can choose to approve the leasehold acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House. This option is recommended because Belgrave House offers the Council and NPH an excellent opportunity to increase Northampton's supply of affordable rented accommodation and support the local economy and the regeneration of the town centre.

#### Option 2 (not recommended)

- 3.3.2 Cabinet can choose to do nothing. This option is not recommended because there is an urgent need to increase the supply of affordable rented housing and to regenerate the town centre.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

- 4.1.1 The leasehold acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House as affordable rented housing for eligible households on the Housing Register will help the Council to meet its policy objectives of maximising the supply of affordable housing, supporting the local economy and regenerating the town centre.
- 4.1.2 It supports the three strategic priorities in the Corporate Plan 2019 –2021:
- A stronger economy;
  - Resilient Communities; and
  - Exceptional services to be proud of.

## 4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 As reported in Exempt Appendix B, the financial viability of the leasehold acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House has been appraised by NPH and reviewed by the Council's Finance Team, using the ALMO Appraisal Model and based on current assumptions, taking into account the following:
- The total scheme costs (detailed in Exempt Appendix B);
  - A 30% subsidy provided by the use of Right to Buy receipts. Alternatively, the Council could use its Registered Provider status to bid for Homes England funding to support the Belgrave House scheme;
  - Interest rate on borrowing;
  - Management and maintenance costs; and
  - Affordable rents (up to 80% of the market rent, based on an independent valuation) but 'capped' at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.
- 4.2.2 The financial appraisal calculates the value in present day terms of the various cash inflows and outflows expected to arise at differing periods in the future, this is called the Net Present Value (NPV).
- 4.2.3 The ALMO Appraisal has shown the Belgrave House scheme has a positive Net Present Value (NPV) over 40 years and a payback period of 18 years.
- 4.2.4 The accounting treatment of local authority leases is governed by International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 which states that, from 1 January 2019, local authorities must treat all leases (unless they are for less than 12 months or the underlying asset is of low value) as finance leases.
- 4.2.5 This means that local authorities must recognise the asset value and the liability for the lease payments within their balance sheets. In this case, the asset is a housing asset as prescribed within Part II of the Housing Act 1985.
- 4.2.6 The Housing Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) refers to that part of the Council's requirement for capital which relates to the borrowing or credit arrangements used to finance capital expenditure on housing assets. For this scheme the Housing CFR will increase by the value of the lease.
- 4.2.7 As well as the definition of the Housing CFR, the legislation includes 'Charges under credit arrangements', described as meaning charges related to the financing of capital expenditure on any interest in housing land where authorities make payments. This covers leases and would apply in respect of the proposed L&G lease. However, the HCFR does not result in additional interest charges because there are no interest-bearing loans under this scheme. Until the lifting of the HRA debt cap in 2018, the increase in the HCFR would have been of material consequence because it would have reduced NBC's borrowing headroom.

- 4.2.8 The financial viability of the scheme – funded up to 70% by L&G through an index-linked finance lease – has also been appraised by NPH and the Council's Finance Team with an external review by GL Hearn.
- 4.2.9 Sensitivity analysis has been undertaken on the 35 year finance lease to understand the impact of inflationary changes in order to mitigate any risk of convergence.
- 4.2.10 The commercially sensitive aspects of the financial proposal are attached as Exempt Appendix B to this report.
- 4.2.11 A RICS Red Book Valuation is attached as Exempt Appendix C to this report.

### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 The Council has power pursuant to Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.
- 4.3.2 A "Finance Lease" is a financing method employed ordinarily to secure the acquisition of a single asset with a large cost. In essence, under the proposed acquisition L&G is not purchasing an asset for the benefit of the Council but will instead be providing the funding to the Council to secure the re-development of its existing asset for the future use of the Council.
- 4.3.3 As outlined under paragraph 3.2.5 above, under the acquisition process L&G will retain the freehold ownership of Belgrave House and the Council will acquire a leasehold interest in Belgrave House from L&G's LPI Fund. For the Council, the proposal at this point in time will secure exclusive possession in for the term of the finance lease. Provided the Council comply with the terms of the finance lease an assignment of the lease will be granted to the Council for a term of 936 years. At the end of that period of time as a result of the principle of unity of ownership (where one party holds both the leasehold and freehold of a property) the leasehold element will fall away, and Belgrave House will be in the freehold ownership of the Council.
- 4.3.4 It is noted, from paragraph 3.2.27 to paragraph 3.2.39 above, that NPH will undertake the redevelopment of Belgrave House. It is essential, therefore, that the Council satisfies itself that NPH has undertaken all necessary steps with its chosen contractors to mitigate the level of exposure the Council may be subject to as a consequence of the Coronavirus Pandemic, particularly around the issue of force majeure, and that appropriate steps have been taken as part of the contractual process to limit so far as is possible the impact of same on the redevelopment of Belgrave House, and to protect the Council so far as possible from potential contractor collapse in advance of entering into the main construction contract with the contractor
- 4.3.5 It is also understood by the Council's legal services that as part of the scheme NPH has undertaken a Red Book Valuation of Belgrave House, a copy of which forms part of the annexures of this report. Legal Services have been advised that pursuant to a letter provided to the Council, (addressed to NPH dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020 from the valuers instructed by NPH) that the letter confirms that the valuers have agreed that the report provided to NPH can be relied upon by the Council for the purposes of acquisition only and that that the Council as a third party accepts the report in its presented form and is subject to the terms and

conditions as set out in the Scope of Works letter agreed previously between NPH and the valuers. It is therefore important to note that the liability with respect to the Council in relation to the valuation report has been both qualified and is also subject to a liability cap in the event that the Council wish at a future date to pursue a claim against the valuers with respect to the valuation provided.

- 4.3.6 It is noted that the Red Book Valuation referred to at paragraph 4.3.6 above is a Desktop Valuation this is performed without a physical inspection and is based on consideration of publicly available documentation on the assumption that the property is in good condition. Allied to the recent government guidance issued and referred to at paragraph 4.3.8 below an assessment of the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the valuation of Belgrave House and the effect on government funding should form part of the due diligence exercise to be undertaken.
- 4.3.7 As part of its role in this scheme, NPH will instruct and fund an external legal firm to support the scheme's legal requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, the legal firm has issued a letter confirming the Council can rely on the advice, (subject to legal firms' terms and conditions) given to NPH as if it were directed to the Council in relation to the transaction.
- 4.3.8 The Government has recently issued guidance on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on local authority decision making and the guidance suggests that local authorities should consider any decision to be made (which is likely to have a significant impact on its community) from the perspective of whether the decision to be made can still be considered to be the proper utilisation of available Council resources in light of the pandemic. A consideration of this issue should form part of the due diligence exercise referred to at paragraph 2.1 (c) above, and the issue referred back to Cabinet for determination if deemed necessary.

#### **4.4 Equality and Health**

- 4.4.1 The action proposed in this report will help to improve the housing conditions and life chances of people with protected characteristics, including people with disabilities and families with children. They will therefore have a positive impact on Equality and Diversity.
- 4.4.2 Maximising the supply of new homes is part of the Council's commitment to improving communities and our town as a place to live.
- 4.4.3 When developing the Local Lettings Policy, the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Duty and will continue to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and help to create a fairer society.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

- 4.5.1 The Senior Management Teams of the Council and NPH have worked collaboratively on the proposed redevelopment of Belgrave House.
- 4.5.2 Consultation on the proposed redevelopment of Belgrave House was carried out in relation to the planning application.

4.5.3 Consultation with local employers has commenced in relation to the housing needs of employees and how the 122 homes in The Clock House will be allocated through the Local Lettings Policy.

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

4.6.1 The action proposed in this report will help meet 5 of the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2019 - 2021:

- More homes, better homes
- Shaping place and driving growth
- Creating a thriving and vibrant town
- Spending your money wisely
- Putting the customer first

#### **4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)**

4.7.1 The specification for The Clock House included the following:

- PV panels to the roof as a form of renewable energy for the communal heating, lighting, CCTV and door entry system
- Bicycle storage on every floor of the building
- Recycling provision on every floor of the building
- LED (light emitting diode) energy saving lighting is to be used in the communal areas

4.7.2 Although parking spaces are available in the proposed scheme, the town centre location is likely to reduce the need for car use.

4.7.3 NPH will produce a 'new home' pack which will include energy saving tips for new residents.

#### **4.8 Other Implications**

4.8.1 There are no other implications.

### **5. Background Papers**

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Corporate Plan 2019 – 2021

Cabinet Report, 'Opportunity to redevelop Belgrave House as affordable rented housing for key workers', 16 January 2019

### **6. Appendices**

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Appendix A – Legal Opinion on Acquisition and Development within the HRA  
Appendix B – Exempt Financial Information and Appraisal  
Appendix C – Exempt Red Book Valuation Report

## 7. Next Steps

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7.1 The following table provides an indicative summary of the next steps if Cabinet approves the leasehold acquisition and redevelopment of Belgrave House:

:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
<b>May - June 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning approval</li><li>• Final contract negotiations following Cabinet approval to proceed.</li><li>• Pre-construction contract with contractor: CEMP and Logistics Plan agreed</li><li>• Design development: technical design finalised</li><li>• Erection of hoarding to compound</li></ul>
<b>July 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contractor appointment: Construction cost confirmed</li><li>• Lease finalised with L&amp;G</li></ul>
<b>July – Aug 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contractor mobilisation</li></ul>
<b>September 2020 – March 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction progresses with phased payments to follow construction milestones.</li><li>• Local Lettings Policy finalised</li><li>• Service charge and rent schedule finalised</li><li>• New tenancy agreements finalised</li></ul>
<b>March 2022</b>	Scheme completion.
<b>April – June 2022</b>	New tenants move into The Clock House
<b>March 2023</b>	Defects period complete

**Phil Harris**  
**Director of Housing and Wellbeing**  
**01604 837871**

## Appendices

Annex 1 – 6 and  
indicative plans of  
land



## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Community Asset Transfers – Open Space and Community Centres, Parish Councils</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS:**                      **Public**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Yes
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Service Area:</b>	Regeneration and Enterprise
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Tim Hadland, Member for Regeneration and Enterprise
<b>Ward(s)</b>	New Duston Ward, Old Duston Ward, East Hunsbury Ward, Nene Valley Ward, Billing Ward

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 This report recommends the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the community property and land set out in annex 1 - 5 of this report to the respective Parish Councils. It outlines the process of due diligence undertaken to date and proposes the terms to take the sites forward through to completion.

### 2. Recommendations

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It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Cabinet delegates authority to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to complete the transfers of Public Open Spaces and Community Centres to the Parish Councils on the following terms:-

- That there is a restrictive covenant placed on the land and centres to ensure that they continue to be used as intended for community use.
- That the Council will continue to provide grass cutting services where there are existing contracts until June 2028 but thereafter the Parish Council will assume this responsibility.
- The Parish Councils will take on all other responsibilities for the land and centres at completion of the community asset transfer.
- The Council to retain a right of pre-emption should the Parish Council no longer require the land or centres for permitted use.
- There will be an independent valuation process undertaken by a RICS qualified valuer to determine market price completed for all assets to be transferred.
- The independent market valuation will consider the financial benefit of the grass cutting contract, the management and maintenance costs, the restrictive covenant, and where relevant, the council tax charges collected on behalf of the Parishes for services provided in the Parish Council areas. A net market value will be determined, and the transfer price will be agreed considering any value for money savings that will be achieved by the transfer.
- Each party will bear their own professional fees including legal and estates costs.
- The transfer will be subject to advertisement to adhere to statutory requirements to allow members of the public opportunity to comment. These comments will be reviewed by the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and should there be no objections to the proposed disposal the matter will complete. If there are any objections received to the proposed disposal then in accordance with statutory procedure the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report Background**

- 3.1.1 The Council is the freehold owner of community land and property, held for social, recreational and community group use.
- 3.1.2 The Council has an extensive asset base but with reducing budgets and resources, has a duty to review land holdings, not only to reduce the cost of the holdings, but also to determine the best way to secure their future.
- 3.1.3 Several Cabinet reports have considered the maintenance and ownership of community held land and resolved that some community assets are best managed in the longer term by the communities that they serve, owned and administered by the Parish Councils. However, the proposal to create two unitary councils in Northamptonshire requires the Council to co-operate in the creation of West Northamptonshire Council and consider the impact of these transfers as part of the unification process.
- 3.1.4 The Council confirms that it will only transfer community assets where there is no detrimental effect on West Northamptonshire Council and give assurance

that suitable due diligence has been undertaken to assess the capability of the receiving Parish Council .

3.1.5 The Parish Councils were invited to express an interest in the community land and assets in their area and many sites were identified. Of these, the assets team have reviewed and agreed in principle to progress a limited proportion, to ensure that the Parish Council does not overstretch themselves financially and/or practically with the management of the property and land.

3.1.6 Each area of land has had the following assessment: -

- An initial land use assessment, to check the planning policy and assets register agree on the community status and that the intention is for the property and land to remain as community assets in perpetuity.
- Initial legal checks to determine sensible boundaries for the transfer of land, identifying any restrictive covenants (for public rights of way and other restrictions that support community use) and any other contractual obligations that run with the land.
- Meetings with the Parish Clerks to discuss and understand their resources for ongoing management, address any concerns of a practical nature. Part of these discussions involved understanding the vision for the land and property, to learn about the local volunteers and community support that is available to assist the Parish Councils.

3.1.7 The community centres have been reviewed with the Parish Councils to gain an understanding of the current situation and, where there are tenants involved, to check that the Parish Council has consulted them with their plans of ownership and that the tenants agree in principle. The community assets proposed for transfer are in all cases supported by the Parish Councils, either directly or indirectly and part of the transfer process includes ensuring the Parish Council understands their responsibilities and liabilities as Landlord.

3.1.8 Where the Parish Council is the tenant of the community centre, the lease will dissolve upon completion, as a result of common ownership (i.e the leasehold and the freeholder are vested in one person in the same capacity)

3.1.9 The community centres are not held to earn income, or as development sites, the annexures attached provides key information on each one. However, an independent valuation will be undertaken as part of the transfer process to ensure the Council considers the statutory requirement for best consideration.

3.1.10 This process has led the Council to conclude that the community asset transfer of the property and land annexed to this report will have a positive effect on the communities they serve, and that being owned and controlled by the Parish Councils this will facilitate proactive management and recreational use of the sites.

3.1.11 The Council have also concluded that the transfers will not have a detrimental effect on West Northamptonshire Council and will benefit from savings in the longer term. None of these assets are required for the delivery of statutory

services, nor to generate income, and this is unlikely to change in the reasonably foreseeable future.

3.1.12 Public sector organisations may transfer property among themselves without placing the asset on the open market, provided they do so at market prices and in appropriate circumstances\*. They should follow the guidelines including: -

- Value assets at market prices
- Work collaboratively to agree the price
- Take legal advice
- The terms should not normally involve neither clawback (the rights to share disposal proceeds) or overage (rights to share future profits on disposal)

3.1.13 The transfer process follows these guidelines. The subject of overage was discussed in the Cabinet Report entitled “Community Asset Transfer of Cherry Orchard” on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 when Cabinet determined the terms of the transfer of Cherry Orchard, and the Cabinet Report concluded that overage was not an appropriate mechanism for this type of asset or this type of transfer.

3.1.14 As a reminder, overage is a means by which owners can be encouraged to sell land to those who are better able to achieve an uplift in the value of the land sold and are better placed to obtain any planning permission which is needed to achieve that uplift. They can be protracted to negotiate and particularly complex the longer the period of that the overage is to cover. They should only be used to promote development and where there is an expectation that the land may be brought forward for development

3.1.15 Key information on each asset, can be found on the annexures to this report but a summary of the assets under transfer is provided below for reference:

- a) Land adjacent to Little Billing Pocket Park (adjacent to site owned by Billing Parish Council)
- b) Ecton Brook Playing Fields
- c) Bellinge Community House
- d) Bellinge Community Centre
- e) Errington Park
- f) Grafton Way Park
- g) Melbourne Lane Open Space
- h) Mendip Park
- i) Blackymore Open Space and Community Centre
- j) Grangewood Park
- k) Penn Valley Park (Penvale Park)
- l) The Elgar Centre (includes land)
- m) St Crispin Community Centre (includes land)
- n) Farmclose Road Green
- o) Park from Curtlee Hill to Quinton Road
- p) Land Tudor Court to Curtlee Hill

- To provide greater assurance of the intentions to keep the asset for community purposes, the conveyance will include a restriction on the title to ensure the property and or land continues to be used as its existing use (public open spaces or community centres as appropriate) the main permitted use is for recreational use.
- There will also be a right of pre-emption should the Parish no longer require the land or centres for permitted use.

3.1.16 Where the transfer is public land the process includes the requirement by statute to advertise the disposal by public media, to allow members of the public to comment, and the Council will comply with its statutory obligations as outlined below at paragraph 4.3.2

### **3.2 Issues**

3.2.1 The land and centres are intended to remain as public open spaces and community centres. The proposed transfer will contain the appropriate restrictions on the use of the land to ensure that it is not used for other purposes. The land and centres will be transferred subject to any existing public rights of way and title covenants.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

3.3.1 The Council could retain ownership of this area of public open space and community centres. This would negatively impact Council resources, both financially and operationally, continuing to hold this size of portfolio is not sustainable. Additionally, retaining ownership does not support the drive to transfer community asset into local ownership.

3.3.2 The Council could retain ownership of this area of public open space and centres granting a peppercorn long leasehold interest in the land to the Parish Councils. The landlord and tenant leasehold mechanisms were not designed for this purpose, it would not achieve any more control over the land may increase the amount of legal, estates and operational management costs.

3.3.3 The recommended option is to transfer the sites based on the recommendation above.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

4.1.1 This report sits within the policy determining community asset transfer to Parish Councils will be on a Freehold basis. See Cabinet Report entitled "Transfer of Land and Open Space to Parish Councils" dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 which amended the Council Owned Asset Strategy adopted by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 These community assets are held on the council asset register with a nominal capital value, reflecting the existing use. To ensure the transfers achieve value for money a market valuation will be completed and Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Borough Secretary, Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise will authorise the transfer.
- 4.2.2 Each Council will pay their own legal estates costs.
- 4.2.3 Northampton Borough Council also charge special expenses for the maintenance of their parks and open spaces as part of the Council Tax. These costs will be factored into the valuation to assist in determining the market value and the transfer price. The Council may continue to charge the special expenses where grass cutting services are provided and each site will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 4.2.4 All contractual open space grounds maintenance costs will be determined and factored into the market valuation to ensure the Council achieves value for money.

## **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 Pursuant to the provisions of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) under s123 (1) LGA 1972 the Council has the power to dispose of land in any manner it wishes subject to a caveat under s123(2) of the LGA 1972 which states that the land must be sold at the best reasonably obtainable price, It follows therefore that the Council as trustee in relation to the land it holds on behalf of the community has a statutory duty to sell the land at the best price reasonably obtainable, unless the exception under the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 applies.
- 4.3.2 In addition to the above there are further procedural steps that the Council are required to comply with in order to meet its statutory duty under s.123 LGA 1972. Pursuant to s.123 (2A) of the LGA 1972 in advance of any final decision to dispose of any open space land the Council must first advertise its intention to do so in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and thereafter consider any objections received.
- 4.3.3 When considering the question of best price that can reasonably be obtained the Council may have regard to ethical as well as commercial considerations, however although such considerations may be a factor in deciding to sell at a certain price they must be in balance.
- 4.3.4 It is noted that the independent market valuation referred to above will take into account a number of factors as part of the independent market valuation. Where such factors form a material part of the consideration, (ie require the Parish Council to assume onerous obligations such as a restrictive covenant) it is likely to be a sale at an undervalue.

4.3.5 As noted in paragraph 4.3.1 above, the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 provides consent for the Council to dispose of land for less than best consideration that can reasonably be obtained where the Council considers the purpose of disposal at less than best price will achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing for the area and/or local residents, subject to the caveat that in all cases disposal at less than best consideration that the undervalue does not exceed £2,000,000 (2 Million)

4.3.6 Notwithstanding paragraph 4.3.5 above, the Council nonetheless needs to ensure that it complies with normal prudent commercial practices and obtain an independent market valuation which sets out the unrestricted value (best price reasonably obtainable) the restricted value together with the value of the conditions. This will ensure that the monetary value had been taken into account by the Council.

4.3.7 In relation to the proposed terms referred to at paragraph 3.1.7 above; -

#### A restrictive covenant

As noted above it is possible for the Council to restrict the use of the land to be transferred to the Parish Councils, and such a restrictive covenant will be enforceable between the original contracting parties as a matter of contract.

#### Restriction noted on the Parish Council's Title

The Parish Council will be required to register an entry on the proprietorship register of their title which will have the effect of restricting the registration any disposition that the Parish Council may wish to make without the consent of the Council.

The presence of such a restriction will ensure that the Parish Council continues to comply with the obligations placed upon by the Council, and ensure no disposition can be registered with HM Land Registry unless the restriction has been complied with.

#### A right of pre-emption

This can also be known as a "right of first refusal". Such a right will ensure that should the Parish Council wish to dispose of the land the Council will have the first opportunity to take the land back from the Parish Council should the Council wish to exercise its right so to do.

## **4.4 Equality and Health**

4.4.1 There are no equality issues identified. The land and property would remain accessible to the public and be available for all groups in the community to use.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

- 4.5.1 Corporate Management Board, Legal, Environmental Services, Community Safety, Assets, Planning, New Duston Ward, Old Duston Ward, East Hunsbury Ward, Nene Valley Ward and Billing Ward Councillors.
- 4.2.1 Bellinge Community House Board of Trustees have been consulted about the transfer to Billing Parish Council and given their full agreement to the proposal.
- 4.2.2 Billing Parish Council have held preliminary discussions with Community Spaces Northampton (CSN) who are the tenant of Bellinge Community Centre and have given their support to the transfer of the freehold to the Parish Council. Billing Parish Council have agreed to honour the rent concession provided for in the side letter to the lease, so that the rent passing for CSN remains at £240.00.

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

- 4.6.1 The proposals support the Corporate Plan, specifically our strategic priority to create resilient communities.

#### **4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)**

- 4.7.1 There are no environmental implications identified.

#### **4.8 Other Implications**

- 4.7.1 None

#### **5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 \*HM Treasury, Managing Public Money, Annex 4.15, Asset Management
- 5.2 Cabinet Report January 2020

#### **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1 Should Cabinet agree to the transfer, following the call-in period and should there be no issues, the transfer will complete.
- 6.2 Should Cabinet agree to the transfer, following advertisement of the transfer of public space following statutory guidelines, should there be no significant concerns, the transfer will complete.
- 6.3 Should Cabinet agree to the transfer and subject to satisfactory completion of 6.1 and 6.2, the transfer will complete on the terms recommended above.

**Kevin Langley**  
**Economic, Growth & Regeneration Manager**  
**klangley@northampton.gov.uk**

### Annex 1 Areas of Land

<b>Billing Parish Council</b>				<b>Hectares</b>
Land adjacent to Little Billing Pocket Park				1.67
Ecton Brook Playing Fields				3.935
<b>Duston Parish Council</b>				
Errington Park				3.747
Grafton Way Park				0.799
Melbourne Lane Open Space				0.301
Mendip Park				1.493
<b>East Hunsbury</b>				
Grangewood Park				8.228
Penn Valley Park				6.501
Blackymore Open Space *				2.806
<b>Upton</b>				
St Crispins Land (part of Community Centre lease)*				8.951
The Elgar Centre Land (part of community centre tenancy)*				
<b>Wootton</b>				
Farmclose Road Green				0.483
Park from Curtlee Hill to Quinton Road				1.673
Tudor Court to Curtlee Hill				3.553
<b>Capital Values</b>		£1*		
<b>Planning Policy</b>	23 & 24			
<b>Current Use Asset Register</b>	Community Land			

- Where the land forms part of a tenancy this will be valued as part of the tenancy and does not form a separate valuation as land.

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## Annex 2

<b>Transferee</b>	Billing Parish Council	<b>Term Commencement Date</b>	21 Years from and including the 1st day of August 2002
		<b>End Date</b>	01/08/2023. Tenant has option to renew for further 21 years.
		<b>S24 - 28 L&amp;T act</b>	Yes
<b>Description of Property:</b>	Bellinge Community House	<b>Tenant</b>	Bellinge Community House Project
		<b>Rent</b>	One Peppercorn Per Year
		<b>Landlord repair and maintenance obligations</b>	The lease requires the Landlord to repair and maintain ( and renew where necessary) the structure and roof, the fixtures and fittings, together with all fences, hedges, boundary walls, gutters, downpipes, window frames, external windows and doors with no mechanism for recharging costs to tenants.
URN Number:	60705		
Address	Fieldmill Square NN3 9AQ	<b>Comments</b>	The lease confirms that the Council contributed £70,000 towards the construction of the building.
Title	NN14979		
Current Use	Community - Office. Run by Manager and Board of trustees. The Centre provides guidance and support to local communities, including education, youth work and other activities.		Billing Parish Council provide £18,000 pa through its precept for operational purposes
Size of Land to be transferred	150.016 sqm		
Planning Policy	Policy 19 - Neighbourhood Centres		

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## Annex 3

<b>Transferee</b>	Billing Parish Council	Term Commencement Date	30 Years from and including 1st March 2012
		End Date	Mar-42
		S24 - 28 L&T act	Excluded
<b>Description of Property</b>	Bellinge Community Centre	Tenant	Community Spaces Northampton
		Rent Passing	£240.00
		Comments	The lease will not be affected by the freehold transfer. There is the option for the landlord to serve notice to redevelop the site but with the caveat that the landlord would need to provide alternative accommodation, of a similar size and location and with a lease on similar terms. <b>Note this property shares a party wall and site with Bellinge Community House, which is let under a long lease with no provision to break for redevelopment. This would make any redevelopment plans more difficult and costly to achieve.</b>
URN Number:	60026		
Address	Fieldmill Square NN3 9AQ		
Title	NN14979	Management Agreement	29th Feb 2012 for term of 30 years
Current Use	Community Use		NBC can terminate this premises from the management agreement but CSN will still have the security of the property under the terms of the lease.
Size of Land to be transferred	488.593 sqm	Side Letter	The tenant to provide community services for the Council and the Council therefore grants a rent concession. The rent passing of £6200 reduces to £240.00 pa
Planning Policy	Policy 19 - Neighbourhood Centre		Rights to use of NBC car park will be continued post transfer

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## Annex 4

<b>Transferee</b>	East Hunsbury Parish Council	Term Commencement Date	38 Years from and including the first day of July 1996
		End Date	Jul-34
		S24 - 28 L&T act	Yes
<b>Description of Property:</b>	Blackymore Community Centre	Tenant	Wootton Parish Council (boundary change has in effect passed the least to East Hunsbury Parish Council)
		Rent	One Peppercorn Per Year
URN Number:	60047		
Address	Butts Croft Close NN4 0WP	Comments	The parish council holds the property under a full repairing lease.
Title	NN165690 - Title includes other side of Rowtree Road and above Butts Lane		Note the play area has equipment
Current Use	Community Centre, Park - Open Space		
Size of Land to be transferred	n/a		
Planning Policy	Community Use		

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Annex 5

<b>Transferee</b>	Upton Parish Council	Term Commencement Date	Tenancy at Will dated 28 April 2011
		End Date	Either party may serve notice
		S24 - 28 L&T act	May have acquired rights due to length of agreement and exclusive nature.
<b>Description of Property:</b>	The Elgar Centre	Tenant	The Elgar Centre Ltd
		Rent	One Peppercorn Per Year
URN Number:	tbc		
Address	1A High Street, Northampton, NN5 4EN	Comments	
Title	tbc		Note The land surrounding the Centre forms part of the tenancy at will.
Current Use	Community Centre and land		
Size of Land to be transferred	tbc		
Planning Policy	Community Use		

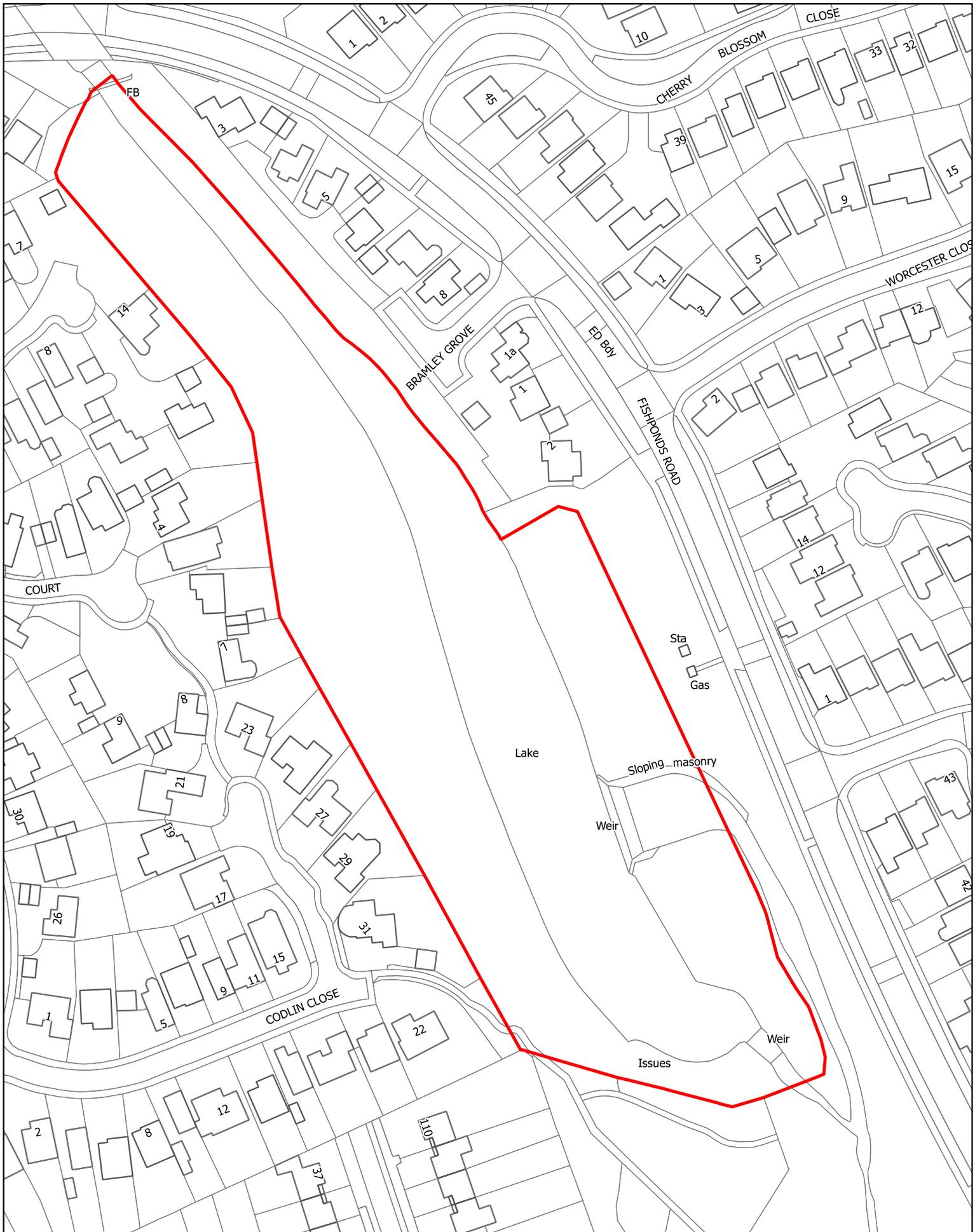
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Annex 6

181

<b>Transferee</b>	Upton Parish Council	Term Commencement Date	Tenancy at Will dated 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
		End Date	See comment below
		S24 - 28 L&T act	See comment below
<b>Description of Property:</b>	St Crispin Centre	Tenant	Community Spaces Northampton
		Rent	One Peppercorn Per Year
URN Number:	tbc		
Address	St Crispin Drive, Northampton. NN5 4GJ	Comments	The centre and land identified in the tenancy at will are to be transferred to Community Spaces Northampton in a lease which should complete very soon. The tenant's rights will not be affected by the freehold transfer.
Title	tbc		
Current Use	Community Centre and land		
Size of Land to be transferred	8.951 ha		
Planning Policy	Community Use		

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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Land adj to Little Billing Pocket Park**

**183**

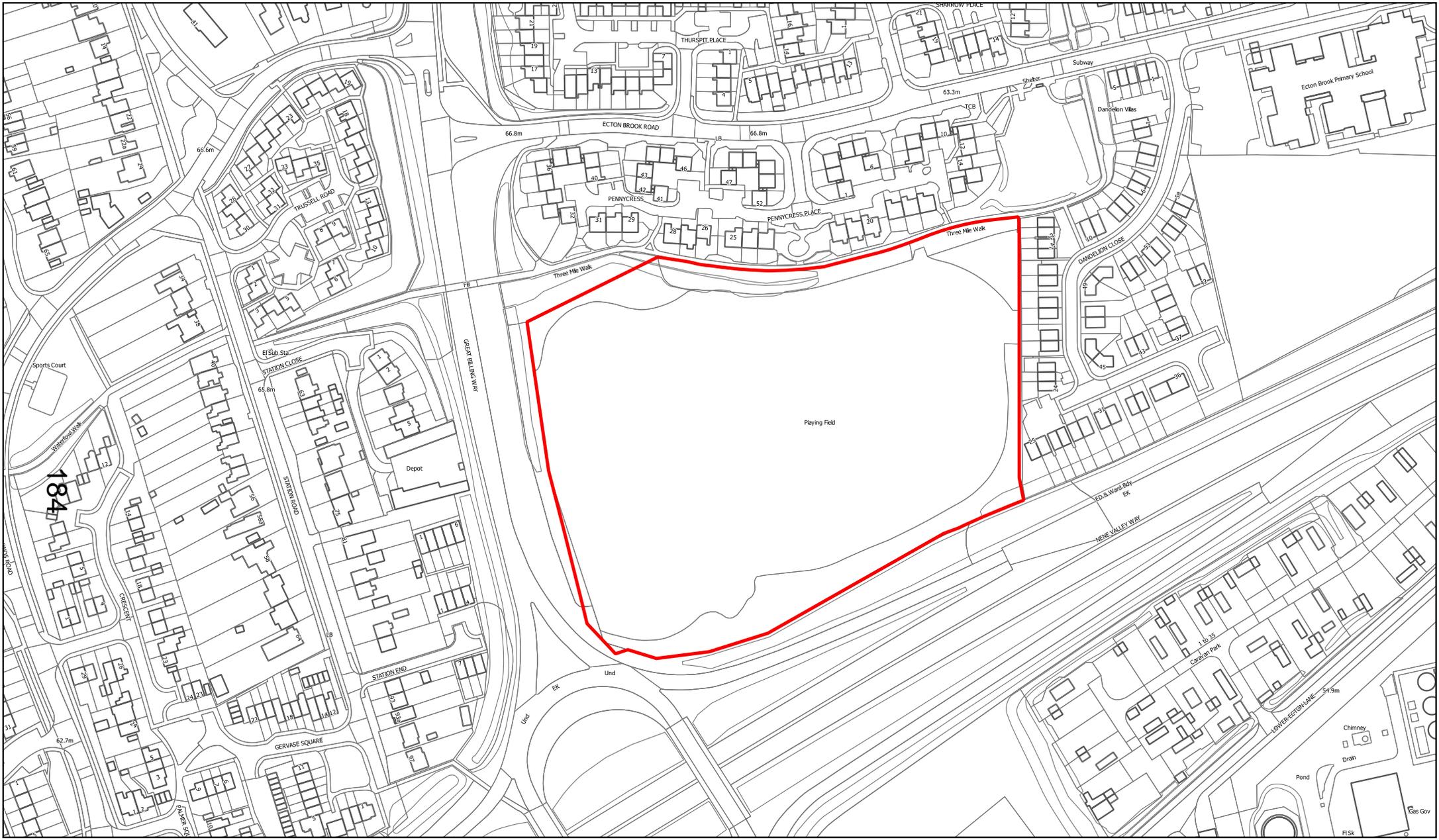
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Date: 16-04-2020

Scale: 1:1,250

Drawn by: LP





**Title: Ecton Brook Playing Fields**

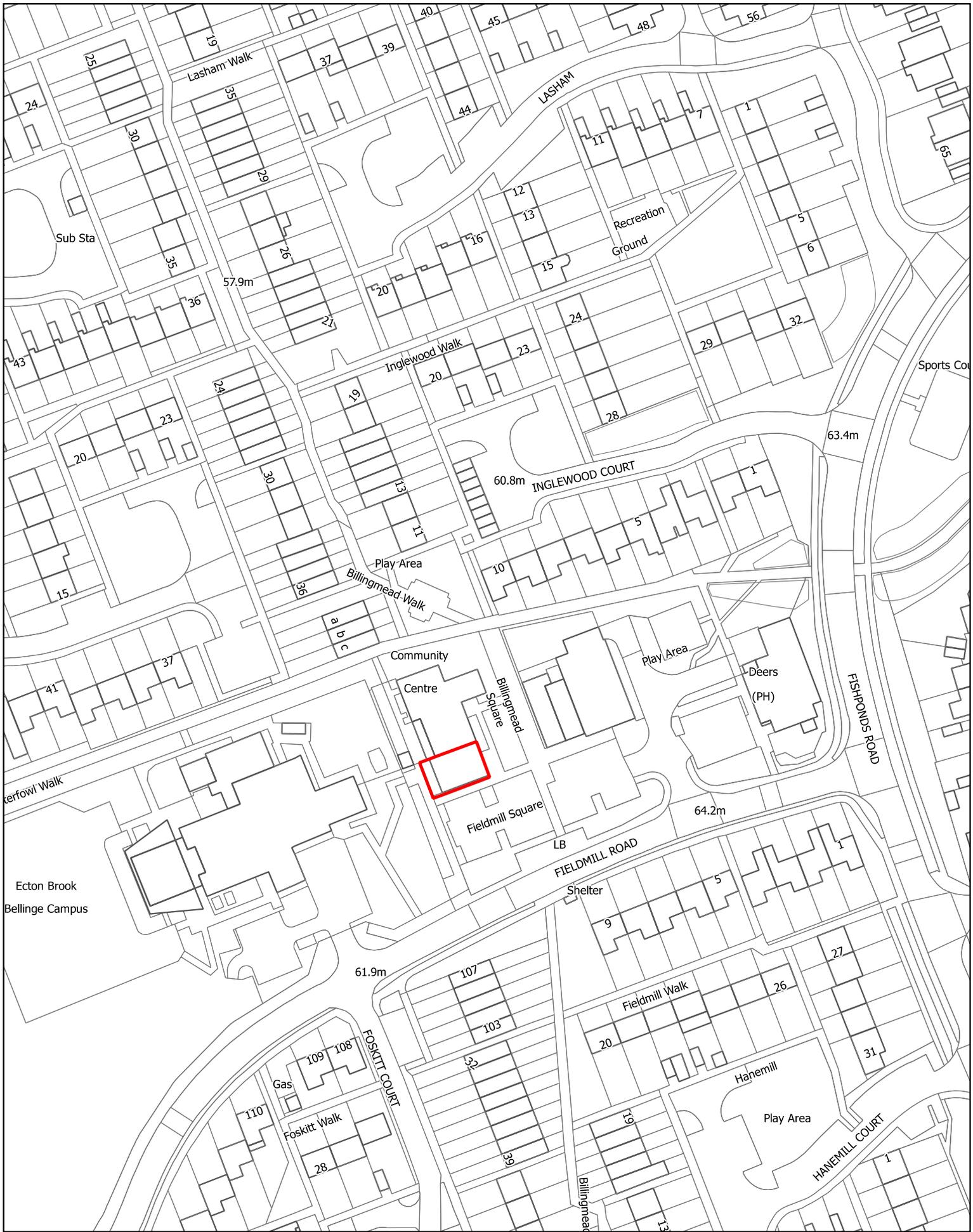
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**Date:** 16-04-2020

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Drawn by:** LP

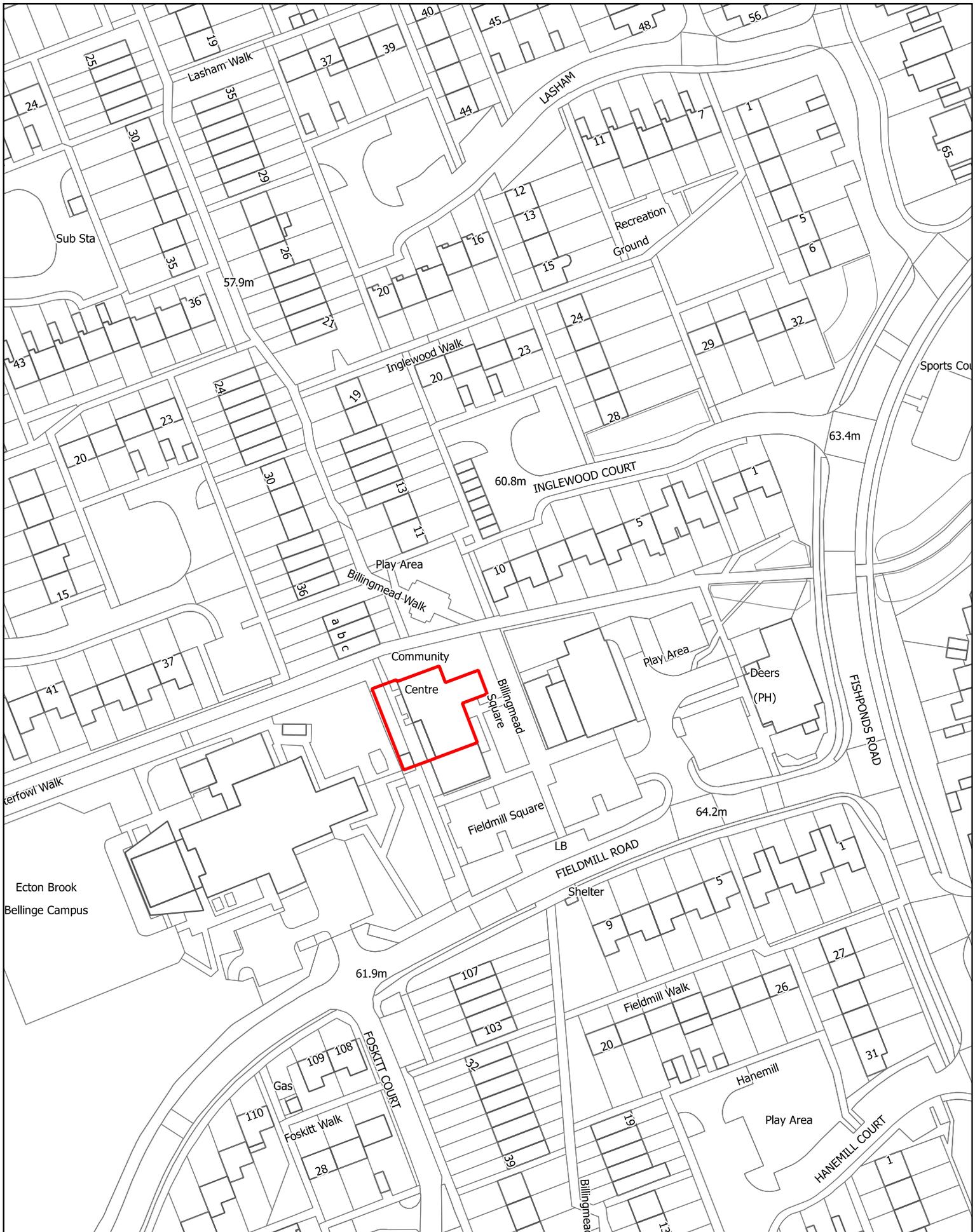




Title: **Bellinge Community House**  
**185**  
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Date: 16-04-2020  
 Scale: 1:1,250  
 Drawn by: LP





Title: **Belling Community Centre**

**186**

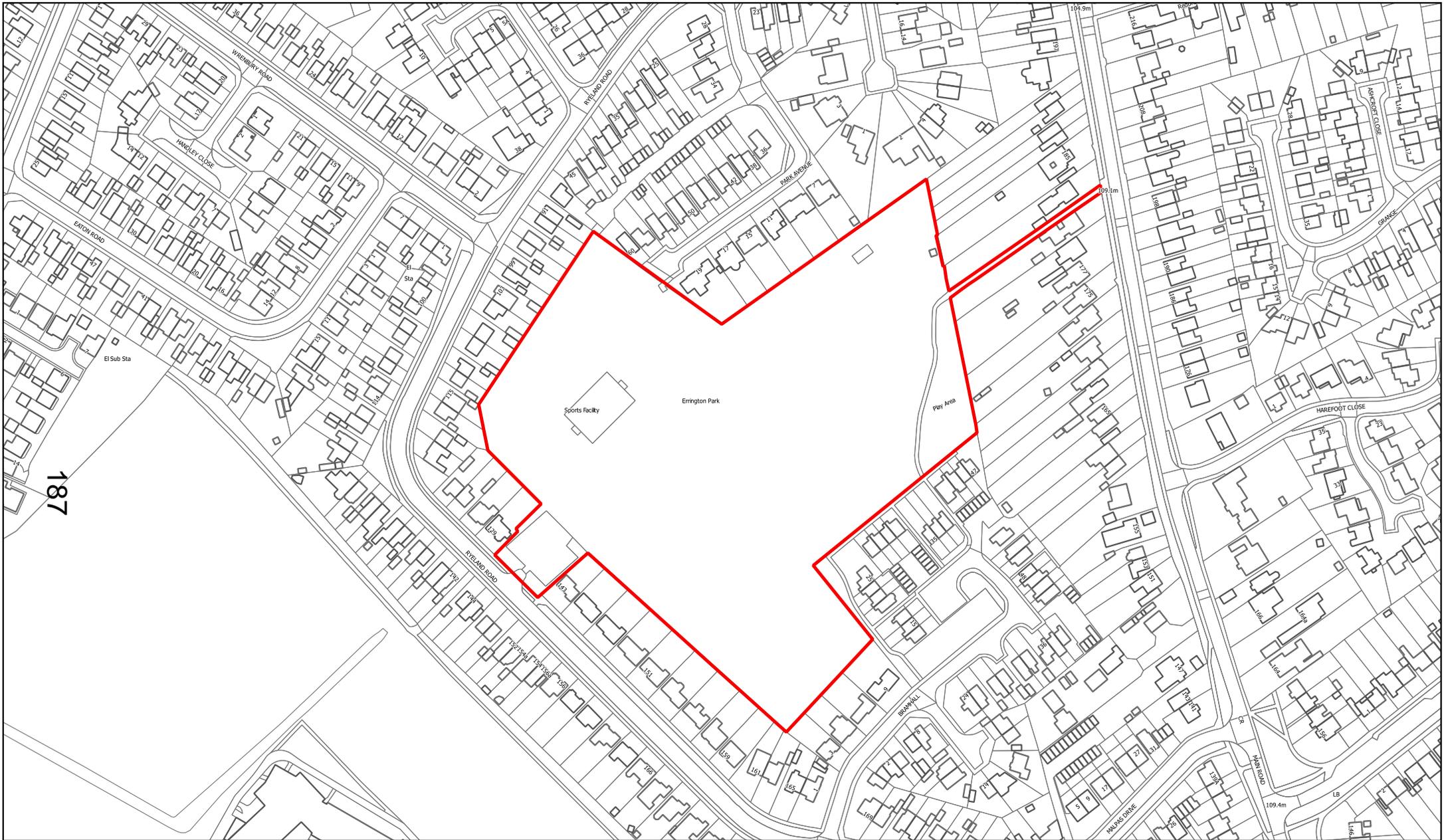
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Scale: 1:1,250

Drawn by: LP





**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Title: Errington Park, Duston**

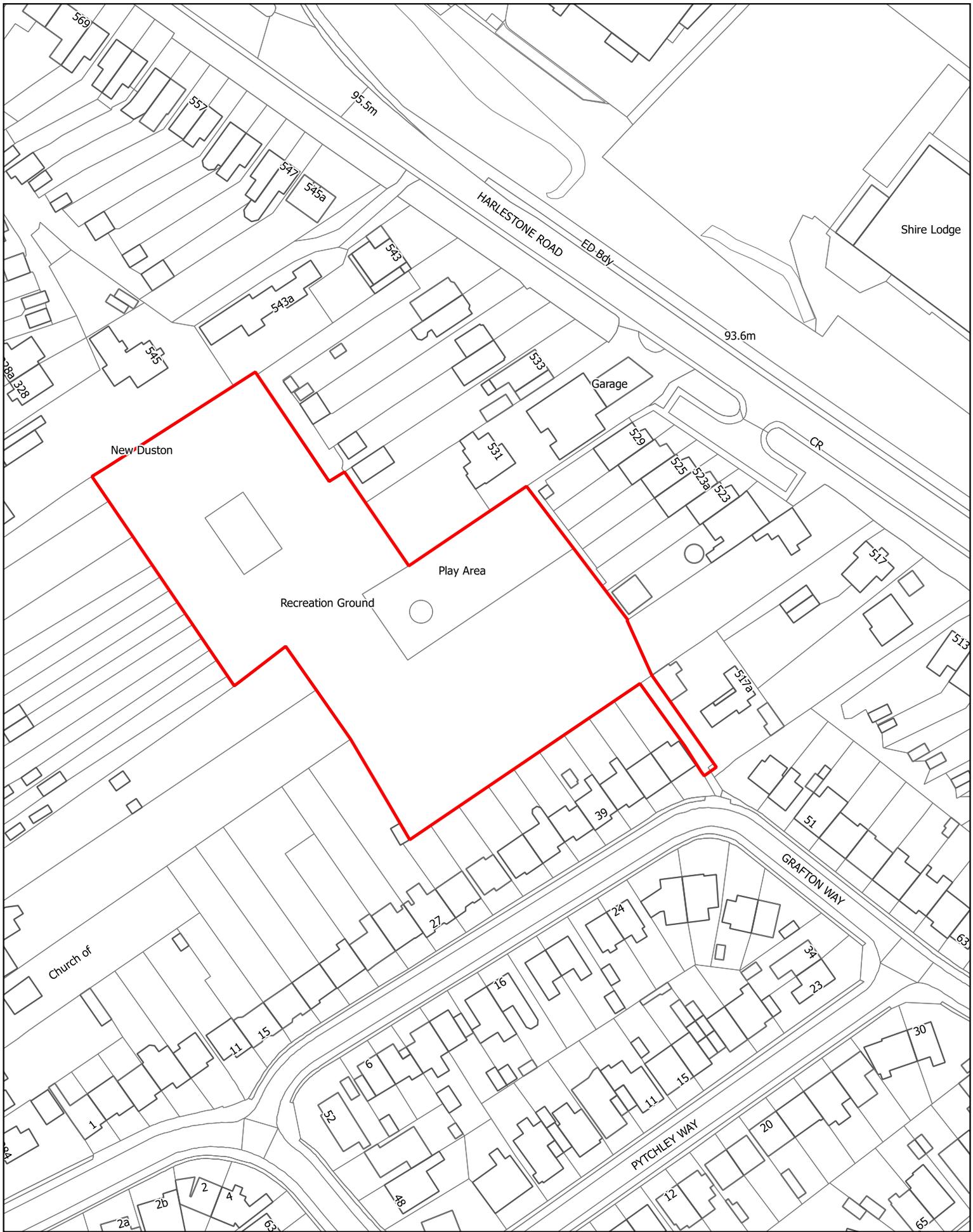
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**Date:** 16-04-2020

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Drawn by:** LP





Title: **Grafton Way Park**

**188**

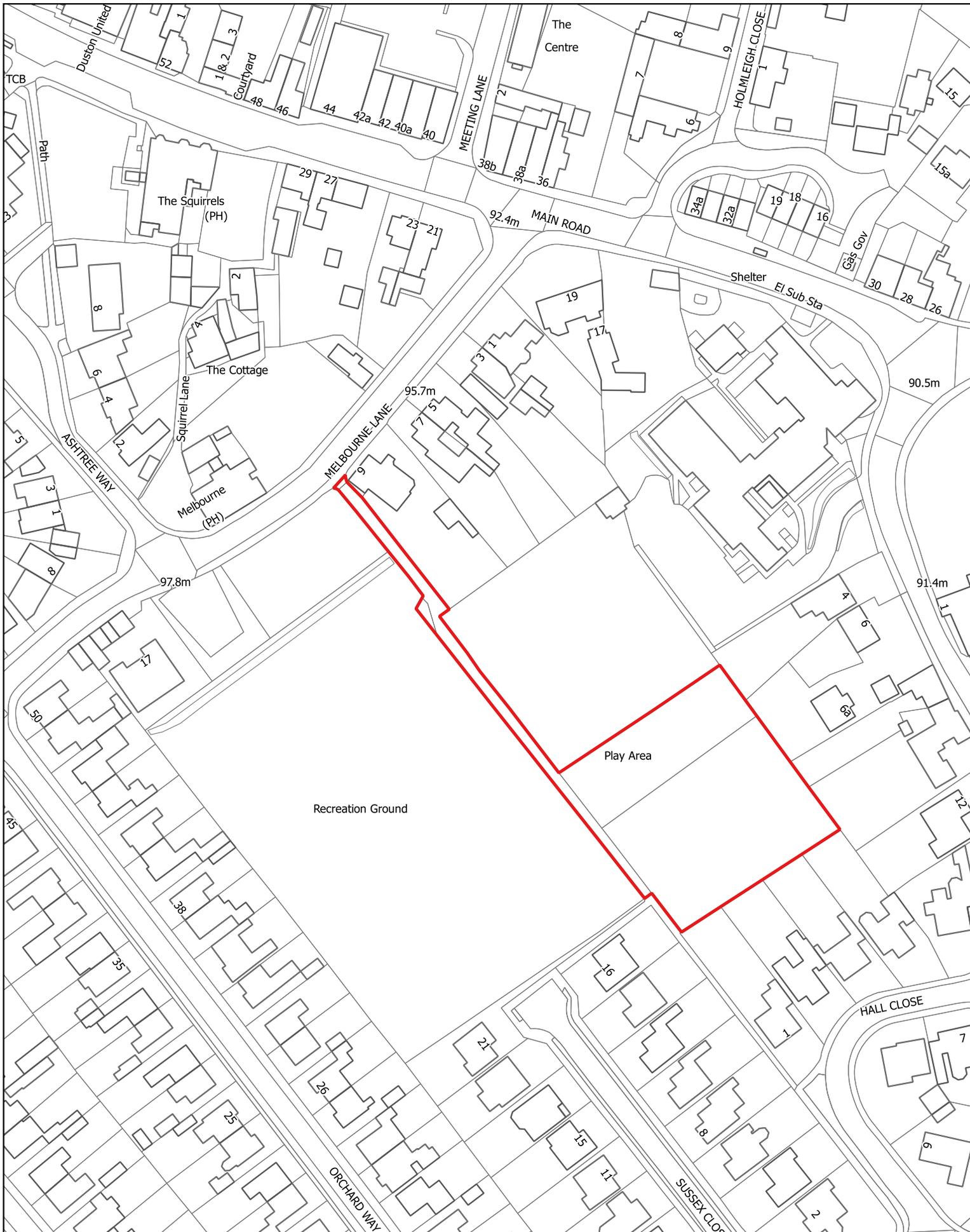
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Title: **Melbourne Lane POS (NN322076)**

**189**

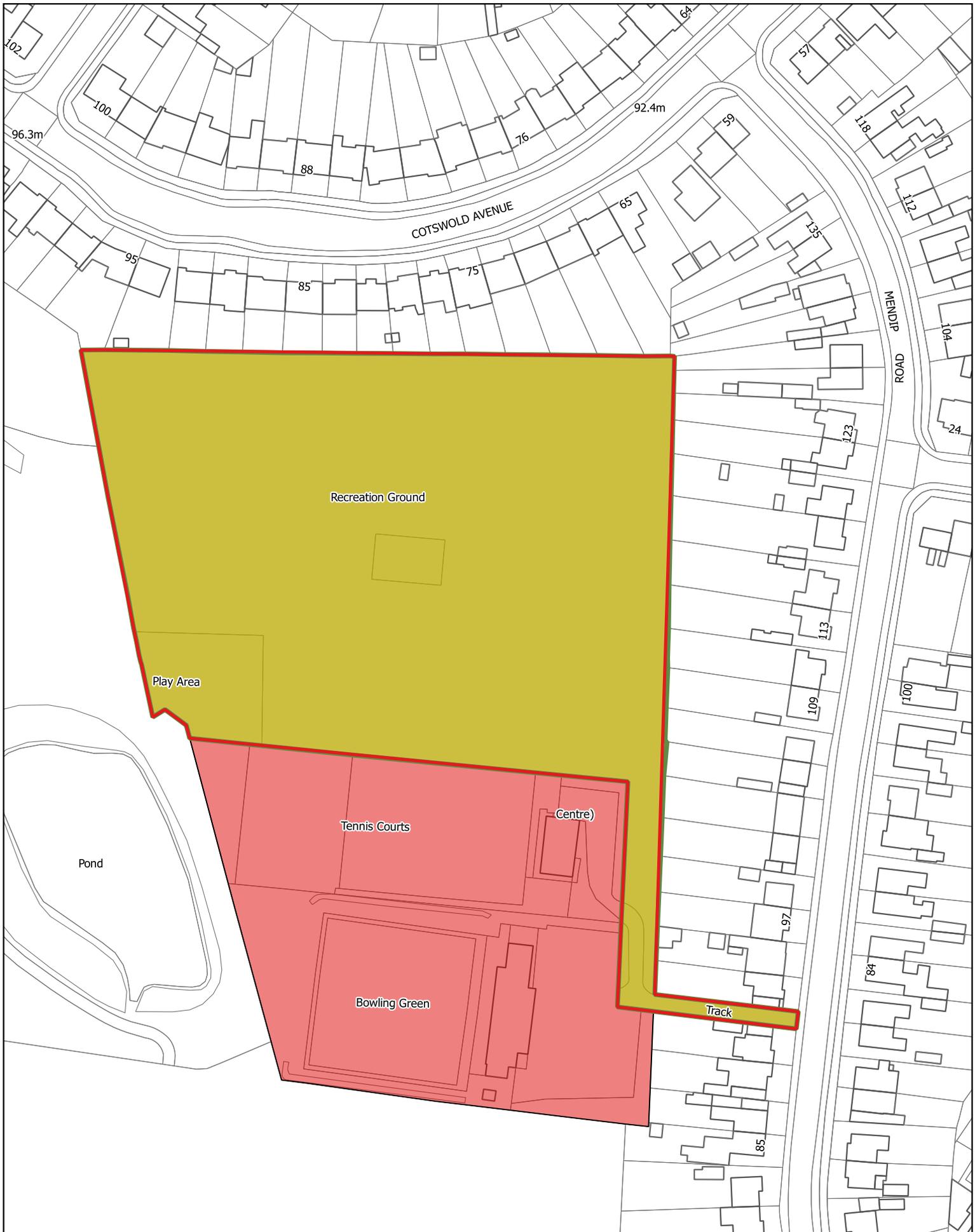
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Date: 21-11-2019

Scale: 1:1,250

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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Mendip Road POS & full extent of O'Ship**

**190**

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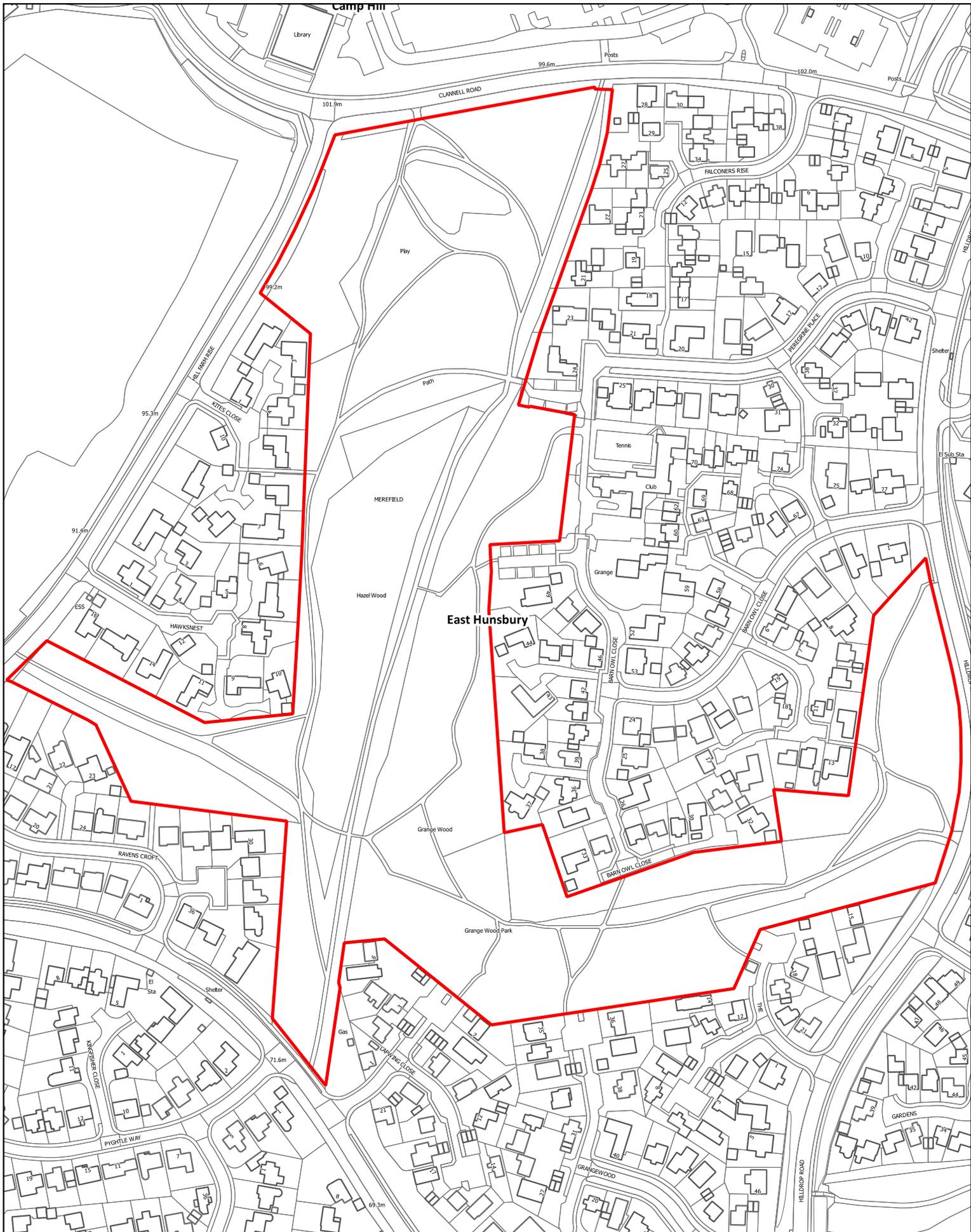
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Drawn by: LP







Title: **Grangewood Park**

**192**

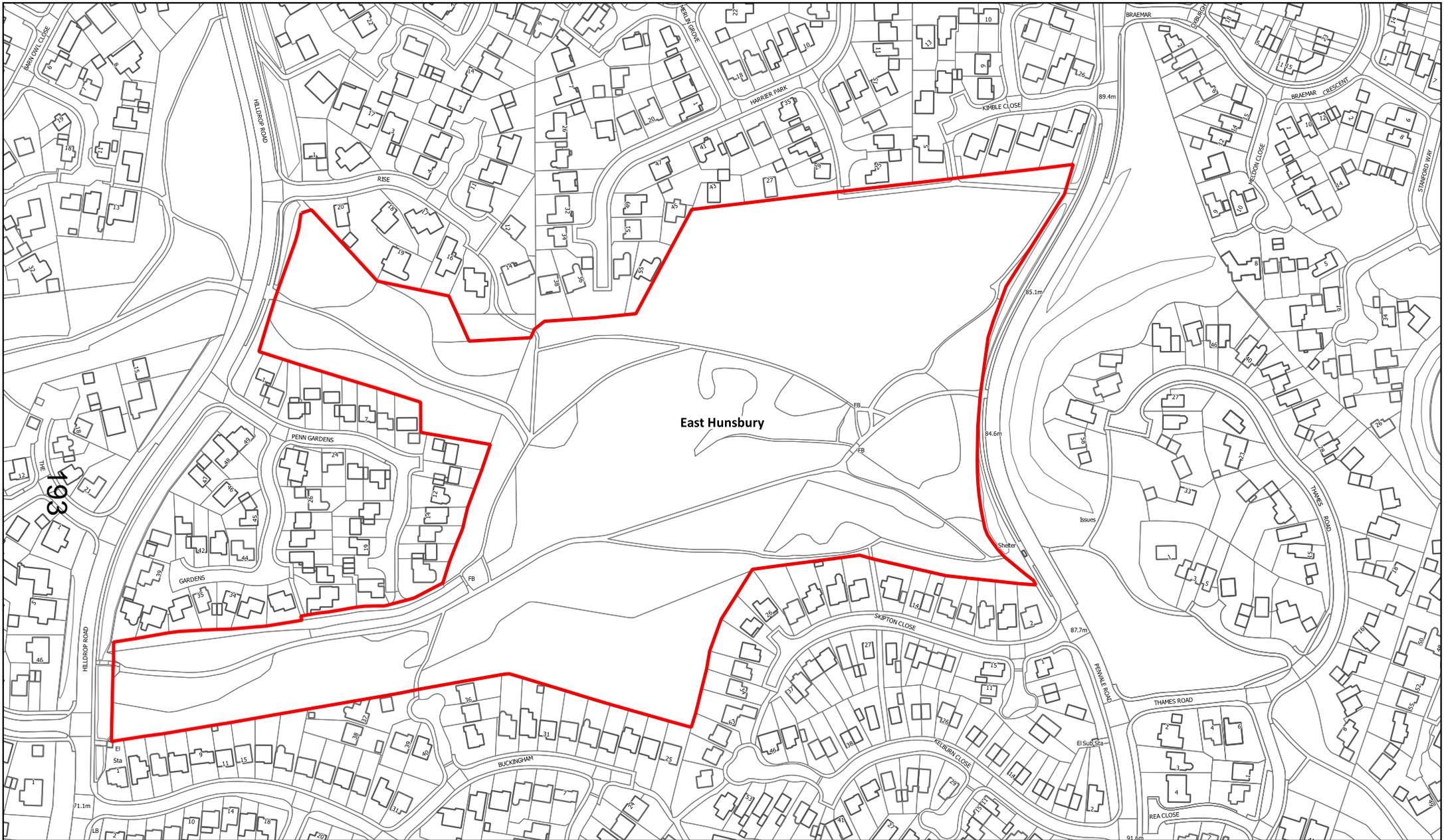
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East Hunsbury



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Penn Valley Park**

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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Title: The Elgar Centre, High St, Upton**

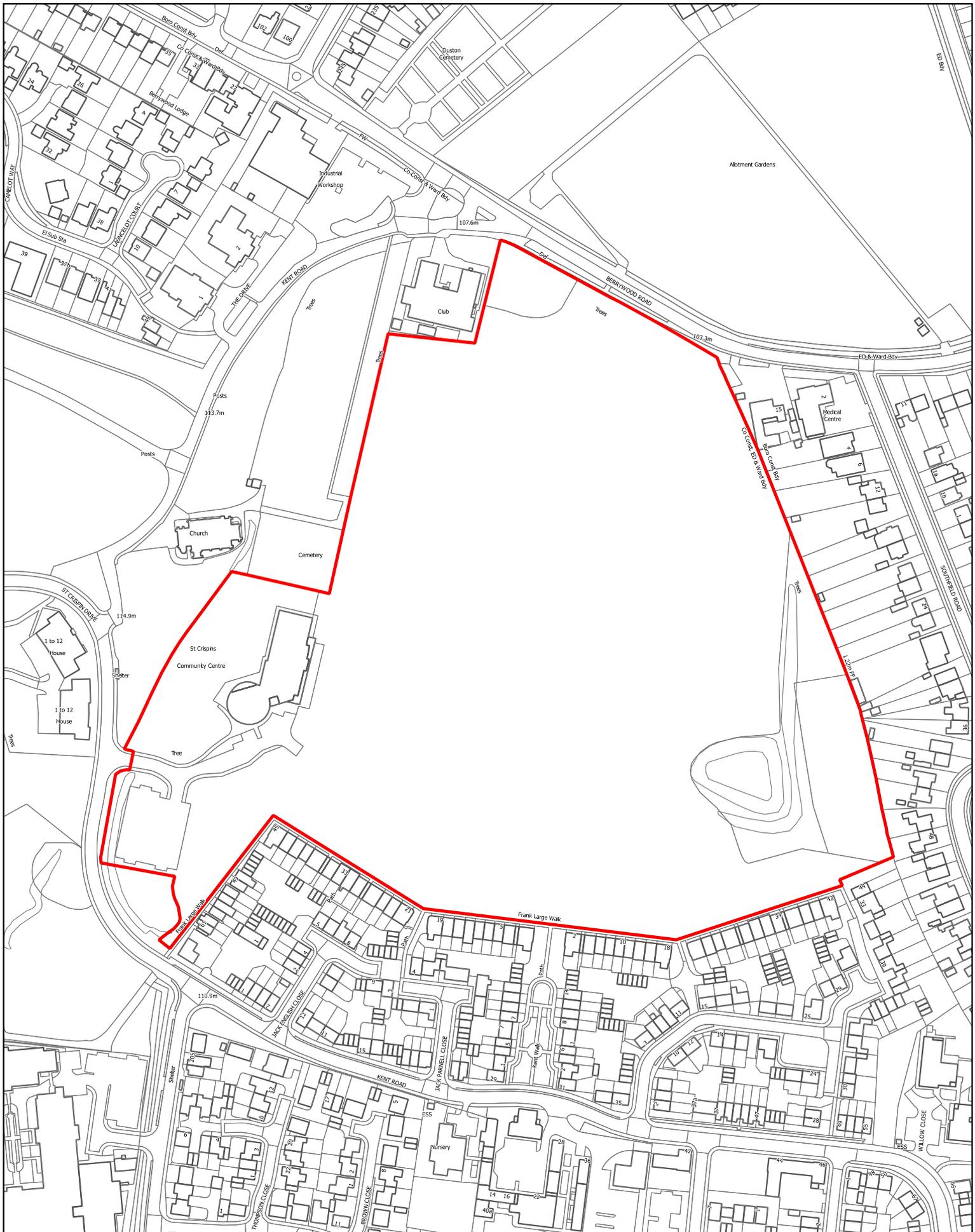
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**Date:** 22-04-2020

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Drawn by:** LP





Title: **St Crispins Community Centre**

**195**

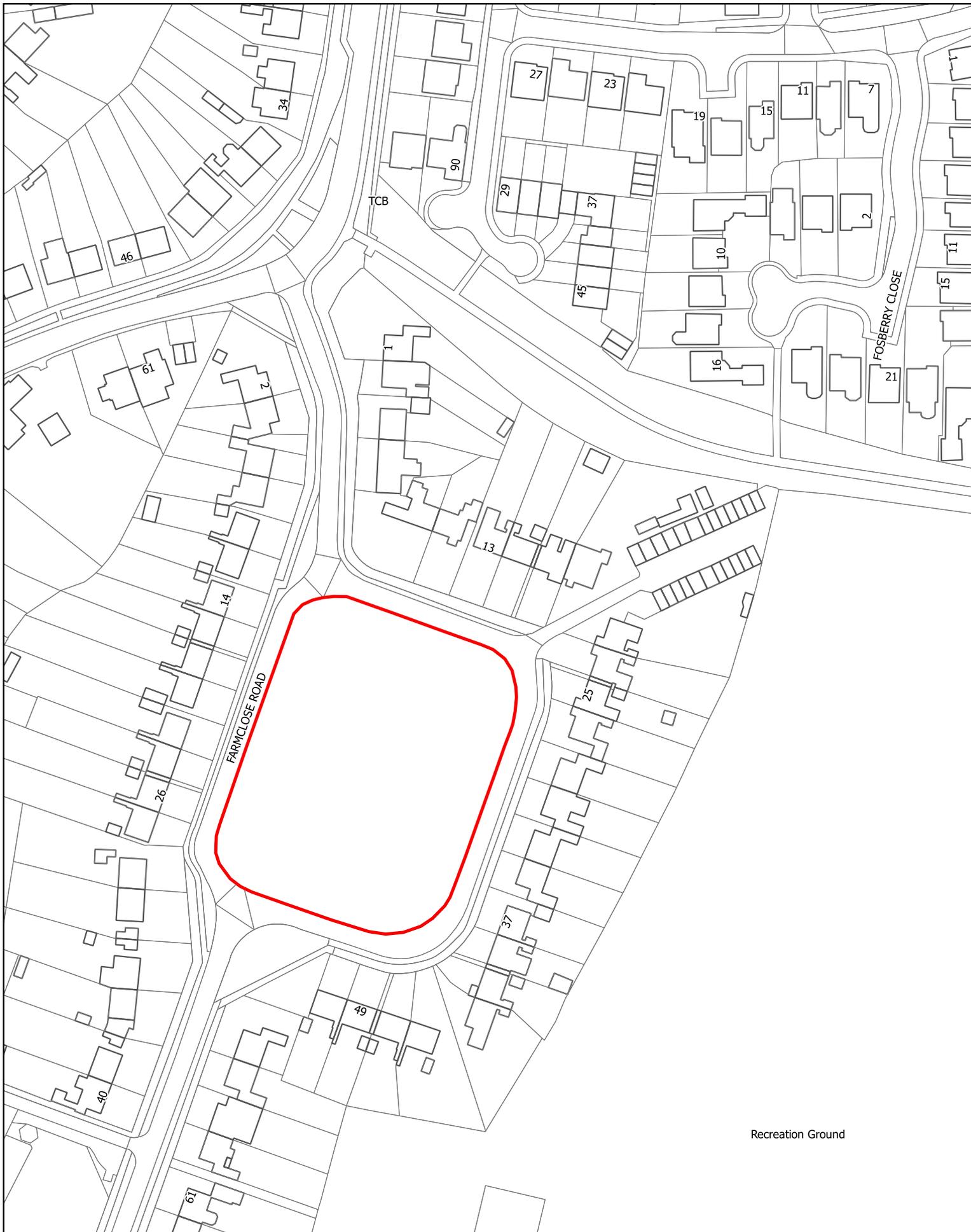
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Date: 22-04-2020

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Recreation Ground



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Farmclose Road Green**

**196**

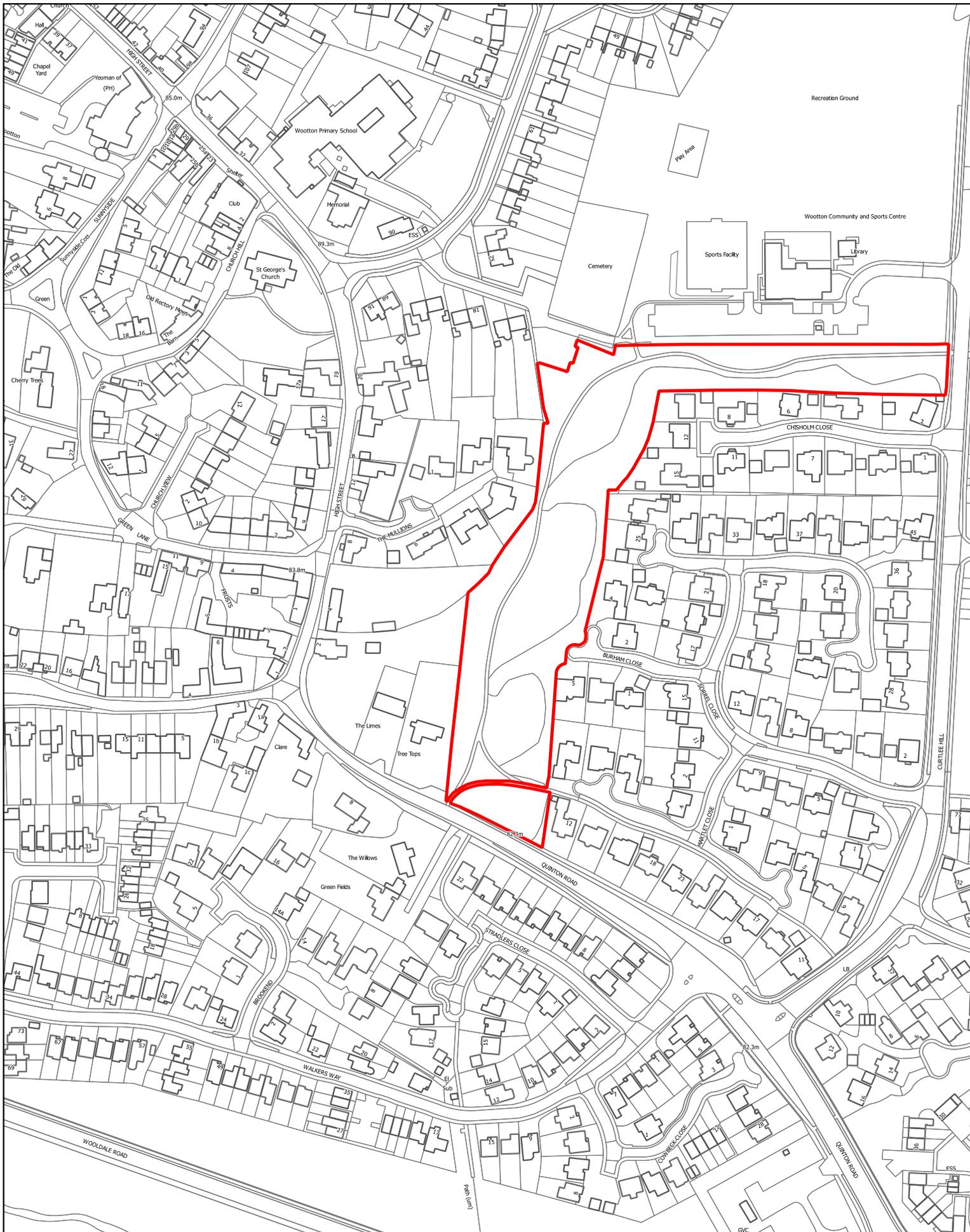
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Date: 16-04-2020

Scale: 1:1,250

Drawn by: LP





**Title: Park from Curtlee Hill to Quinton Road**

**197**

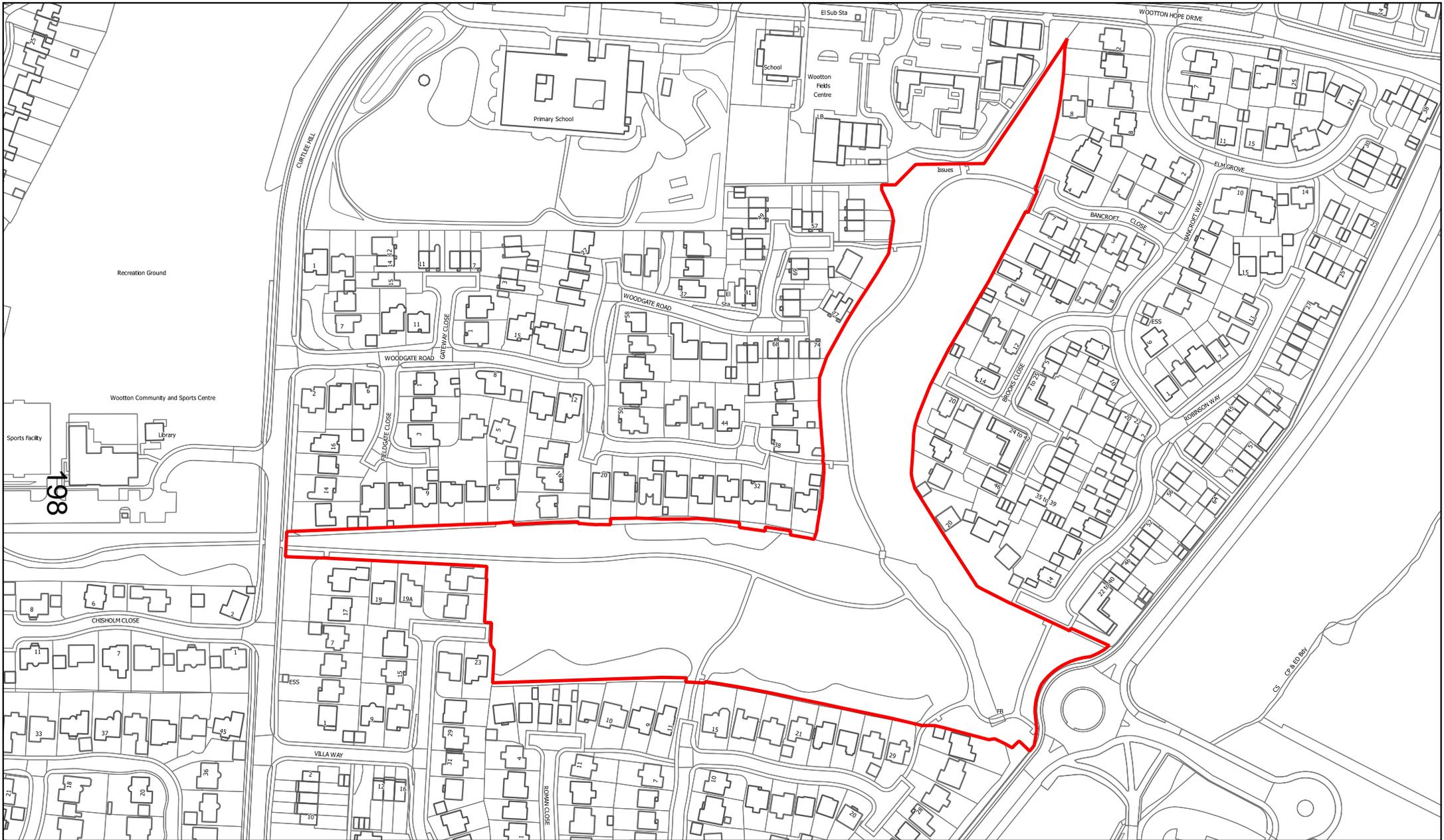
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**Date:** 16-04-2020

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Drawn by:** LP





**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Title: Park from Tudor Court to Curtlee Hill**

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**Date:** 16-04-2020

**Scale:** 1:2,500

**Drawn by:** LP



Appendices 3



## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Northampton Economic Growth Strategy</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS:** Public

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Within Policy:</b>	No
<b>Policy Document:</b>	Yes
<b>Service Area:</b>	Economy, Assets and Culture
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Tim Hadland
<b>Ward(s)</b>	<b>All</b>

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out a new strategy for growing Northampton's economy. It provides information on the priorities and actions to be taken by the Council, its successor, West Northamptonshire and its partners over the next five years to help deliver the strategy's aim to ensure Northampton is a great place to start, stay and grow.

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Cabinet adopt the Northampton Economic Growth Strategy (2020-2025) attached to this report as Appendix 1 which establishes the economic growth vision and priorities for the town. The document also set's out the actions that are required to achieve economic growth for all over the period of 2020-2025.
- 2.2 Cabinet approve the budget arrangements identified within the report including reallocating future years Business Incentive Scheme revenue to fund the broader range of economic development activity identified within the strategy.

2.3 Cabinet delegates to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, the Chief Finance Officer and the Borough Secretary the authority to make any minor amendments to the said strategy which will include its desktop publishing, with the caveat that any further reports be brought to Cabinet as and when considered necessary.

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report Background**

3.1.1 The last structured economic growth strategy was developed some years ago spanning a period 2008-2026 and is in urgent need of updating against a backdrop of continuing inward investment enquires, as well as the broader macro growth developments linked to the Cambridge -Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor. It is important as the key settlement in the county that a strategic approach is developed that both complements surrounding areas moving into West Northamptonshire, but also acts as a catalyst for future growth opportunity across the county.

3.1.2 Northampton has been and continues to be a thriving town with tremendous opportunity for growth. Northampton has experienced strong private sector jobs growth since 2010, above the national average and is a major hub for financial services, logistics and advanced manufacturing. It also demonstrates a growth in knowledge intensive jobs. Northampton also continues to be a great place to start up and scale up a business, being named the third ‘most enterprising town’ for business start up’s in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

3.1.3 The Northampton Economy has also been strengthened by recent investment, notably the University of Northampton Waterside Campus and at the Northampton Railway Station. These projects have all contributed towards jobs creation and retention for Northampton across a wide sector.

3.1.4 However, significant challenges and opportunities remain. Not everyone is benefiting from or contributing to economic growth to their full potential. Northampton lags behind other comparator areas in terms of educational attainment levels, from early years to secondary schools. ONS analysis also reveals that Northampton is currently 8% less productive than the national average and the average weekly wage is lower than our neighbours in West Northamptonshire. The town centre is also experiencing a number of challenges due to the wider changes in the way town centres are operating and leisure, retail and work trends are shifting.

3.1.5 These issues hold our economic performance back, create costs to the public sector, affect productivity and means that we are not drawing on the full talents of everyone in the Borough. However, they also provide an economic opportunity. This strategy focuses on how we can support people into work, support them to progress into high quality employment, improve housing and health conditions, and make neighbourhoods and centres more attractive,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://informi.co.uk/blog/best-place-start-small-business-uk-2018-3-northampton>

meaning we can boost Northampton's economic performance and deliver economic growth for all.

- 3.1.6 Northampton is a significant part of the wider West Northants area, and therefore the growth of the town will be instrumental in the wider economic growth of both the West Northants Unitary area and the county as a whole.
- 3.1.7 Deyton Bell in March 2019 were commissioned by the Council to begin the process of creating an ambitious new economic vision and strategy to capitalise on Northampton's growth ambitions.
- 3.1.8 Deyton Bell conducted in depth research into the key economic data for Northampton and the wider West Northamptonshire area, reviewing Employment, Skills, Trade, Economic Growth and Education. Using this data, they then identified which sectors are key to Northampton's economy and those that make the greatest economic contribution in terms of volume and employment. Utilising all the evidence gathered, Deyton Bell analysed the key challenges faced within the Borough and then tested this in the next stage which was stakeholder engagement.
- 3.1.9 Deyton Bell then undertook initial engagement with partners having a series of face-to-face meetings or via telephone. This initial engagement explored topics such as the performance of local networks, sectors and clusters, the strength and performance of the business support landscape within Northampton and the identification of current and potential future skills gaps.
- 3.1.10 Deyton Bell then used the evidence base and feedback collected to commence drafting a tailored solution for Northampton. The analysis carried out allowed for the creation of a high level vision that resonated with all local stakeholders and the business community, a detailed analysis of local performance against a range of economic data, providing evidence analysis of local challenges and issues raised during the stakeholder engagement and then the identification of priority actions needed to further enhance economic growth in Northampton and the wider sub region.
- 3.1.11 The strategy aligns Northampton to local and national priorities such as SEMLEP's Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan; and its focus, and delivery will ensure Northampton is well placed as a key location for inward investment and place to do business. This strategy closely aligns with the LIS priority of 'increasing productivity across all sectors and geographies within the SEMLEP area... supporting businesses not just to start up, but to scale up, grow and prosper.' This economic growth strategy for Northampton focuses on improving the environment for business by supporting our key sectors to allow them to reach their full potential and ensures that the business support available is in line with the economic demands of our community.
- 3.1.12 This strategy will also work alongside the Town Centre Masterplan for Northampton by supporting the strategic objectives of addressing infrastructure challenges, poor quality commercial space and increasing the level of footfall and activity in the town centre. This strategy also sits alongside the Waterside Enterprise Zone work of unlocking key development sites,

consolidating infrastructure and attracting businesses and creating jobs. Furthermore, this strategy will develop an inward investment strategy which will leverage investment (including foreign) into the Enterprise Zone and wider town centre.

## **Economic Growth Strategy**

- 3.1.13 The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy focuses activity and resources to drive economic growth in the borough, such as enabling job creation and the growth of the town as well as to unlock potential opportunities on offer from Central Government, linked to wider growth opportunities across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc. It will also be the foundations of a wider growth strategy for West Northamptonshire when it comes into being in April 2021. The strategy reflects and is cognisant of Northampton's place in the wider economic geography of the West Northants area, Northamptonshire as a county and the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor.
- 3.1.14 The document will be used both internally and externally with our partners to target key priorities and projects so ensuring good communication and buy in with all key partners. The Strategy includes an executive summary, it shows the current economic position of the Borough, the future aspiration and the actions to be taken to deliver this. It is broken down into easily understandable themes or priorities looking at the broad economy ensuring all building blocks to success are identified. The strategy has been informed by both economic analysis of Northampton, to understand the prevailing trends in the areas economy and by focus groups with a range of stakeholders including those from Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, The University of Northampton, Northampton Town Centre BID, SEMLEP and the private sector to create a co-created and co-owned document.
- 3.1.15 This document identifies 9 key areas to focus resource and activity on over the next 5 years in order to achieve growth for Northampton and the Wider West Northamptonshire area. However, the document also recognises that there are key cutting principles which are the foundation for the Council and it's partners to deliver the required economic growth. These principles are ensuring the Council are sustainable in all our actions and reduce our implications on the environment, develop a well informed and educated workforce and equip them with the right skills and finally partnership working, especially as the Council move in to Unitary. These principles will underpin all the work stipulated in this strategy.
- 3.1.16 In determining our priorities for the next 5 years, key evidence has been gathered to understand Northampton's local economy, these can be seen in the Data Pack (Appendix II.) The Strategy identifies 9 priority areas that through partnership working and taking a long-term view, we can make necessary interventions to support the local economy and its businesses. These priorities serve to underpin an action plan to encourage growth across the Borough. The priorities are:

- **Supporting Innovators, Entrepreneurs and Social Enterprise**  
This priority is focused on encouraging enterprise by developing programmes and projects that ensure the local economy offers the conditions for businesses to thrive.

The Council will deliver the Vulcan Works Creative Hub, a new business facility, creating 67 lettable units for businesses in the creative industries. This will provide high quality flexible accommodation and facilities to encourage innovation, such as rapid prototyping facilities. The Council will appoint an operator who will provide business support to tenants on site. Other key work in this area will include the development of a Social Enterprise Strategy with our partners to identify further ways of supporting enterprise in the Borough.

- **Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Centre**  
The Council's approach is to continue to regenerate key town centre sites (as illustrated by the Town Centre Masterplan) and continue the delivery of the Waterside Enterprise Zone. By also focusing on reducing homelessness and marginalisation in the town centre, it will become a more welcoming and safer place which will increase tourism and visitor numbers.

As part of the Council's Future High Street Fund bid, the Council will continue to progress plans for the Market Square to ensure it becomes a high-quality and flexible space. The Council will develop a number of improvements to the Town Centre as detailed in the Town Centre Masterplan and as a result the Council will have attracted funding from both the public and private sector for these key projects. The Place Marketing Campaign for Northampton will underpin this and lead to an increase in investment enquiries into the Town Centre and Waterside Enterprise Zone.

- **Maximising the Economic Benefits of Culture and Heritage**  
Northampton has a rich cultural offer and this intervention focuses on ensuring that this sector is visible and attracts both residents and visitors into the Borough. It also focuses on building on the success of the Cultural Quarter and to grow the cultural and creative sector in Northampton.

The Council will work closely with partners such as the Royal & Derngate and NN Contemporary to increase tourism numbers into the Borough, parallel to this a coordinated programme will be implemented that promotes the Cultural and Heritage sector.

Projects such as 24 Guildhall Road will strengthen the Cultural Quarter and provide a focal point and stimulus for start-up businesses in the cultural sectors.

- **Raising Northampton's Profile**  
The Council's focus is to improve the profile of Northampton and to capitalise on what makes us different to our nearby competitors, to market Northampton as an attractive environment for businesses and tourism, which in turn will boost Inward Investment.

The Council will develop a comprehensive Inward Investment Strategy and proposition to capitalise on the history and assets of Northampton. The Council will also develop a place marketing campaign for Northampton to underpin this Inward Investment Strategy.

Alongside our partners, such as Northamptonshire: Britain's Best Surprise, the Council will develop a Tourism proposition to drive visitors into the Borough, showcasing our strengths such as Culture and Heritage and Food and Drink.

- **Putting Employers at the Heart of the Skills System**

This priority is to ensure that Northampton's business community is able to tap into a skilled and flexible workforce. The Council's focus will be on developing skills programmes in the Borough and bridging the gap between employers and education providers.

The Council will work with its partners such as SEMLEP, University of Northampton, Northampton College and the business community to shape a skills strategy and action plan which sets out a system that meets the needs of our local economy.

The Council will also work with the University of Northampton and key employers to explore how we can attract and retain talented people within the Borough, this is vital to ensuring sustainable economic growth in Northampton.

- **Northampton as a Digital Town**

The Council will focus on ensuring that Northampton makes the most of the digital opportunities that are on offer, to promote and grow the digital sector in the Borough and ensure that everyone has access to high quality digital connectivity.

By working with our partners, such as Digital Northampton, the Council will explore applications for new technology as it becomes available and look at opportunities for how Northampton can benefit from the new technology.

Furthermore, the Council will work with City Fibre to develop a full fibre network across the Borough and promote Northampton as a location to invest in for further testing.

- **Efficient and Effective Infrastructure**

This priority is focused on making key strategic improvements to infrastructure in the Borough including transport and green infrastructure but also social infrastructure such as modernising and improving health services and community facilities.

The Council will work with Northamptonshire County Council to focus on priority improvements such as Brackmills & Castle Station Corridor and the dualling of the A43 from Northampton to Kettering. The Council will also support the development of a Transport Strategy and then work with partners to develop business cases required to secure funding for the identified improvements.

- **Supporting our Key Sectors**

The focus of this priority is to strengthen the local clusters of our diverse economy and work with our key sectors to develop a programme of support to ensure they have the right environment to be able to start, run and grow their business. The 6 key sectors identified which offer great growth potential are as follows:

- The Creative and Cultural Industries
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Financial Services
- Logistics
- Health and Wellbeing
- Retail

Supporting these key sectors will mean regular engagement with the business community. This will be achieved through networking events through our partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and the FSB but in addition the Council will look to host networking events for key sectors if such engagement is not being met through our partners.

The Council will also look to hold consultation workshops when developing new strategies and policies such as the Inward Investment Strategy, this allows for all documents to be co-produced and co-owned.

Finally, the Council will host an Annual Economic Forum to highlight progress being made on the strategy to the business the community and to provide an update on economic performance.

In addition, the strategy identifies that Northampton has a strong Sport and Recreation sector underpinned by nationally visible sporting clubs. This sector will be reviewed in terms of how we can support the sector and increase economic activity.

- **Tackling the Climate Emergency**

The focus here is to ensure that by 2030, Northampton will become a zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilient town. By limiting the impacts of climate change, residents and businesses will all benefit from the improved environment.

The Council will work with its partners to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan which address the need to reduce carbon emissions effectively. The Council will work with our business community to educate them on climate change and encourage green infrastructure.

The Council will also review the work being undertaken as part of the Town Centre Masterplan and Waterside Enterprise Zone to ensure that all development meets the sustainability requirements.

3.1.17 The primary use of this document is to: -

- 1) Give leadership and direction to Northampton and bring forward cohesion to the priorities for the Northampton economy.
- 2) Promote joint working and understanding with key partners in delivering a structured programme of work.
- 3) Ensure clear priorities and objectives for deciding resources, including financial, people and assets to deliver outcomes set in the strategy.

### **3.2 Issues**

- 3.2.1 As work within this area slowed in recent years as there have been changes to the team, much of the work that is now required is starting from a low base. This will involve developing tools, processes and sub strategies to effect delivery of the Economic Growth Strategy.
- 3.2.2 In recent years the Council has worked to improve its reputation amongst the business community. Further progress can be made on this with active and consistent engagement and dialogue with our business community and partners vital to ensuring a strong and prosperous town.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

- 3.3.1 Accept the recommendations as set out in this report to adopt the strategy the Northampton Economic Growth Strategy it will give a co-ordinated plan for delivery based on local needs, regional and sub regional strategies for Northampton.
- 3.3.2 Adopt the strategy but not allocate the budget which is currently reserved for the Business Incentive Scheme. This option would mean that the Economic Growth Strategy would not be implemented, and it would damage the reputation of the Council.
- 3.3.3 Reject the recommendations as set out in this report (Do nothing) – this option to do nothing and not adopt this document would affect the economic vision for Northampton and strategic priorities of the Council and future West Northants, which would not be delivered.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

- 4.1.1 The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy will act as adopted Council policy.

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

- 4.2.1 The development of this strategy has been funded through existing budgets. The application of this strategy will however have financial and resource implications for the Council, but the long-term impact should be financially positive as investment into facilities, infrastructure and jobs are created from the proposed actions.
- 4.2.2 It is proposed that the funding needed to deliver the Northampton Economic Growth Strategy is derived from the following:
- 4.2.3 The Business Incentive Scheme (BIS) which has an allocated budget of £200k ceased at the end of the 2019-20 financial year. £150k of this budget will be allocated to delivering the strategy for future years with the remaining £50k identified as a saving towards budget pressures.
- 4.2.4 The £150k will be spent on activity identified in the strategy which could include:
- Business Contact Database and Email Engagement Platform
  - Economic Data, Profiles, Analysis and Dashboard
  - Marketing, Events and Business Support
  - Skills Strategy, Data and Associated Programmes
  - Inward Investment Strategy
  - Digital Town Strategy
  - Strategic Site Study and Property Review
- 4.2.5 External funding from partners and central government will be regularly reviewed to maximise the opportunities available.
- 4.2.6 Authority to deliver the strategy is requested to be delegated to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager and his team (identified below) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise. The Senior Economic Development Officer (in-post) and Economic Development Officer (soon to be in-post.) These officers will review and monitor the delivery of the Economic Growth Strategy against the deliverables set out in the action plan.
- 4.2.7 Any additional resource required as a result of the impact of COVID-19 will be allocated through the Economic Recovery Strategy which will go to Cabinet as a separate report. The Economic Recovery Strategy will sit alongside this strategy and will specifically focus on how the Council will support businesses to recover from the impact COVID-19 has caused.
- 4.2.8 The Economic Recovery Strategy will be developed as part of the Council's recovery plans. It will be led by the Countywide Economic Impact Cell and will align to regional and national recovery strategies, as well as this Economic Growth Strategy.

### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act provided Local Authorities with the power of general competence. Implementation activity arising from the strategy is likely to rely on this and other specific enabling powers such as the Council's

powers as landowner and its housing and planning powers. The relevant powers will be identified at the appropriate time.

- 4.3.2 There is no statutory duty to produce an Economic Growth Strategy but doing so provides an important framework to assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its statutory obligations around housing, planning and regeneration infrastructure provision, where relevant.
- 4.3.3 Specific legal advice should be sought as and when any work connected with the priority areas identified above as part of the Council's Northampton Economic Growth Strategy is to be implemented.
- 4.3.4 The Government has recently issued guidance on the impact of the Corona Virus pandemic on local authority decision making and the guidance suggests that local authorities should consider any decision to be made (which is likely to have a significant impact on its community) from the perspective of whether the decision to be made can still be considered to be the proper utilisation of available Council resources in light of the pandemic.

#### **4.4 Equality and Health**

- 4.4.1 The economic growth and regeneration set out in this strategy will have positive benefits to residents and the wider community.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

- 4.5.1 Throughout the development of this strategy, stakeholders were consulted to input into the strategy and also review and make comments. Initial engagement early on in the process included partners such as Northampton Business Improvement District, Northampton College, Northamptonshire County Council, SEMLEP, University of Northampton as well as business such as Mahle, Travis Perkins, Trickers, Church's Footwear and Northampton Saints.
- 4.5.2 In December 2019, a consultation workshop was also held with key stakeholders including those from the private sector, the voluntary and community sector and senior officers from the Council, NCC, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council. In total, 33 attendees attended the workshop. The strategy was then circulated to the attendees to provide a window of opportunity for them to have a further day and to sense check the document.
- 4.5.3 A further opportunity was given for businesses and key partners to contribute in early January 2020 where comments were then incorporated into this final draft.

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

- 4.6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out three strategic priorities to be pursued over the next two years. One of these is 'A Stronger Economy'. This Council's

corporate objective is the driving force in writing and developing the Northampton Economic Strategy and in the future implementation of this strategy.

- 4.6.2 The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy takes its primary lead from local needs but also takes its guide from SEMLEPs Local Industrial Strategy and SEMLEP's Strategic Economic Plan. The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy does not aim to repeat these targets and objectives but rather to give specific local achievable direction in areas of influence aiming to add value to the current overarching work.
- 4.6.3 The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy will be a key document for the Borough and relates directly to the Corporate Plan strategic priority of 'A Stronger Economy.' With the 'Establish a comprehensive Economic Growth Strategy' and 'Shaping Place and Driving Growth.' Specific outputs against this area.

#### **4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)**

- 4.7.1 There are no specific environmental impacts arising from the contents of this report, however creating a borough that is a great place to live, work and play enables more sustainable living and reduces negative environmental impacts, carbon footprints and air pollution. Tackling the Climate Emergency and reducing environmental implications in the town has been identified as a priority in the strategy.

#### **4.8 Other Implications**

- 4.7.1 No comments

### **5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 Northampton Economic Growth Strategy
- 5.2 Northampton Economic Growth Action Plan
- 5.3 Northampton Economic Growth Strategy Data Pack

### **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1 The strategy will be used as the framework for delivering economic development and growth of Northampton with the Action Plan setting out how this will be delivered over the next 5 years

**Contact: Kevin Langley, Economy and Assets, Ext.7740.**

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# **Northampton Borough Council**

## **Economic Growth Strategy**

**2020-2025**

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## Vision for 2025

By 2025 Northampton will be recognised as a highly productive economy. Our businesses will operate in an environment in which they can thrive and where our communities benefit from opportunities provided by the private sector.

Northampton will remain a fantastic place to start, scale-up and grow a business. The town will attract investment to deliver key projects and talented people. Our schools, colleges, university, and businesses will work closely together to develop people with the skills and the access to opportunities to enable them to succeed and be resilient in the fast-changing economy. People who are out of work or in low paid jobs will find it easier to obtain support and access to opportunities they need to get into the workforce and progress into better jobs. Our skills system will directly address the needs of our economy and the business community, ensuring that residents have access to high quality employment.

The town centre will undergo significant change. We will work closely with the private sector to achieve the changes that both our communities and businesses are seeking. Ensuring that the Town Centre is a thriving heart as the county town for Northamptonshire.

In April 2021, there will be a significant change to the way Local Government operates across Northamptonshire. The eight existing councils in Northamptonshire are to be abolished and replaced by two new councils (North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire) to improve the delivery of public services across the county. Northampton Borough Council will form part of West Northamptonshire, alongside Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council

We will work with our partners to ensure that local infrastructure has the capacity to meet business and resident's needs across the Borough and West Northamptonshire. We will build on our extensive local heritage, reflecting the role the town and wider area have played in the country's history and our rich natural environment.

Economic growth will create new jobs and homes. Central to this growth will be the need for high quality broadband and 5G infrastructure, smart city technology, clean energy measures to reduce carbon, and use of data that will make Northampton a digital city. Our communities will be equipped with new digital skills and abilities, allowing new career opportunities and in-work progression as workers contribute to their full potential.

We have learnt through the Coronavirus Pandemic that more needs to be done to be prepared for major economic shocks. Working with our partners we will seek to develop plans that enable Northampton to be well placed to respond and be resilient to economic challenges and opportunities.

The key characteristics of Northampton's success will include;

- Job growth in key sectors and increase the business base;
- Increased Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita, average worker income and productivity – leading to wealth creation for Northampton residents;

- Improvement in educational attainment – increasing the number of residents qualified to deliver the jobs needed by local business;
- High business start-up and survival rates – creating even more successful business leaders in the future;

With sustained increases in each of these measures during the life of the Economic Growth Strategy, Northampton will improve its resilience and improve its economic diversity. Which will assist in weathering future global economic trends and market cycles, aiding recovery from economic downturns. Improvements will assist the Borough being agile enough to adapt to changing technologies and importantly, provide benefit to all Northampton residents. The Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan sets out the basepoint and future targets which the delivery of the strategy will be measured against.

## **1. The Council's Approach to Growth**

Enabling economic growth is integral to the work of Northampton Borough Council. Sustaining a productive economy will contribute to making Northampton a prosperous, healthy, safe and clean place.

The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy is a key document for the Council that will shape the future of Northampton's economy, enable the safeguarding and creation of local jobs and stimulate wealth creation for residents.

The Borough Council seeks to improve conditions that will assist local business to thrive. The Council is responsible for ensuring that the local economic infrastructure both encourages and supports local business. Northampton benefits from a strong economic infrastructure, with significant investment made by the University of Northampton and key schemes such as Vulcan Works and Northampton Innovation Centre providing high quality facilities. This strategy focuses on how further action can strengthen local economic infrastructure further.

While achieving economic growth is a priority for the Borough Council we also recognise the responsibility we have for the Environment. In order to accelerate a response to the challenge the Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency. The Council has agreed a target that by 2030 Northampton will have become a zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilient town, playing its part in limiting the impacts of climate change. Business and community support will be vital in helping to meet the zero carbon target.

The Council has responsibility to support the response to economic shocks. The Coronavirus Pandemic has demonstrated the impact such shocks can have upon local, national and international economies. We want to ensure that we have a clear strategy in place that enables a quick and full recovery from Coronavirus, and puts in place plans for future potential shocks.

An Economic Recovery Strategy will be developed to help the Borough's economy bounce back from the damage caused by Coronavirus. This document will underpin the Economic

Growth Strategy and work to support businesses to return to business as usual, whatever that might look like in the future.

To inform the recommendations within this strategy, two specific actions have been undertaken: -

- An economic baseline analysing trends and progress made over the last five years has been developed.
- Valuable consultation with, and input from, a wide range of stakeholders has been received and recorded, and played a key role in shaping the strategy.

This method has ensured a 'top-down and bottom-up' approach to creating a plan that is both co-produced and co-owned by the Council and our partners.

## 2. Our Economy

The Northampton economy contributed £7.6bn to the UK economy in 2018 (by Gross Value Added at current prices), while the wider West Northamptonshire contributed £11.9bn.

Table 1 shows the recent growth trend within the economy.

*Table 1: Gross Value Added: The size of the local economy*

Year	Northampton	Daventry	South Northamptonshire
2018	7.627bn	2,339bn	1,943bn
2016	7,090bn	2,019bn	1,825bn
2012	5,837bn	1,729bn	1,468bn
2010	5,692bn	1,175bn	1,299bn

*Source: ONS*

Northampton has experienced strong private sector jobs growth since 2010, increasing from 74,600 to 79,500 representing 6.5% growth during the period 2010-2018. The Borough has a diverse economy that continues to grow and attract new investment. It is a major hub for Financial Services, Logistics and Advanced Manufacturing. The Knowledge economy of higher skilled employment currently provides around 13,500 jobs within the Borough.

Northampton is also a great place to start-up and scale up businesses, and to commercialise innovation. Northampton was named the 3<sup>rd</sup> 'most enterprising town' for business start-ups in 2018 by Informi. Similar positions were also achieved in 2016 and 2017. This consistent positioning recognises that Northampton offers an affordable location for business to become established and also demonstrates that the local community have an enterprising outlook. Almost inevitably locations with high numbers of business start-ups also have a high number of business failures, this is true of Northampton and Informi conclude that the positioning in the table demonstrates that a business has currently more chance of surviving in Northampton as opposed to anywhere else except London.

The Northampton economy has been strengthened by the development of the new University of Northampton campus a £330m investment in the Waterside Enterprise Zone, which opened in September 2018.

Significant further investment has been made in a number of priority projects across the Borough since 2015, these include.

- One Angel Square - £53m
- St Johns student accommodation, and student accommodation across the Borough – £25 Million
- Carlsberg Bottling Plant – £25 million
- Railway Station – £20 Million
- Northampton Vulcan Works Creative Hub - £14m
- Northampton Innovation Centre £8.5m
- The opening of the new Museum – £6.7m
- Northgate bus station – £7 Million
- MAHLE Powertrain – road to zero vehicle testing facility - £5.1m

These projects have all contributed towards securing job creation and retention for Northampton across a wide sector. These schemes have begun to transform the Town Centre, a number of other projects are in scope, confidence will increase through further delivery and raised profile of the Borough nationally and internationally.

There is clear dynamism in the Northampton economy.

But significant challenges and opportunities remain.

Not everyone is currently benefiting from or contributing to economic growth to their full potential. Some of these issues are concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, where poor housing stock and conditions, financial exclusion, physical and mental health problems remain.

A fast changing economy has implications for the skills people need to access jobs, progress within their careers and be resilient to economic shocks. Low pay is a growing issue. Whilst educational attainment is a narrow measure of people's suitability for work, Northampton lags behind other comparator areas in attainment levels, from early years to secondary schools. Our schools and skills system needs to do more to provide people with the skills and careers information they need to access the full range of opportunities in the modern economy and meet employer needs. Whilst some employers are leading the way in terms of staff development, apprenticeships, creating opportunities for school leavers, career changers and people returning to the workforce, others could do more.

These issues hold our economic performance back, create costs to the public sector, affect productivity and mean that we are not drawing on the full talents of everyone in the Borough. They also provide an economic opportunity. If we can get people into work, support them to progress into better jobs, improve housing and health conditions, and make neighbourhoods and centres more attractive, we can boost Northampton's economic performance, tackle the unfairness, costs of poverty and reduce costs to the public sector.

In determining our priorities for the next five years, key evidence has been gathered to understand Northampton's local economy. The facts and figures illustrated in this section highlight some of the most significant current characteristics of the local economy.

Northampton has a growing community, the population of the Borough is 228,000. This represents growth of 6.7% since 2010, and equates to 1.8% growth year on year. Across West Northamptonshire, Daventry experienced population growth of 8.1% and South Northamptonshire's by 7.5% over the same period. Northampton has a young population with 25% of the community under 16, while the over 65's age group stands at 13%. With the current demographic make-up of the area, this balance will potentially change as the population changes. Both Daventry and South Northamptonshire have similar age profiles to the Northampton Borough.

The Borough is home to 137,000 jobs based within 10,715 companies. The economy is diverse with 90% of businesses employing fewer than 10 employees. 55 of companies employ over 250 employees, many of which are household names and serve as company headquarters, such as Cosworth, Barclaycard, Travis Perkins, Avon, Churches, Trickers, St

Andrews Healthcare. The Borough is also home to significant employment for Nationwide Building Society and Carlsberg. Based on Government data, Northampton has a similar share of major companies as other key cities, including Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Lincoln. This points to Northampton being one of the strategic locations within the region

An advantage of this economic profile is that because employment is distributed among a large number of smaller companies rather than being concentrated in a small number of large corporations, the economy is less at risk of economic shocks more likely to be experienced by having a high concentration of large internationally mobile companies. This means that SMEs are well placed to support future job creation. Northampton currently has 13.6%, (equating to 17,100 jobs) of its businesses classified as operating within the 'Knowledge economy' (ONS business register 2018).

The Knowledge economy is defined as an 'Economy based on creating, evaluating, and trading knowledge'. It is typically a technology driven sector and is considered to be the leading sector of a modern economy. Within the Cities Outlook 2017, Northampton was position as the 21<sup>st</sup> most knowledge driven economy of the 62 cities analysed. Locally, Milton Keynes was placed 6<sup>th</sup> (32,300 jobs), Peterborough 16<sup>th</sup> (15,200 jobs) Coventry 20<sup>th</sup> (21,300 jobs) while Luton was 37<sup>th</sup> (9,600 jobs).

The depth of the Knowledge economy is an important indicator of how the economy is changing to reflect new demands and the adoption of technology. A position of 21<sup>st</sup> reflects that Northampton is changing, but not necessarily as fast as the leading cities. This analysis is supported by the data concerning the number of Patent applications made by business. Northampton in this area has been positioned as 31<sup>st</sup> of 63. By comparison Coventry is in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Milton Keynes 11<sup>th</sup>, while Luton trails considerably in 60<sup>th</sup>.

This analysis again points to Northampton's economy being dominated by small medium sized enterprises, while the large companies in the area typically have a presence through production centres and distribution units rather than their headquarters or research and development centres.

Northampton boasts many of the world's finest shoemakers and has a proud heritage dating back almost 900 years. High quality shoe manufacturers based within the town include Churches, Trickers, Crockett and Jones, Jeffrey West, Crown and Edward Green. The companies play a significant role in the local economy and in employment terms.

Northampton contributes Gross Value Added (GVA) of £6.2bn in 2015. With GVA per head at £27,963 per person. This places Northampton as 35<sup>th</sup> of 63 cities.

ONS analysis reveals that Northampton is currently 8% less productive than the national average. Although it should be noted that if London were removed from the analysis, Northampton would be significantly closer to the national average. However, this demonstrates that Northampton does need to identify ways of diversifying the local economy further in order to improve currently levels of productivity. Figure 2 highlights GVA performance of Northampton and its local comparators.

**Figure 2: Comparator GVA performance**

<b>Location</b>	<b>GVA per head (2016)</b>
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	£46,780
<b>Northampton</b>	£27,963
<b>Peterborough</b>	£27,595
<b>Luton</b>	£24,339
<b>Bedford</b>	£23,895
<b>Coventry</b>	£23,192

Source: ONS

The average weekly wage in Northampton is currently £536.50 per week (ONS Labour Force report). This is reported by the Centre for Cities as an average performing area (32nd/63). This level is lower than West Northamptonshire neighbours, where Daventry is £558 per week and South Northamptonshire is £566.30 per week. Northampton does however perform better than the regional East Midlands average which stands at £529.90.

This relatively weak performance again points to the prevalent sectors within the Borough, which are typically employing lower skilled workers. Compared to the National average, the Borough is current lower than the national figure of £571.10 per week. The Borough's dependence on public sector employment is comparable with neighbouring cities, there are currently 32,500 jobs in the sector (25.7%). This figure has been decreasing since 2010 from a starting position of 36,000 jobs.

The local workforce has 32% (46,900) of its workforce educated to NVQ Level 4 or above. While the number of residents with no qualifications is falling with currently 6.6% (9,500) in this position. This level has fallen by half since 2009. This performance is however significantly lower than West Northamptonshire neighbours, with 83% of Northampton's community qualified at NVQ Level 1, compared to South Northamptonshire's 87.7% and Daventry's 85.6%. However the level of performance is even more marked at NVQ Level 4 where Northampton as 32.6% of its residents educated to this higher level, while South Northamptonshire 43.7% and Daventry 38.5% have higher qualified communities. Northampton also currently performs beneath the East Midlands average at both NVQ Levels 1 and 4.

While unemployment levels remain similar to the national average, with around 4.1% compared to the national 4.2% current without work. The Northampton unemployment trend has closely matched the national picture for some time, this reflects the diversity of the local economy and the agility of the business community to weather economic uncertainty.

The business community reported during consultation that they find it difficult to recruit to positions at varying levels of skill. This phenomenon is not usual to Northampton, and is widely felt across the country. This however is a concern that the Borough Council and its partners will seek to address through this strategy. While there are shortages in key skills areas the Borough has a jobs density ratio of 1.07 (ONS Labour Force Survey, where a ratio of 1.00 equates to 1 job being available for each resident) meaning Northampton has a strong supply of job opportunities and performs as a natural regional employment centre.

The commuting pattern reveals the Northampton's influence on the wider geography. On a daily basis, Northampton is receiving an inflow of 39,545 commuters, while 27,442 residents are travelling out of the Borough. The commuting relationship is predominantly with neighbours such as Milton Keynes, Bedford and the rest of Northamptonshire. This balance reflects Northampton's geographical position, the relative ease of commuting and the availability of jobs in neighbouring areas.

As a sub-regional centre Northampton plays a key role as a retail centre. However the town centre has seen a number of changes due to wider changes in the way High Streets are operating. Town Centres across the country are seeing sizeable changes. The rate of change amongst retailers has been considerable, with a number of major retailers disappearing from Town Centres since 2010. The industry view confirms that this trend is likely to continue into the future. Northampton has seen a number of major retailers close within the Town Centre. At present the Northampton's Retail and Leisure Study (2018) reports a town centre vacancy rate of 14.9% within Northampton Town Centre. This figure represents a reduction from the 2010 figure of 17.3%.

The retail sector is undergoing significant change nationally, Northampton has been impacted by the demise of major retailers since 2010, while there has been growth in independent retailers. Northampton's retail vacancies created since 2010 are larger units in the Town Centre, such as Marks and Spencer, BHS and Market Walk. In some cases these units are neighbouring. While new retailers are not always offering a high quality offer. The performance of the Town Centre is an important signal to the wider economy about the economic health of a location. The performance of Northampton Town Centre is therefore a key priority within the Economic Growth Strategy.

Northampton is current positioned as the 64 highest performing retail centre in the country (Genecom/BEIS) although this positioning has been weakening since 2013/4 (when placed 57<sup>th</sup>). It is noticeable that there is a hierarchy developing between 'retail destinations' that offer a broad 'experience' when allied to a strong cultural and leisure offer, whereas, secondary tier centres, such as Northampton provide a more functional experience as a regional centre. It is this level which is experiencing the most competition, not least as there are a number of regional centres within a 50 mile radius of Northampton.

### 3. Northampton within the Region

#### The Oxford Cambridge Arc

Northampton is located within the Arc and has the potential to be a beneficiary of investment and economic growth relating to the presence of the Arc.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a world leading economic area, underpinned by a high-quality environment. It will deliver transformational growth that will create knowledge-based jobs and boost local and regional economies for the benefit of existing and future communities. It currently has 3.7 million residents and over two million jobs, contributing £111bn of annual Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy per year and the transformative economic potential to contribute nearly £200bn by 2050. It is a highly productive and prosperous region with global strengths in science, technology and high-value manufacturing.

The Arc contains globally renowned universities, and sits at the heart of a business, science and technology ecosystem that makes it one of the most exciting economic growth opportunities in the world. Realising this potential will mean more jobs, of a higher quality, for existing communities and future residents, and can encourage international investment and exports for the benefit of local businesses and the national economy.

The Arc will also require new ways of working between the Government, local partners and businesses to ensure benefits are felt both by local people in the Arc and the national economy. It will require taking a long-term view, up to 2050 and beyond, recognising that this must include protecting and enhancing the natural environment. It will require making the most of current investments in infrastructure, particularly in railways and roads, to ensure that they can support business growth and the delivery of the new homes that the area needs to fulfil its potential.

The Government's Ambition and Joint declaration with partners identified three core areas for Arc to focus; these include;

- Productivity
- Place-making
- Connectivity
- Environment

Northampton has a key role to play within the Arc and share core ambition within the wider area, this includes enabling local communities and businesses to benefit from better jobs, increased wages and greater prosperity and improved productivity.

Place-making in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc means creating places valued by local communities, including through the delivery of sufficient, affordable and high-quality homes, and wider services including health and education. The Government has set out its ambition for up to one million new homes in the Arc by 2050.

The Government has set out a number of schemes that it will invest in to improve connectivity across the Arc. None of these at present directly involve Northampton, however all schemes improve the transport infrastructure across the region.

Map to be inserted here to show the infrastructure projects across the region.

Government has also committed to work with partners locally to encourage strategic thinking around climate resilience, water management and biodiversity net gain. A commitment has been made to explore natural capital thinking throughout across the Arc, including providing £1.2m to develop local natural capital planning.

Northampton will play an active role in supporting the Arc and ensure that it has projects in development that can assist in delivering the Arc's ambition. Equally the Borough Council and its partners need to ensure that Northampton is playing a positive, long term role in the Arc if it is to benefit from the opportunities that will arise.

#### **4. Working with our partners**

Northampton plays a key role within the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

The SEMLEP economy was valued at approximately £52bn in 2017, more than doubling in size since 1998 in nominal terms. The quality of this growth has been strong, with employment rates, and start-up rates above their respective national averages.

SEMLEP has recently produced its Local Industrial Strategy. The Strategy will provide the overarching focus for the economy and the area's relationship with Government and the National Industrial Strategy.

The Local Industrial Strategy is focused upon 'increasing productivity across all sectors and geographies within the SEMLEP area, thereby supporting the aims of the national Industrial Strategy. This means improving energy, transport and digital infrastructure, and being smarter about how this infrastructure is used. Supporting the development of a balanced mix of commercial premises. Linking up businesses and universities across the SEMLEP area and the Arc, to enhance key knowledge transfer. Acting now to put in place a pipeline of

skills that will match the future needs of local employers, particularly in the digital and wider STEM realm.

Supporting businesses not just to start up, but to scale up, grow and prosper. Increasing productivity within the logistics sector by supporting local SMEs to adopt automation and artificial intelligence technologies, addressing the Artificial Intelligence and Data Grand Challenge. Piloting new ways of living and working, and of moving people and freight around. The possibilities for the future are immense. As the high-knowledge economies and clusters of expertise within the Arc become better integrated, the SEMLEP area can act as its Connected Core: a place to collaborate, with the space to test new ideas and capitalise on commercialising new technologies. And a place where people want to live, not just because of its exciting job opportunities, innovation and national and global links, but also because of its attractive cultural assets, natural environment and green credentials’.

Northampton is a key stakeholder within the SEMLEP area, it will be important for the Council and its partners to continue to develop the positive relationship with SEMLEP. There is shared endeavour in the delivery of the Waterside Enterprise Zone. The Borough Council will ensure that there is active dialogue with SEMLEP to ensure that opportunities are seized and delivered, and that where we experience blockages, new solutions are found and addressed through partnership. This Economic Growth Strategy links closely to SEMLEP’s Industrial Strategy and will underpin the contribution Northampton will make to the SEMLEP area.

Northampton Borough Council will continue to work with colleagues in South Northamptonshire and Daventry District Councils as we move into the Unitary authority of West Northamptonshire in April 2021. We will develop a common approach to economic growth as the Unitary Council develops, recognising our collective strengths as an urban centre and outstanding rural areas. When the Unitary council forms there will also be the formation of a Northampton Town Council. We will work closely with the new Town Council in order to promote the interventions and maximise the benefits of this strategy.

Throughout this process, the Borough will also continue to work closely with key partners such as Northamptonshire County Council and neighbouring local authorities as we work on shared priorities such as infrastructure and the sharing of intelligence.

## **5. Growth Scenarios**

Recent data indicates the Northampton economy is experiencing growth pressures across a number of sectors, particularly manufacturing and logistics, mainly due to the availability of labour, but also the willingness to commit to capital project while there is uncertainty with Brexit. This message highlights the risk from future economic change, particularly automation and technology developments, to manufacturing jobs, and also jobs in financial and business services back office functions.

A failure to equip our people with the skills they need to succeed in the modern economy will hold them and hold the Borough’s progress back.

Improvements in infrastructure will be needed to secure and accommodate future growth as well as improving the city’s resilience to extreme weather, and fluctuations in energy prices. SEMLEP’s Energy Strategy also evidences grid constraints in Northampton and surrounding area. These constraints will need to be addressed if economic growth is to continue to benefit the Borough. Any impact of energy constraints could restrict the supply of the new homes and business space we need.

Three Growth Scenarios have been developed to identify potential trajectories for the Northampton economy. These are based on the following premise;

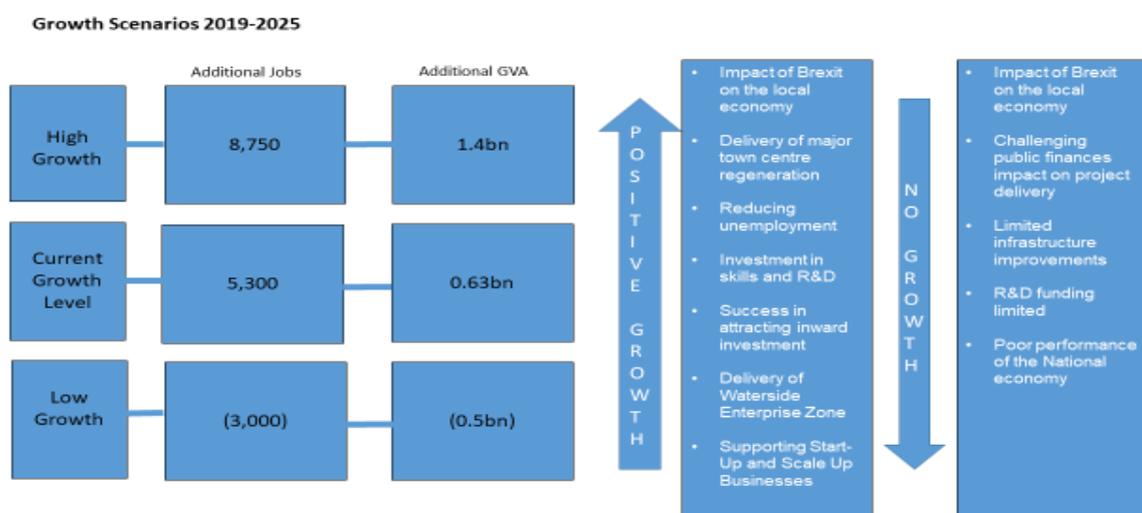
A central scenario, based on a continuation of long-run trends – this would see continued growth in financial and professional services and the knowledge economy, and continued progress with developing new infrastructure and office space in the town centre. This scenario is predicated on national growth remaining positive.

A higher growth scenario, based on a continuation of recent positive trends and progress being made on some of the issues holding the Borough’s economy back – this would require substantial intervention to be made on boosting exports and R&D, increasing infrastructure investment, regeneration, delivering new homes and business space, reducing unemployment, tackling low pay and underemployment, attracting and retaining more graduates. It would be dependent on a strong national economy.

A lower growth / recession scenario, based on an economic downturn as a result of uncertainty and wider business confidence, skills issues, continued weaknesses in infrastructure, and problems associated with low pay and increased unemployment.

The Growth Scenarios serve to outline the potential the Northampton economy possesses. The following section outlines our priorities and how they will assist in creating opportunities for growth and support both existing companies operating in the Borough and future inward investors.

**Figure 3: Growth Scenarios 2019-2025**



Source: ONS

## **Driving our priorities**

The factors that influence Northampton's economy are numerous. The following represents some of the key characteristics, assets and 'influencing factors' for the borough.

We have identified 9 priority areas that through partnership working and taking a long term view we can make necessary interventions to support the local economy and its businesses. These priorities serve to underpin an action plan to encourage growth across the Borough.

Our priorities are:

- Supporting innovators, entrepreneurs and social enterprise
- Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century Town Centre
- Maximising the economic benefits of culture and heritage
- Raising Northampton's profile
- Employers at the heart of the skills system
- Northampton as a digital town
- Effective and efficient infrastructure
- Supporting our key sectors
- Tackling the Climate Emergency

## Supporting Innovators, Entrepreneurs and Social Enterprise

The Borough Council will continue to encourage enterprise. We will work to ensure that the Northampton economy is successful. We will welcome entrepreneurs, innovators and social enterprises and will develop programmes and projects that will ensure that the economy offers the conditions for businesses to thrive.

Our approach	Our focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting start-ups and scale-ups</li> <li>• Boosting innovation throughout the economy, including commercialising knowledge from universities and government, and supporting firms of all sizes in all sectors to improve their products, processes and capabilities</li> <li>• Promoting social enterprises and innovation in public services</li> </ul>	<p>Innovation does not just occur in high tech sectors and top universities. Simple improvements to processes, finding new markets or adapting to new technology can increase productivity. We will continue to support the creation of new businesses and the growth of small businesses, including independents, which are an important part of the Northampton economy.</p> <p>Whilst we have a large number of innovative firms, we need more companies investing in R&amp;D. We are aware that we need more high quality commercial space. Our proposals for the Town Centre will provide new space for economic activity. The Vulcan Works Creative Hub will provide an important focus for the Creative Sector</p> <p>We will support the growth of manufacturing firms, enabling them to access grow-on space and modern premises.</p> <p>There were 1800 start-up companies created in Northampton during 2017 almost double the levels seen in 2012, as well as year on year growth. The failure rate stood at 50% during 2016/17. The Growth Curve programme has been supporting high growth business with support from the region’s Universities including the University of Northampton. New businesses and entrepreneurs will require more support in order to make a success of their business or to overcome any “growing pains” as they scale-up, these include finding employees with the right skills, building their leadership capability, accessing new customers and markets, capital, finance and regulation.</p> <p>We will work with our partners, such as Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, Department for International Trade and SEMLEP to develop a coordinated Export Advice service. This will provide advice and guidance to businesses looking to expand their operation.</p>

	<p>We will support spaces and initiatives that incubate small creative businesses, which may require the development of new spaces to be supported, and the Council to consider how best to use its assets and investments to support small business growth.</p> <p>We will support small independent businesses as they innovate and create jobs, Northampton has more than 2,000 of these businesses. Small businesses need access to the right finance and support to invest in staff training or adopt new technologies.</p> <p>We will support social enterprises, and innovation in public services recognising the positive role social enterprises play in supporting economic growth and inclusion.</p> <p>We will develop a social enterprise strategy with the sector to underpin further growth</p>
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## Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Centre

The pressure on Town Centres has intensified with changing retail, leisure and working patterns. New technology has created a global change in how Town Centres are valued and used. Northampton Town Centre faces a number of challenges resulting from these trends. Tackling these challenges is an important priority for the Borough Council. We will continue to make Northampton a welcoming and safe place for residents and visitors. Working closely with parts such as the Northampton Town Centre BID and the private sector, we will address these challenges. We will continue to address Homelessness and help residents experiencing the most acute problems of disadvantage, exclusion and marginalisation.

Our approach	Our focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will regenerate key town centre sites and continue the delivery of the Waterside Enterprise Zone.</li> </ul>	<p>Working with our partners, we will transform the heart of the town by developing the current Market Square area into a high-quality space that reflects the ambition and pride within the town. We will focus on what makes Northampton unique; creating a new event space, a refashioned market and greatly enhanced public realm that will all work together to act as a regional attractor.</p> <p>Targeted site acquisition will be used to re-purpose property surrounding the square to take advantage of the transformed space they face and drive activity back into the heart of the town.</p> <p>We will create a smaller but stronger retail area anchored around stable retailers and cultural assets in the town centre. Encouraging existing independent retailers from the fringes of the town centre into the new units around the Market Square</p> <p>We will actively encourage and re-purpose vacant retail units and the space above retail into new residential, flexible office and leisure opportunities.</p> <p>New spaces outside of the retail core will be developed that meet market demand, we will restructure vacant space to deliver units that are attractive and can be immediately used. In these areas we will encourage modern flexible office/workspaces to help encourage businesses back into the town centre.</p> <p>We will bring residential communities back into the town centre through transforming tired shopping areas into attractive mixed-use developments and unlocking brownfield sites. New opportunities for North-South</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that</li> </ul>	<p>links will be created to reconnect the Greyfriars area with the rest of the town centre opening up this 4-acre mixed use opportunity.</p> <p>Alongside this, urban scale interventions will be explored to open and reanimate existing poor quality pedestrian links across the town centre. These pinch points for pedestrian flow will be activated with revived shop fronts, new public realm and landscaping and improved external lighting to encourage daytime café culture and evening leisure trade.</p> <p>We will work with our partners and the private sector to deliver key town centre sites. Our approach will be proactive and will support the ethos of the Town Centre Masterplan by seeking to bring high quality investments in retail, culture and housing to a number of sites, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Waterside</li> <li>• Horizon House</li> <li>• Greyfriars</li> <li>• Freeschool Street</li> <li>• Vulcan Works Creative Hub</li> <li>• Railway Station Phase 2</li> </ul> <p>Working alongside SEMLEP we will continue to focus on delivering the Waterside Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>The Enterprise Zone includes extensive underused, vacant and brownfield sites. As an urban EZ it provides a critical mass around existing employment, housing and infrastructure with strong connectivity to the town centre.</p> <p>Despite being recognised as a successful EZ, delivering good job and investment performance, a greater opportunity remains, as the investment on the EZ to date has seen 18 hectares (of 92 hectares) of land developed. This equates to 19% of land in the EZ with a further 74 hectares remaining available for investment. This links closely to SEMLEP’s aim of addressing the undersupply of commercial premises.</p> <p>Working with stakeholders we will continue to ensure</p>
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<p>Northampton Town Centre is a welcoming and safe place</p>	<p>that the Town Centre is a clean and safe environment which welcomes residents and visitors. We will use the regeneration of the Town Centre to create new spaces which improve the ambience and encourages greater usage by a greater range of residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work with communities that face homelessness or marginalisation</li> </ul>	<p>With our stakeholders we will develop and embed practical support, which focuses on helping people to help themselves, provide support and services that will enable individuals to take back control of their own lives</p>

## Maximising the economic benefit of culture and heritage

Northampton has a rich cultural offer including the recently refurbished Delapré Abbey which showcases almost a thousand years of the town’s history. The Cultural and Heritage is currently contributing £146m GVA per annum. This represents a 9.7% increase since 2010. There is considerable public sector investment in Northampton’s heritage with a £6.7 million extension and refurbishment of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery which will complement the existing Cultural Quarter offer featuring the highly successful Royal & Derngate theatres, Northampton Filmhouse, 78 Derngate, and the stunning Victorian Guildhall.

We will work with our partners to ensure that the sector is visible and attracting both residents and visitors into the Borough.

Our approach	Our focus
<p>We will improve how we promote and communicate all of the activities that take place in Northampton</p>	<p>We will work with stakeholders to design a long-term programme which coordinates how our attractions and events promote Northampton’s activities. We will ensure that we attract new visitors and provides residents with a single reference point to access information about Northampton’s events.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing visitors and enhancing the image of Northampton through major cultural events and attractions</li> </ul>	<p>With the largest cluster of world-class shoe manufacturers based in the town, a great history of sporting achievements, the iconic Delapre Abbey, outstanding green spaces and the wide range of events held across the Borough there is a lot to celebrate and help catalyse success.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing the cultural and creative sector as well as boosting creativity across the wider economy, education system and communities</li> </ul>	<p>With our transformative vision for the Town Centre working alongside these great assets we will boost the presence of Northampton as a major creative centre where talent, ideas and enterprise meet.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a coordinated proposition for the Cultural and Heritage sector and promote</li> </ul>	<p>The many beautiful listed period buildings will continue to be a feature of this new vision through carrying out improvements to change these tired buildings into impressive assets. Enabling us to once again showcase Northampton as a place that is ambitious and proud.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the success of the Cultural Quarter to attract new businesses and investment</li> </ul>	<p>We will continue to deliver projects to develop the Castle Area and Heritage Gateway leading to Northampton Town Centre. These projects will encourage residents and visitors to learn about the town’s rich medieval heritage.</p>
	<p>We will deliver a new Museum following a £6.7m</p>

<p>We will investigate how an ambassador programme could help raise Northampton's profile</p>	<p>refurbishment during 2020.</p> <p>The Vulcan Works Creative Hub will be operational in 2020 and provide a focal point and stimulus for start-up businesses in the Creative Sector.</p> <p>We will seek to co-invest in projects which demonstrate that they grow the Cultural and Heritage offer and can demonstrate a contribution to the Economic Growth of the Borough.</p> <p>We will develop the Cultural Quarter working with partners such as the Royal &amp; Derngate and local Arts community to enhance the reputation and visibility of the Quarter and seek to attract new inward investment into the area.</p> <p>With the vibrant Creative sector within the Borough we will seek to utilise the role the sector plays in how we position Northampton through proactive marketing campaigns.</p> <p>Working with stakeholders we will assess whether an ambassadors programme can improve the Borough's visibility. We will review best practice across the country and if applicable design a Northampton programme.</p>
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While the Borough’s geographic position is a strength, it faces significant competition in terms of profile. In recent years Northampton has not had a positive profile, at regional and national level. We will work to improve the profile of Northampton, to market Northampton as an attractive environment for business and tourism, which in turn will boost Inward Investment. This will ensure that a wider audience are aware of the facilities and opportunities available within the Borough.

<b>Our approach</b>	<b>Our focus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive Inward investment proposition, including strengthening links with London</li> <li>• Develop a Tourism proposition that links to countywide activity based on strong themes eg. Food and Drink and Heritage attractions</li> <li>• Use proactive campaigning to attract and retain talented people in Northampton</li> </ul>	<p>We will develop a high quality inward investment proposition that attracts strong levels of enquiry.</p> <p>We will work with our partners to develop the Northampton inward investment proposition, this will focus upon;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a compelling inward investment narrative that establishes Northampton as a premier location for companies seeking a UK base with particular attention on sectors where Northampton has strong representation</li> <li>• We will develop a comprehensive package of measures to attract new business, this will utilise the freedoms available to the Borough Council and partners that will differentiate the Northampton offer from other competitor locations</li> <li>• We will develop a Research pack that can be shared with potential investors that highlights the environment in Northampton and demonstrates the opportunities that exist.</li> <li>• We will develop a proactive media facing campaign to position the Borough as a leading location to receive inward investment.</li> </ul> <p>Alongside our partners, such as Northamptonshire: Britain’s Best surprise we will develop a strong Tourism proposition that will drive visitors to the Borough. We will draw upon our strengths, such as Culture and Heritage and Food and Drink.</p> <p>We will work with partners such as the University of Northampton and key employers to explore how we can attract and retain talented people within the Borough.</p>

**Putting employers at the heart of the skills system**

Increasingly employers are reporting that they are unable to recruit, or when they do skills levels are not a level they require. There is a move nationally to engage with businesses more significantly to ensure that their demands are understood and acted upon within the education system. This is a fundamental challenge the UK is facing, which Northampton needs to address. We will work closely with SEMLEP to deliver the Skills Plan and inform the approach the LEP takes in delivering skills improvements.

SEMLEP reports through the 2017 Skills Plan that across the South East Midlands 23% of businesses reported that they had at least one vacancy that was hard-to-fill. This figure had increased from 18% in 2015. Employers state the key factors in filling these vacancies is not having applicants with the required skills (53%), a small number of applicants (25%) or applicants lacking the required attitude, motivation or personality (24%).

Key employability skills that are required include technical and practical skills, with digital/advanced IT and customer service recognised as being required across West Northamptonshire. Evidence from the CBI highlights that Businesses currently need and will increase the demand for people with higher level skills. 29% of businesses have increased their graduate recruitment with only 9% decreasing their intake. Sectors increasing within Northampton and West Northamptonshire seeking these skills were Professional Services (31%), Engineering, Science and Hi-Tech (15%), Manufacturing (14%), Retail and Hospitality (13%) and Transport and Distribution (13%).

<b>Our approach</b>	<b>Our focus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a programme to drive skills improvements within Northampton</li>   <li>• Bringing employers and education providers together to develop and commission education and training to meet employers' needs and economic priorities</li>   <li>• Supporting our current and future workforce to be resilient to economic change</li>   <li>• Attracting and retaining</li> </ul>	<p>NBC will identify a skills lead within its Economic development team and seek to establish a Northampton Skills Board which will provide governance to coordinate local skills activity. We will develop a broad programme that raises aspiration and connects business skills requirements with local people. We will conduct a Skills Audit during 2020.</p> <p>We will work closely with our key sectors and large employers, such as the primary care and health sector to understand the skills that are required and whether current provision meets those requirements.</p> <p>We will work with the business community, schools – both secondary and primary, colleges, universities and training providers to try to shape a skills system that meets the needs of our economy.</p> <p>Employers and education providers need to work more closely together, with business involvement directly in the classroom to mentor and inspire young people.</p>

<p>talented people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling the skills gap at all levels</li> </ul>	<p>Greater collaboration will help to develop and commission education and training that is tailored to the needs of employers and our economic priorities. We want our employers to commit to invest more in skills training, engage more with schools, and deepen their involvement in education.</p> <p>We will continue to promote apprenticeship as a key route for our communities to access employment. Good work has been done in this area over the last five years to put employers at the heart of the apprenticeship system, they now write the standards required and commission training providers, this not only benefits trainees but also business as the apprenticeship levy can offset funding costs to train staff.</p> <p>We will look at how we can work with employers and providers to improve the skills of the existing workforce, to enhance people’s productivity, progression and resilience. This will include looking at how greater support can be provided to people who lose their jobs or whose skills need to be kept up to date.</p> <p>Supporting enhanced uptake of Apprenticeship levy through the promotion of opportunities to local companies.</p> <p>An increase in graduate level jobs is forecast, but some major employers report challenges in attracting graduate applicants with the right skills, particularly in digital.</p> <p>We will work with the University of Northampton to continue to widen participation of Northampton residents in higher education. We will develop programmes that create better awareness among Northampton students and potential returners (and residents returning from work and study elsewhere) of available jobs in the Borough.</p> <p>We will bring employers and higher education providers together to design courses to address higher level skills shortages, including creating new degree apprenticeships.</p>
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### **Northampton as a digital town**

As the economy becomes more digitised there is an opportunity for Northampton to become a digital city. We will work closely with Digital Northampton to develop the opportunity further and explore how we can utilise big data effectively. We will work with

City Fibre to ensure that the Borough has a digital infrastructure which is high quality. This will serve local businesses and be an attractive benefit for potential inward investors.

How do we support our local digital supply chain?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will investigate how Northampton can become recognised as a ‘Smart City’</li> <li>• Promoting and growing the digital sector</li> <li>• Encouraging every business to become a digital business</li> <li>• Developing a workforce that can be resilient in the context of technological change</li> <li>• Strengthening digital and data infrastructure (including 5G), promoting Northampton as a smart city and using data to help address challenges</li> <li>• Increasing digital inclusion, so all communities can access services, education and training</li> <li>• Using digital technology and data to improve health outcomes and tackle health inequalities</li> </ul>	<p>There is no clear definition of what a ‘Smart City’ is. Working with our partners we will identify the opportunities to define an approach that works for Northampton, in terms of using technology to support local business ambitions and applications that can enhance how public services are delivered.</p> <p>The growth in our digital sector is a sign of a trend towards digital and tech, changing the way we interact, do business and work with communities in the Borough. We need to develop a workforce that can thrive and be resilient in the context of technological change.</p> <p>We will research our local digital supply chain and establish through a Digital Audit how we can better support the wider digital network. We will seek to understand best practice from the Silverstone Tech Cluster and where appropriate work closely to develop mutually beneficial activities.</p> <p>We will continue to develop the digital skills of all our people to support inclusion, access to services, information and jobs.</p> <p>Digital connectivity is an essential part of the modern economy and increasingly people are working in more flexible ways. A smart digital city provides one solution to congestion challenges. Working with City Fibre we will develop a full fibre network which is connected to all premises within the core urban area.</p> <p>We will continue to push for Northampton to be a test city for 5G, in order to provide faster mobile connectivity for commuters and citizens. 5G provides further opportunities in the Internet of Things market, in supporting smart cities and, particularly, the implementation of autonomous vehicles.</p> <p>Smart city technology is developing in Northampton and we want to be at the forefront of this technology. Electric car charge points, parking bay sensors, apps and autonomy will all shape the future of end to end journeys as well as benefiting the environment.</p>
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	<p>We will explore the applications for new technology including Blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning to see how Northampton and the local economy can benefit from new technology.</p>
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### **Efficient & Effective Infrastructure and Transport**

The role of infrastructure remains a key issue for residents and businesses alike. We will work with our partners to identify where improvements need to make to our roads, where

we can influence our rail services and where we can utilise technology effectively to address current blockages.

There is also need for good transport planning and connectivity. Transport connectivity relates to the ability of people and goods to connect spatially and logically with seamless interconnection to other transport modes. Good national, international, inter-regional and intra-regional connections are vital for economic growth. Northampton has good local rail connections with Birmingham to the north and London Euston to the South. The Council will continue to develop Northampton Railway Station as a gateway into the town promoting surrounding sites for major office and hotel development and bring forward development for a multi storey car park at the station.

Our approach	Our focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will co-ordinate plans and leverage investment to improve infrastructure including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transport</li> <li>- Smart cities</li> <li>- Low carbon energy - electricity, hydrogen and water networks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Green infrastructure</li> <li>• Housing of the right quality, type and range in the right places</li> </ul>	<p>Infrastructure improvements should act as a catalyst for regeneration. Improved transport will connect people to jobs, businesses to knowledge and markets, employers to talent, and can enable high densities of productive firms and jobs.</p> <p>We will work with partners to influence and support where we can priority infrastructure developments such as Brackmills &amp; Castle Station Corridor, The North West Bypass, The Northern Orbital Road, The Northampton Growth Management Scheme affecting the A45, Stanwick to Thrapston dualling and the dualling of the A43 from Northampton to Kettering.</p> <p>We will work with the County Council to develop proposals to address congestion in the Town Centre and tackle existing pinch points which hinder journeys across the Borough.</p> <p>We will ensure that capacity is built into our road network prior to major programmes of house building.</p> <p>We will continue to plan for, and support investment in social infrastructure in communities. This will include providing new school places, modernising and improving health services, community facilities, sports facilities and parks.</p>

## 6. Supporting our key sectors

Northampton has a diverse economy. There are a number of key sectors that provide both significant employment for West Northamptonshire and also offer growth potential. Due to the diversity of the economy all local sectors are of importance, however we have identified six key sectors with stakeholders.

Our approach to supporting growth and strategic sectors will vary dependent on: the specific needs of the sector, forthcoming opportunities and the rate of return on investment of resources. The six sectors include;

- Creative & Cultural Industries
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Financial Services
- Logistics
- Health and Wellbeing
- Retail

In addition we will review the Sport and recreation sector within Northampton.

Northampton has a strong Sport and Recreation sector underpinned by nationally visible sporting clubs. The sector is traditionally overlooked in economic development terms. We wish to work with the sector to understand the impact it currently has and explore whether there are mutually beneficial activities which could boost Northampton's image or increase economic activity both within the sector and across the Borough.

Our approach	Our focus
<p>Growth in our main sectors will create wealth and jobs. We are creating the base for business to grow through major development and regeneration sites, and focusing on training and skills. All sectors are important to the Northampton economy.</p> <p>We will develop a detailed approach to engaging with our businesses and with their support form Sector Working Groups. This will enable each sector to work more closely to address key challenges they are facing.</p>	<p>We will strengthen local clusters through enhanced collaboration, with NBC working with business representative organisations to act as a catalyst (particularly in support of innovation). We will develop a programme of support that engages with business and seeks to strengthen local clusters.</p> <p>We will work with local businesses to understand emerging employment and skills gaps and work closely with education providers to ensure that provision helps address these gaps and begin a journey to ensure that Northampton can meet sustainable business demand for skills and ensure that residents possess skills to work within the local economy.</p> <p>We will work review the availability of employment space and work with the developer community to establish the demand for high quality, affordable office space in the city centre</p> <p>We will work with the development community to</p>

	<p>understand the nature of enquiries that are received within the Borough and ensure that this demand is fed into the Planning process. Thereby ensuring a proactive approach to growth opportunities in the short and long term.</p> <p>Working with SEMLEP and Growth Hub we will Identify opportunities to support local sectors through the Government's Sector Deals as they are announced.</p>
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## Tackling the Climate Emergency

Climate change and its repercussions is an acknowledged global problem. Northampton Borough Council will be doing all it can to tackle this issue locally. In a special report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations highlights the need to take immediate action to limit the increase in average global temperatures to a 1.5°C threshold. Even an increase of half a degree beyond this will drastically worsen the risk of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty.

The challenge of climate change is a global issue, but everyone needs to play their part. This is why Northampton Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency. During 2017 Northampton emitted 910kt of carbon emissions (BEIS Carbon Emission data 2005-2017), with West Northamptonshire emitting 2,597 kt of carbon. These figures show reductions from the 2010 data where Northampton emitted 1228kt and West Northamptonshire emitted 3,139kt. The reduction over the 2010-2017 period being 26% in Northampton and 17% for West Northamptonshire. Across the West Northamptonshire area, transport is the major contributor to carbon emissions with Northampton actually seeing an increase by 0.2% while West Northamptonshire reduced by 6%. To compensate for this both the Domestic and Industrial sectors made significant reductions, with Industrial reducing by 36% and Domestic by 31%.

These indicators reveal a positive start to reducing emissions, however more needs to be achieved. Our approach to addressing the climate emergency is as follows:

<b>Our approach</b>	<b>Our focus</b>
Establish a net zero emission economy	We will focus our work on developing approaches to address; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Buildings</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Green infrastructure</li> </ul>
Encourage low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the Borough	We will ensure that cutting carbon presents economic opportunities for Northampton’s companies and the Borough as a whole through the development of local programmes of activity. Work with existing businesses and employers to improve their environmental performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop resident’s low carbon awareness and skills to be able to secure local jobs</li> <li>• Encourage innovative and inclusive local growth</li> </ul>
Develop a resilient economy	We will identify and deliver with our partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved water management</li> <li>• Maximise high levels of renewable local green energy production, supply and storage</li> <li>• Use land to capture and store carbon</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve building standards</li> </ul>
We will ensure that any intervention supports improvements to air quality and health across Northampton	We will support large scale energy efficiency programmes such as insulating homes and further renewables will play a vital role in reducing energy demand.

During 2020, the Borough Council and its partners will develop a detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan that develops our long term approach to tackling the Emergency and addresses the need to reduce carbon emissions effectively.

## 7. Key Sector Profiles

### i) Creative and Cultural Industries

With significant investment already being made in the sector, the digital, creative and cultural sector has grown in national significantly during the last 10 years.

Industries including advertising and marketing, arts and film, TV and radio, and museums and galleries are all part of the Creative sector. The creative industries' contribution to the UK is up from £85bn in 2015 and it is growing at twice the rate of the economy. The sector now makes up more than five per cent of the UK economy's GVA. Much of the increase has been driven by a boom in the computer services sub-sector. While this includes video games, it also covers wider digital industries.

It is important to recognise the support that this sector offers the wider economy by contributing to making Northampton an attractive and increasingly popular place to live and work. The sector currently accounts for 8% of local employment, which reflects a doubling since 2017 from 3,500 jobs to 7,000.

At local level, investment in the Vulcan Works Creative Hub will provide further stimulus for the sector which will help yield further job growth, support the regeneration of the town centre and serve to assist in attracting further inward investment. The Knowledge Intensive Businesses and digital businesses in this sector represent an important contributor to job growth and are a key high-wage contributor to the sector.

#### Sector information

Total Jobs	% of jobs in Northampton	Job growth since 2010	GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy
7,000	4	+60%	146m

Source: Nomis

## ii) Advanced Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector makes significant contributions to the economy, accounting for over 10% of the UK's gross value and employing around 2.5 million people. It accounts for more than half of the UK's exports (53%) and around 3 quarters of business research and development (72%).

For the period 2009-2017 the manufacturing sector in Northampton experienced positive growth in employment (+700 employees since 2010). Northampton is home to a number of key household name manufacturing companies. The Borough's specialisms include High Performance Technology with companies such as Cosworth and Mahle Powertrain located within Northampton, equally the Shoe Industry continues to play an important role with a number of leading companies, such as Church's and Trickers located within the Borough and wider Northamptonshire.

Looking ahead, manufacturing will continue to change and embrace new working practices and technology, and will be virtually unrecognisable from that of 30 years ago. Successful firms will be capable of rapidly adapting their physical and intellectual infrastructures to exploit changes in technology as manufacturing becomes faster, more responsive to changing global markets and closer to customers. The public sector will support the sector by ensuring that flows of highly skilled workers are available. A number of local businesses are already adapting and are world class, but many are not positioned to succeed in a future world where greater opportunities will be balanced by greater global competition.

The quality and skills of the workforce will be a critical factor in capturing competitive advantage. It is essential that local stakeholders focus on the supply of skilled workers, including apprenticeship schemes, support for researchers, and the supply of skilled managers.

In addition the Borough will maintain active engagement with our manufacturers, ensuring that they have the land and premises they require to remain profitable or deliver growth. We will work closely with the sector to understand their investment plans and concerns that the Borough can assist in resolving.

### Sector information

Total Jobs	% of jobs in Northampton	Job growth since 2010	GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy
11,000	8.1	+6.4%	408

Source: Nomis

### iii) Financial Services

Financial Services plays a key role in the Northampton economy with over 8,000 employees working in the sector. The sector operates globally and is facing rapid change due to advancing technologies, evolving customer expectations and a changing regulatory landscape. These changes are creating disruptive innovation in financial services. Examples include crypto-currencies, big data and peer-to-peer lending.

However, the nature and extent of the impact that these innovations will have on the established financial services industry remains unclear. Change can be anticipated in the long term, with Northampton's Financial Services companies able to benefit from new opportunities, but also exposed to any potential impact.

Locally, this sector has been dominated by the decline in back-office functions in recent years resulting in a reduction in the number of employees (-575 since 2010). However, excluding the Banks, the finance sector has grown in terms of the number of firms (+12). A number of Northampton's largest employers operate within this sector and therefore Financial Services will remain an important part of Northampton's economy.

Knowledge intensive businesses within the sector have grown, but not at a fast enough rate to make up for the larger number of job losses experienced in earlier years, due to a long-term trend in outsourcing back office functions.

The Borough Council and its partners will continue to engage with the sector to understand the pressures the sector faces, and determine how the public sector can assist in resolving issues where it can have influence.

#### Sector information

Total Jobs	% of jobs in Northampton	Job growth since 2010	GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy
8,000	5.9	-1.8%	717

Source: Nomis

#### iv) Health and Well-being

The Health and Well-being sector's growth is linked to the ageing population. The growth of the sector can be expected to continue to grow in the long term due to global demographics.

This sector has seen the growth in firms since 2010 (+11) and employees (+234). Northampton's ageing population, the continuing and an increasing demand for health and social care products and services is driving growth in this area. Given the population forecasts for an increasingly aged Northampton population, it is likely that growth in this sector will be sustained.

Digital technologies are creating significant change across the sector, with many companies transitioning to new models of patient-centred care and "smart health" approaches to increase access and affordability, improve quality, and lower costs. From Blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics, to internet of medical things (IoMT), digital and virtual reality are just some of the ways technology is disrupting health care. These technologies are helping with diagnosis and treatment, helping with speed, quality and accuracy, and improving the patient experience. The health and wellbeing sector is looking to technology to assist with rising demands and costs. The sector is anticipating mergers, acquisitions, and strategic partnerships in the medium term. This may have an impact on Northampton's sector.

The Borough Council will work with the sector to understand their business planning and ensure that the correct conditions are in place to ensure their continued growth within the Borough. This will generate employment opportunities locally, and ensure that good quality health support is available to our residents.

#### Sector information

Total Jobs	% of jobs in Northampton	Job growth since 2010	GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy
7,000	5.1	+11.3%	1,127

Source: Nomis

## v) Retail

The Retail sector has been visibly changing since 2009. The impact of online shopping and e-commerce has dramatically impacted upon the High Street. The strength of the Supermarkets has grown and many household named retailers have closed. Northampton has been particularly affected by these closures.

Since 2009, the Northampton retail sector has had a net growth of businesses (+20) but a reduction in overall employee numbers (-420 jobs). During this period, there has been a 57% increase in online retailing creating additional local jobs (+250). The sector continues dominated by part time work and low wages.

Northampton's Town Centre has been considerably affected by global changes to retail. The most significant of which was the decision by Marks and Spencer to closure their Abington Street store. While this reflected their company position and strategy, it also demonstrates how Northampton is currently viewed as a retail location by retailers. The Borough and its partners are actively seeking to move forward schemes that will address the decline that is being experienced.

There is considerable support from stakeholders to regenerate the Town centre. The Borough Council and local stakeholders have established Northampton Forward to lead on the Town Centre strategy, and in particular the High Street Fund made available by Government. The Town Centre Strategy will determine a new way forward for the area. This will present new opportunities for growth once plans are finalised. Local planning policies encouraging mixed land-use (incorporating residential and community uses, within areas traditionally associated with retail) will attract a new offer to the high street, driving additional footfall and supporting growth in the night-time economy. By supporting cafes, bars, restaurants and residential accommodation within the town centre, a revitalised and refreshed high street offer will be achieved. This in turn will encourage businesses to remain open longer, increasing the number of jobs in the area and encouraging further spending by residents and visitors.

### Sector information

<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>% of jobs in Northampton</b>	<b>Job growth since 2010</b>	<b>GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy</b>
6,500	4.7	-5.9%	N/A

*Source: Nomis*

## vi) Logistics

The logistics industry forms a key component of the Northamptonshire economy, with approximately 9% of the workforce employed in logistics and allied fields. The sector is faced with more challenges than other sectors. From Climate change to automation to new technology such as drones, the new sector is adapting to change and increased competitiveness.

Northamptonshire's historic attractiveness as a logistics centre has been based on a business model relies upon a road-centric operation to distribute goods that have been predominantly imported through long-established ports such as Felixstowe and Southampton. Supply chains are long, with lengthy lead times from global trading partners that typically compete on the basis of cost. There is increased pressure to increase sustainability moving away from fossil fuels and to adopt shorter supply chains in order to improve customer satisfaction with delivery times.

The central location of the country has led many businesses to choose Northamptonshire as a location that can serve London, The Midlands and The North with equal service levels. The Borough will continue to play a key role in supporting the sector. The Borough Council will work closely with the sector to understand how the sector is adapting to change and assist where the public sector can influence the performance of the sector.

### Sector information

<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>% of jobs in Northampton</b>	<b>Job growth since 2010</b>	<b>GVA (Millions) generated in the local economy</b>
12,000	8.75	+4.3	1,337

*Source: Nomis*

## 8. Measuring economic outcomes

To ensure effective delivery of our priorities, project teams and strategic leads will be assigned to each. It is important to recognise that the actions prioritised by this review are not static, nor do they reflect all activities undertaken by partners in delivering economic development. Therefore, while the overarching strategic framework will remain stable, the actions themselves will be more fluid, subject to periodic review and tweaked to incorporate new opportunities/interventions as they emerge.

The Council will produce a Bi-Annual Economic Monitor which will draw together a suite of ‘real time’ economic intelligence indicators. The Economic Growth Action Plan sets out the measures and outcomes that the Council is seeking to deliver against each of the Priority areas. The Action Plan also establishes an Outcome by 2025, which sets the overall target by the conclusion of the lifespan of this Economic Growth Strategy. These plans will be ‘living’ documents, monitored and refreshed by project teams and reported to the Northampton Forward Board on a regular basis. This will ensure all partners are working together towards a coherent set of economic objectives, prioritising resources and delivery where appropriate. The Borough Council will also host an Annual Economic Forum to highlight progress being made on the strategy, and to provide an update on economic performance.

<b>Our Priority</b>	<b>Key indicators</b>	<b>Core outcomes</b>
<b>Tackling the Climate Emergency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon emissions (as measured by BEIS)</li> <li>• Carbon emissions by vehicles</li> <li>• Water consumption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVA per hour</li> <li>• Private sector jobs</li> <li>• Employment rate</li> <li>• Average earnings</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting innovators, entrepreneurs and social enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business start-up rate</li> <li>• Business density</li> <li>• Business survival rates</li> </ul>	
<b>Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century Town Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footfall levels</li> <li>• Key schemes delivered</li> <li>• Occupancy levels</li> </ul>	
<b>Maximising the economic benefits of culture and heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment in creative and cultural industries</li> <li>• Volume and value of visitors</li> <li>• Hotel stock and occupancy rates</li> </ul>	
<b>Raising Northampton’s profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visitors</li> <li>• Increase in GVA</li> <li>• Increase in Audience attendance</li> </ul>	
<b>Employers at the heart of the skills system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses reporting skills shortages</li> <li>• Number of schools engaged</li> <li>• Youth-unemployment rate</li> <li>• Number of apprenticeships</li> </ul>	
<b>Northampton as a</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Knowledge-based jobs</li> </ul>	

<b>digital town</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superfast broadband penetration</li> <li>• Number of digital businesses</li> </ul>	
<b>Effective and efficient infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO2e emissions per passenger/tonne km</li> <li>• Travel Time reliability</li> <li>• Air Quality</li> </ul>	
<b>Supporting our key sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Land Developed</li> <li>• GVA levels for the Borough</li> <li>• Increase in employment</li> </ul>	

## **9. Implementing the Economic Growth Strategy**

The growth and success of the Northampton economy has been positive. We are not complacent, and our strategy outlines the necessary steps needed to continue to support growth across the Borough. There are a number of key issues that the Council and its partners will focus upon including; regenerating and refocusing the Town Centre, supporting our entrepreneurs and innovators, proactively working with business to tackle skills gaps and encourage job creation. These are set out in our 9 priorities and apply across all sectors. Delivering inclusive growth is a key theme within this strategy. This is about ensuring that people and places contribute to and benefit from growth to their full potential. Our priority activities are set out in the Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies the projects and approach the Borough Council will be taking to support the local economy from 2020-2025.

## Supporting Innovators, Entrepreneurs and Social Enterprise

Northampton will support entrepreneurs, innovators and social enterprises and will develop programmes and projects that ensure that our economy offers the conditions for businesses to thrive.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will support local businesses by signposting business to SEMLEP's Growth Hub and other partners such as the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce.	We will signpost 100 businesses to the Growth Hub for support.	We will signpost 200 businesses to the Growth Hub for support	Over 500 Northampton businesses will have received growth advice.	NBC EG&R team
253	We will support spaces and initiatives that incubate small creative businesses	The Vulcan Works will be open in 2020.	The Vulcan Works will be 60% occupied. With 25 businesses located in the Hub providing 35 jobs.	The Hub will be recognised as a regional centre for Creative businesses and will be 75% occupied. With 45 businesses operating from the Hub providing 90 jobs.	NBC EG&R team and Vulcan Operator  Growth Hub
3.	We will review the amount of commercial workspace there is within the Borough and identify where we have shortage of good quality facilities	We will conduct a review of the current property market and identify where Northampton lacks commercial space and where there is currently unmet demand from businesses.	We will use the review to identify priorities and where appropriate develop business cases and funding applications which will assist in meeting business demands.	We will have received financial support and delivered the first new workspace premises to meet the local economic demands.	NBC EG&R
4.	We will work with the University of Northampton and other key partners to	We will develop a Social Enterprise Strategy with our partners	We will have delivered priorities set out within the Strategy and be	We will review the Social Enterprise Strategy and assess the impact our work	NBC EG&R, UoN

	develop a Social Enterprise Strategy to underpin further growth for the sector		working closely with the Social Enterprise Sector.	has had on the sector.	
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## Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Centre

Northampton Town Centre faces a number of challenges resulting from national retail trends. Tackling these challenges is an important priority for the Borough Council. Working closely with partners such as Northampton Town Centre BID and the private sector we will address these challenges.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will transform the heart of the town by regenerating the current Market Square into a high-quality space that reflects the ambition and pride within the town.	We will have come up with a final design for the Market Square and we will be implementing the Town Centre Masterplan.	The Market Square will be a high-quality and flexible space. We will have made significant progress with delivering the Masterplan.	We will have delivered a number of improvements to the Town Centre.	NBC EG&R team
255 2.	Our approach will be proactive and will support the ethos of the Town Centre Masterplan and Enterprise Zone by seeking to bring high quality investments in retail, culture and housing to a number of sites, including:  Four Waterside Horizon House Greyfriars Freeschool Street Railway Station Phase 2 Vulcan Works	We will have acquired key sites and premises to begin implementation of the Masterplan.	We will have attracted funding from both the public and private sector to deliver our key projects.	We will have begun to increase the amount of housing available within the Town Centre and built on the profile of the Cultural Quarter.	NBC EG&R team
3.	We will actively	We will continue to	We will be	We will have begun	NBC EG&R

	encourage and re-purpose vacant retail units and the space above retail into new residential, office and leisure opportunities.	progress key sites including:  Market Square Four Waterside Horizon House Grey Friars	progressing the build of Four Waterside and Horizon House. While other key schemes such as Greyfriars will be progressing through planning and securing funds to support implementation.	the development of Four Waterside, Greyfriars, Horizon House and Railway Station Phase 2.	
256 4.	Working alongside SEMLEP we will continue to focus on delivering the Waterside Enterprise Zone  Place marketing Move from 21 <sup>st</sup> Century TC into raising Nptons profile	We will continue to deliver the Enterprise Zone, repositioning the Zone through a new marketing campaign and website. We will then bring forward new sites that can attract new occupiers and inward investment.	Our marketing campaign will have raised the profile of the Enterprise Zone and lead to a 50% increase in investment enquiries and relocation of 10 additional businesses on to the Enterprise Zone.	The Enterprise Zone will have attracted businesses onto a further 8ha of the zone with a net new 500 jobs available.	NBC EG&R

## Maximising the Economic Benefits of Culture and Heritage

Northampton has outstanding Cultural and Heritage assets. We will work with our partners to ensure that the sector is visible and attracts both residents and visitors into the Borough.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will work with our local partners to ensure that we are promoting the sector and it's offer to the widest audience.	We will review current activity and design a new cultural and heritage programme.	A coordinated programme will be implemented which increases visitors' numbers to our cultural and heritage assets	All local assets report increased numbers year on year	NBC EG&R team
257	We will deliver a new Museum and Art Gallery following a £6.7m refurbishment during 2020.	The new Museum and Art Gallery will be open to the public in 2020.	The Museum and Art Gallery will be attracting XXX visitors per annum	The Museum and Art Gallery will be attracting XXX visitors per annum	
3.	The Vulcan Works will be operational in 2020 and provide a focal point and stimulus for start-up businesses in the Creative sector.	Vulcan Works will be open as a new facility for creative businesses.	The Vulcan Works will be 60% occupied and home to 25 creative businesses.	The Vulcan Works will be 75% occupied and home to 45 creative businesses.	NBC EG&R

4.	We will develop the Cultural Quarter working with partners such as the Royal & Derngate, NN Contemporary and the local arts community to enhance the reputation and visibility of the Quarter and seek to attract inward investment in to the area.	We will work with our partners to explore how we can further develop Northampton as a cultural and heritage centre for both residents and visitors.	We will deliver a programme to increase the visibility of the Creative Quarter attracting new business investment and attracting new jobs.	We will have attracted 25 new creative businesses into the Creative Quarter and have an additional 50 new creative jobs operating within the Quarter.	NBC EG&R

## Raising Northampton's Profile

We will work to improve the profile of Northampton, to market Northampton as an attractive environment for business and tourism, which in turn will boost inward investment.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will develop a comprehensive Inward Investment Strategy and proposition, including strengthening links with London	We will start to implement our new inward investment marketing campaign	We will have attracted 50 new businesses into the Borough delivering 150 new jobs.	We will have attracted 75 new business and 225 new jobs.	NBC EG&R team
259 2.	We will continue to deliver the Waterside Enterprise Zone and develop a place marketing campaign to underpin this.	We will have started to implement our place marketing campaign which will market the Enterprise Zone as an attractive place to invest and do business.	We will have established an Enterprise Zone strategy, website and marketing material to gain investment into the area.	We will have seen a large amount of businesses locate in the Enterprise Zone with high value job growth.	NBC EG&R team
3.	Alongside our partners, such as Northamptonshire: Britain's Best surprise we will develop a strong Tourism proposition that will drive visitors to the Borough. We will draw upon our strengths, such as Culture and Heritage and Food and Drink.	We will work with partners to develop a strong Tourism programme.	We will have seen a 10% increase in the number of visitors to Northampton and a 10% increase in the amount of Tourism spend within the Borough.	We will have seen a 15% increase in the number of visitors to Northampton and a 15% increase in the amount of Tourism spend within the Borough.	NBC EG&R team
4.	We will work with	We will develop a	We will see an	We will see an	NBC EG&R team

	partners such as the University of Northampton and key employers to explore how we can attract and retain talented people within the Borough.	programme of activity with our partners which identifies how we can attract and retain talent within the Borough.	increase in the number graduates remaining in Northampton increase by 10%	increase in the number of graduates remaining in Northampton increase by 15%	
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## Employers at the Heart of the Skills System

We want to ensure that businesses demand for skills are understood and acted upon within the education system.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will work with the business community, schools, colleges, university and training providers to shape a Skills Strategy and action plan which sets out a system that meets the needs of our economy.	We will work with our partners to devise a strategy and programme that connects businesses with educational institutions.	Our programme will be working with schools (primary and secondary), colleges, the university and training providers all across Northampton.	By 2025, we will have a robust skills hub and network.	NBC EG&R team
261 2.	We will work closely with partners such as SEMLEP, the University of Northampton and Northampton College to develop programmes which bring employers and education providers together to develop and commission education and training providers to meet employer's needs and economic priorities.	Programmes will be developed which support our current and future workforce to be resilient to economic change, attract and retain talented people and tackle the skills gap at all levels.		The skills profile in Northampton will be above the national average and a smaller number of businesses will cite skills shortages as a barrier to their business.	NBC EG&R team SEMLEP UoN Northampton College
3.	We will work with partners such as the University of Northampton and key employers to explore how we can attract	We will develop a programme of activity with our partners which identifies how we can attract and retain	We will see an increase in the number of graduates remaining in Northampton by 10%	We will see an increase in the number of graduates remaining in Northampton by 15%	NBC EG&R team UoN

	and retain talented people within the Borough.	talent within the Borough.			
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## Northampton as a Digital Town

We want to ensure that Northampton has a high-quality digital infrastructure that supports both business and resident ambitions.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We want Northampton to be a smart city and be at the forefront of technological change. We will work with City Fibre to develop a full fibre network across the Borough.	Fibre Cover within the Borough will be XXX%	Fibre Cover within the Borough will be XXX%	Fibre Cover within the Borough will be XXX%	City Fibre
263 2.	We will push for Northampton to be a testbed for 5G, in order to provide faster mobile connectivity for businesses and residents.	We will develop partnerships with the private sector in order to develop proposals which will use Northampton as a test bed.	We will have developed a programme to establish the Borough as a test bed.	We will have delivered a programme and be evaluating the impact and promoting Northampton as location to invest in for further testing.	NBC EG&R team
3.	We will explore the applications for new technology as it becomes available including Blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning	We will work with partners to assess the opportunities that exist for Northampton to benefit from new technology.	We will review options and where an opportunity presents, we will design a programme with our partners.	We will have developed a programme which has utilised new technology and benefitted local residents and	NBC EG&R team

	to see how Northampton and the local economy can benefit from new technology.			businesses.	
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## Effective and Efficient Infrastructure

We will work with our partners to identify where improvements need to be made to our roads, where we can influence our rail services and where we can utilise technology effectively to address current blockages.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will work with Northamptonshire County Council to develop a Transport Strategy to address congestion in the Town Centre and tackle existing pinch points which hinder journeys across the Borough.	Working with partners we will develop out the business cases required to secure funding to make the identified improvements.	We will have addressed the key pinch points in line with progress we are making with the Town Centre Masterplan.	We will have addressed all pinch points within the Town Centre and be delivering improvements that support alternative means of transport.	
265 2.	We will work with partners to bring forward the following priority improvements; Brackmills & Castle Station Corridor, the North West Bypass, the Northern Orbital Road, the Northampton Growth Management Scheme affecting the A45 and the dualling of the A43 from Northampton to Kettering.	Working with partners we will design the business cases required to secure funding to make the improvements	We will have secured funds for a number of schemes and be commencing delivery of the schemes	We will be delivering improvements to a number of priority schemes	

## Supporting Our Key Sectors

We will develop a detailed approach to engaging with our businesses to encourage growth and resolve issues that may be impacting upon growth opportunities.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will work with existing local networks and clusters to provide support to local businesses.	We will work our partners to identify how NBC can work with local networks to assist in tackling existing issues and blockages that impact on business operation across Northampton. We will identify gaps in networking and aim to fill these.	We will be supporting local networks which meet regularly to discuss issues and opportunities facing local businesses.	Our work with local networks will have secured additional funds for local initiatives and have supported 25 businesses to secure funds for new innovative products.	
266 2.	We will review the availability of employment space and work with the developer community to establish the demand space across the Borough.	We will conduct a review to assess current demand and the condition of existing vacant premises.	We will have used the outcome of the review to deliver a programme which delivers new employment space and facilities with the Borough.	We will have developed new facilities with support from external funds to meet the needs of businesses.	
3.	Working with SEMLEP and the Growth Hub we will identify opportunities to support local sectors through the Government's Sector Deals as they are announced.	We will work closely with the Growth Hub to understand the opportunities available to local businesses through Government support, including the current Sector Deals which are available.	We will have secured support through the Growth Deal for our key sectors.	We will be working closely with our local sectors to support their growth, with key outcomes relating to 250 new jobs and 20 businesses moving to new expanded facilities within the Borough.	

4.	To ensure that measures are in place to address future economic shocks	We will develop an Economic Recovery Strategy in partnership with our stakeholders.	An agreed Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan will be agreed and implemented.	The strategy will be held in reserve to enhance economic resilience should it be required.	
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## Tackling the Climate Emergency

The Council have declared a Climate Emergency and has agreed that by 2030 Northampton will become a zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilient town, playing it's part in limiting the impacts of climate change, both locally and globally, where residents, businesses and partners all benefit from the improved environment.

No.	Key Actions	Year 1 Impact	Year 3 Impact	Impact by 2025	Lead
1.	We will work with our business community to educate them on climate change and encourage green infrastructure.	We will devise a programme of activity to work with businesses and residents to develop low carbon awareness.	We will have encouraged low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the Borough.	We will have seen the economic benefits that cutting carbon presents for Northampton and we would have encouraged innovative clean growth.	NBC EG&R Team and Planning
268 2.	We will contribute and work with our partners to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan.	We will have identified a plan that develops our long-term approach to tackling the Climate Emergency and address the need to reduce carbon emissions effectively.	We will have started to implement our action plan and developed approaches to address Transport, Buildings, Waste, Energy, Procurement and Green Infrastructure.	We will have noticed a significant reduction in carbon emissions and will be able to see progress in becoming a net zero emission economy.	NBC EG&R Team and Planning
3.	We will ensure that any interventions support improvements to air quality and health across Northampton.	We will review the work being undertaken as part of the Town Centre Masterplan and Enterprise Zone to ensure that all work meets the sustainability requirements.	We will continue to deliver our priority sites in line with the climate emergency policy and work with businesses to support large scale energy efficiency programmes such as insulating homes and renewable energy,	We will have supported local initiatives that mitigate climate change and demonstrate Northampton's commitment to carbon reduction and adaption.	NBC EG&R Team and Planning

# **Northampton Borough Council Economic Growth Strategy**

**DATA PACK**

**May 2020**

**Produced by**



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## 1. Overview

This Data Pack seeks to provide an overall compendium of information related to the economic performance of Northampton. The Data Pack reviews existing data available from local, regional and national sources. It seeks to identify the strategic themes that will be developed as the Economic Growth Strategy is drafted.

Through the research, a wealth of data is clearly available. The Data Pack has therefore sought to address two key issues;

- i) Considering Northampton as a single unit
- ii) Assessing Northampton against the wider South East Midlands LEP's performance

This evidence will be invaluable in developing the Economic Growth Strategy and in demonstrating both the issues and opportunities facing Northampton.

The Data Pack seeks to review the national economic picture, the SEMLEP area and Northampton specifically. The research seeks to link the three geographies together and develop an evidence base that demonstrates that Northampton requires investment, and in certain areas new policies.

The Data Pack should be seen a living document. As the project develops additional information will be added to ensure that the document is dynamic and underpins the Economic Growth Strategy.

## 2. Objectives

The purpose of this work is to produce an Economic Growth Strategy/study for Northampton within the context of the region economic picture, and that of SEMLEP. The objective of the Economic Growth Strategy will be enhancing the ability of Northampton Borough Council (and partners) to identify and focus on action that will grow business or create conditions for growth

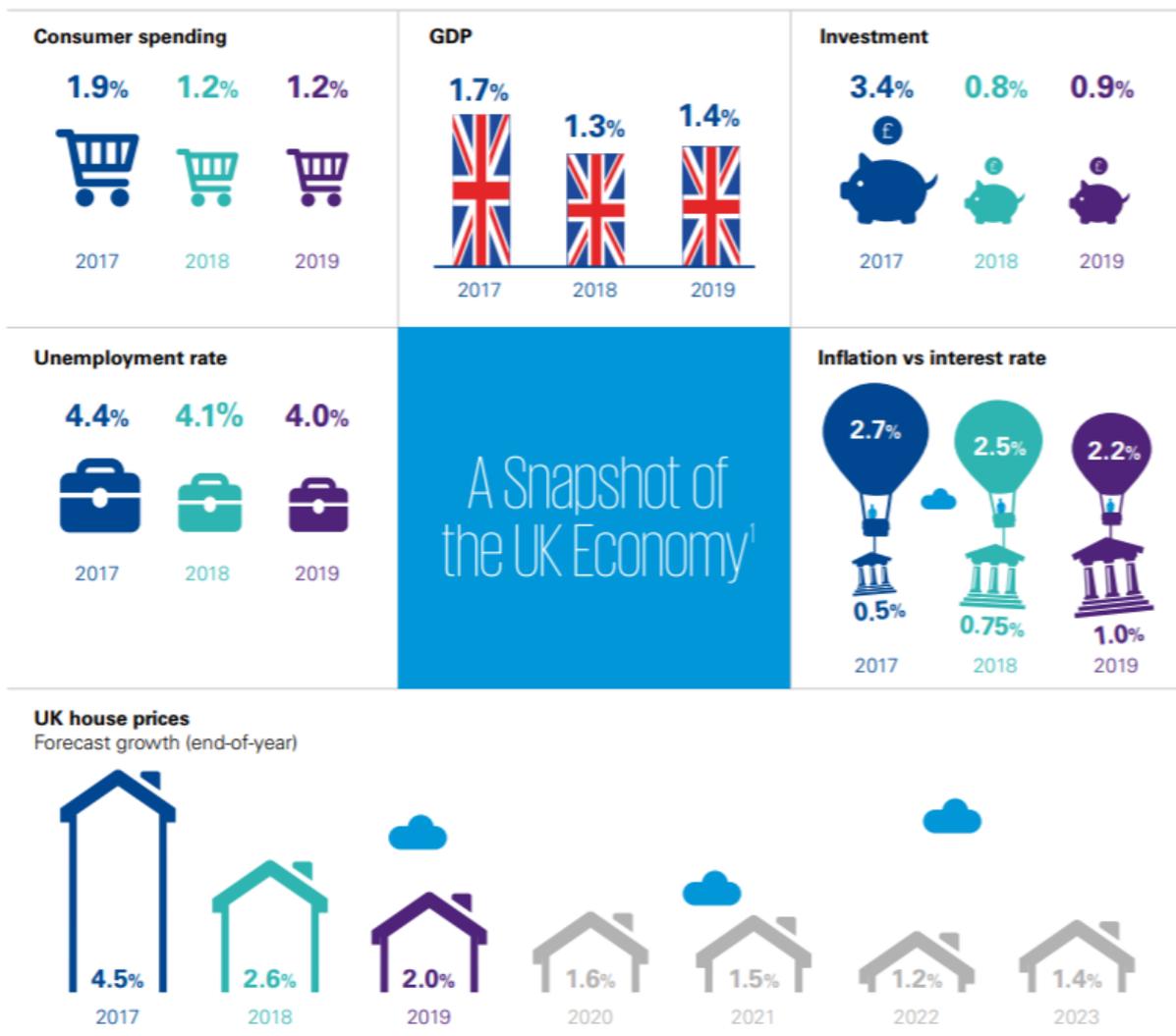
The Economic Growth Strategy will identify key: opportunities, issues, challenges and strategic priorities for Northampton aimed at:

- Improving economic performance absolutely but also relative to the regional and national economy.
- Improving economic inclusion.
- Developing specific initiatives around key sectors, housing, infrastructure, small and micro businesses and generally improve economic performance to benefit communities, residents and business.

This Data Pack will provide supporting evidence to underpin Northampton's Economic Growth Strategy, drawing together information that demonstrates the Community, Economic and Environmental issues that Northampton currently faces.

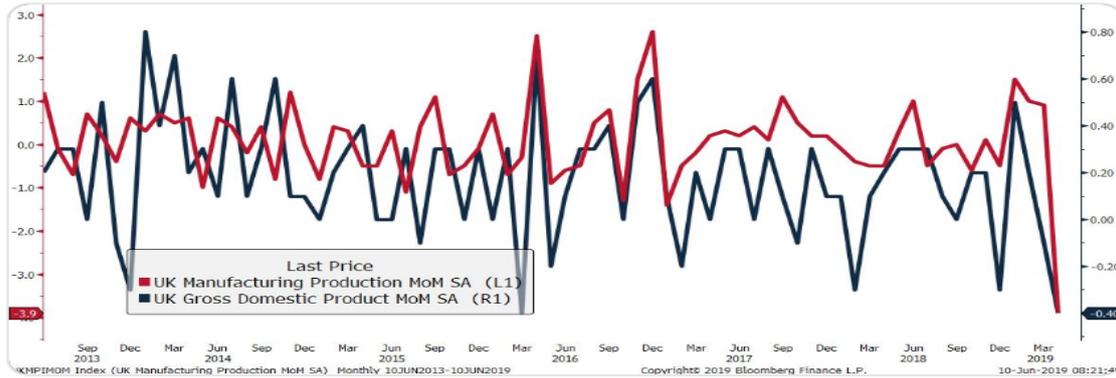
### 3. National Economic Context

As is well publicised, the UK is currently going through turbulent economic times, not least due to continued uncertainty around Brexit. As is depicted in Table 1, there is currently consistent reporting of key indicators, with consumer spending, GDP and Investment and Inflation all falling. While the Unemployment rate also continues to fall. House price forecasts suggest that lower growth can be expected over the next few years.



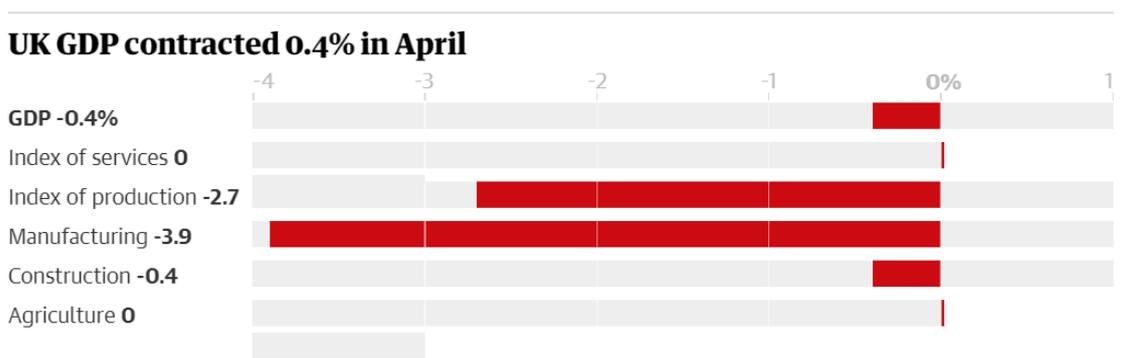
Source: A snapshot of the UK Economy

The UK economy has posted its weakest growth figures in three years. Table 2 below demonstrates that UK GDP shrank by 0.4% in April, rather worse than economists expected, dragging the rolling three-month growth rate down to 0.3%



Source: Bloomberg Finance

Table 3 sets out the GDP performance of key sectors. The decline was principally due to a 3.9% contraction across manufacturing, the worst decline since 2002, as UK car producers implemented planned shutdowns in case Britain had exited the European Union at the end of March. Car manufacturing slumped by 24%, while transport output suffered its biggest fall since 1974. The construction sector has also, dropped by 0.4%, while service sector was flat.



Source: ONS

With the current level of uncertainty in the UK economy, there are significant implications for all areas of the UK's economy. The national context is important as it sets the conditions for regional and local growth. Having reviewed the national level, it is important to consider the performance of the wider South East.

The most pertinent national context for Northampton is the National Industrial Strategy. There are a number of themes, or 'foundations' within the Industrial Strategy that will have strong influence on how the Economic Growth Strategy is shaped and ultimately delivered. The 'foundations' set out to address how the country will boost productivity and earning power by focusing on the 5 foundations of productivity. Our 5 foundations support our vision for a transformed economy. The foundations are particularly pertinent to the Northampton, as they are the cornerstone of a strong economy and delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in all communities. The foundations include;

**i) Ideas – being the world's most innovative economy**

Our ability to innovate – to develop new ideas and deploy them – is one of Britain’s great historic strengths, from the jet engine and the bagless vacuum to MRI scanners and the World Wide Web. We are a global leader in science and research: top in measures of research excellence and home to four of the top 10 universities in the world.

#### **ii) People - To generate good jobs and greater earning power for all**

Our employment rate is at a near historic high – one of the fastest post-recession rates relative to other major economies. It is underpinned by a world-class higher education system, the first choice of students and researchers around the world. Employers are ever more closely involved in the system, and we are committed to delivering three million apprenticeship starts by 2020.

The Industrial Strategy states that we still face challenges in meeting our business needs for talent, skills and labour. In the past, we have given insufficient attention to technical education. We do not have enough people skilled in science, technology, engineering and maths. We need to narrow disparities between communities in skills and education and remove barriers faced by workers from underrepresented groups in realising their potential.

#### **iii) Infrastructure - A major upgrade to the UK’s infrastructure**

Infrastructure is the essential underpinning of our lives and work, and having modern and accessible infrastructure throughout the country is essential to our future growth and prosperity.

We must make sure our infrastructure choices not only provide the basics for the economy, they must actively support our long-term productivity, providing greater certainty and clear strategic direction. Our investment decisions need to be more geographically balanced and include more local voices. We can improve how we link up people and markets to attract investment, and we must be more forward-looking in respect of significant global economic trends.

#### **iv) Business Environment - To be the best place to start and grow a business**

Our challenge is to improve how we spread the best practice of our most productive businesses. We are one of the world’s great financial centres, yet growing businesses sometimes face difficulty in accessing finance.

Our managers are, on average, less proficient than many competitors, and we should make better connections between high-performing businesses and their supply chains.

Our Industrial Strategy aims to make Britain the best place to start and grow a business, and a global draw for innovators. We will drive productivity in businesses of all sizes by increasing collaboration, building skills and ensuring everyone has the opportunity of good work and high-paying jobs. We will ensure the financial sector is better connected to the rest of the economy, driving impactful investments.

#### **v) Places – to have prosperous communities across the UK**

Many places are not realising their full potential. The UK has greater disparities in regional productivity than other European countries. This affects people in their pay, their work opportunities and their life chances.

Every region in the UK has a role to play in boosting the national economy. We will build on the strong foundations of our city, growth and devolution deals and continue to work in partnership with local leaders to drive productivity. We will introduce Local Industrial Strategies and further strengthen local leadership through Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral Combined Authorities.

The Government will also introduce new policies to improve skills in all parts of the country, create more connected infrastructure, back innovation strengths, ensure land is available for housing growth, and strengthen our cultural assets.

Each of these foundations set out how the Government will invest resource in tackling a number of issues that create issues across the country. Each foundation is pertinent to Northampton to a greater or lesser extent.

In addition to the foundations, Government has identified 4 'Grand Challenges', these being macro level issues that the country needs to address. The four Grand Challenges are:

1. Artificial intelligence and data
2. Ageing society
3. Clean growth
4. Future of mobility

The Northampton Economy links closely to each of the four Grand Challenges. However the Borough is well-placed to contribute to both the Future of Mobility and Clean Growth grand challenges are aligned to the Borough Council's ambition to establish Northampton as a Smart City. In addition with the strength in the Health and Well-being sector, the Borough will be able to assist in support the Ageing Society grand challenge. The Borough will consider with its stakeholders how local activity can support Ageing Society innovation or whether the Borough can provide an urban testbed for new technology and applications.

#### 4. South East Midlands Local Industrial Strategy Context

##### a. Overview

SEMLEP occupies a strategically and economically important position at the nexus of Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham and London. Over the past two decades, the population of SEMLEP has grown faster than any other LEP area outside London, and at 10% above the UK average to c. 2 million.

In recent years, SEMLEP has contributed a substantial, and increasing, share of national housing completion. The areas also contributes some £50bn in GVA to the national economy.

There are over 90,000 PAYE-registered business enterprises in the SEMLEP area, and the size split is broadly comparable with England.

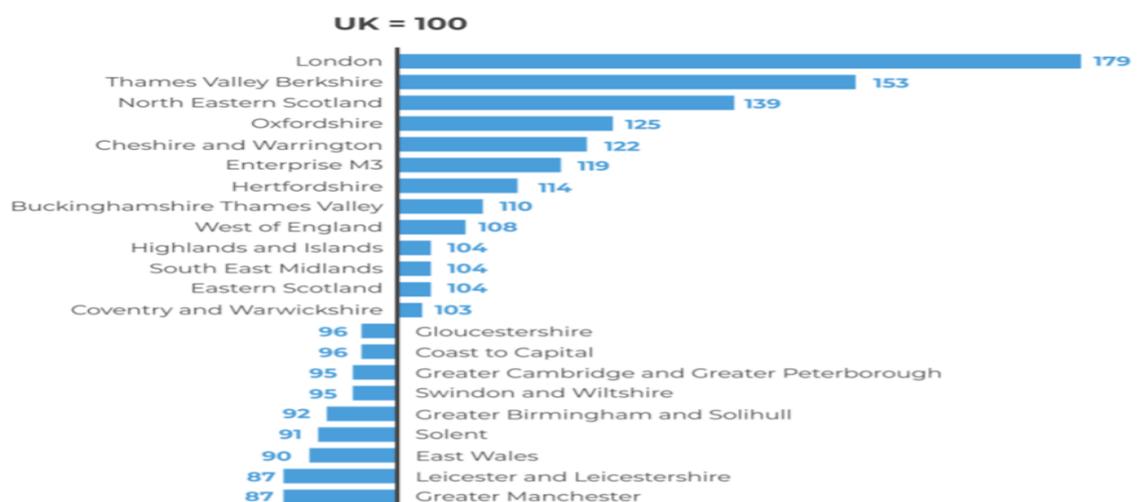
The SEMLEP area has a high employment rate; 62% for all over 16 years old and is the top performing LEP for recent employment growth (just under 6% versus the national average of just under 2%)

##### b. Productivity.

SEMLEP’s overall productivity is not as high as elsewhere in the OxCam Arc, or the greater South East. High productivity sectors include Construction, Manufacturing, Real Estate, ICT & Finance whilst lower productivity is evident in Logistics sub-sectors and Food & Drink service activities.

Only four local authorities in the SEMLEP area have higher work place wages than the England average (not including Northampton), with earnings in the SEMLEP area being below the average for England but recent real wage growth in much of the SEMLEP area has outstripped that of England (by 3.5% in Northampton).

Table 4 below sets out Gross Value Added figures per head by Sub Region (2017 figures; ONS). On current performance SEMLEP is placed 11<sup>th</sup> of the 38 LEPs in the UK;



Source ONS

#### c. Skills

Qualifications in SEMLEP are above the national average and in line with Cambridgeshire, but below those of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire although this masks considerable variation within the SEMLEP area (Northampton appearing above average within SEMLEP). Baseline forecasts suggest that higher qualifications will become more dominant in the workforce, with all workers having a qualification by 2038.

#### d. Key sectors

SEMELP has key sectors that include Manufacturing and Advanced/High Technology, Creative and Cultural and above average representation of Agritech, Medical related goods and services and Computer Sciences.

The South East Midlands is a key player in the development of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, and Next Generation Transport more broadly and is unique in the testing facilities that it provides (including MAHLE Real Emissions Testing Centre). The area also has a number of Food & Drink Innovation Assets including Moulton College: Food & Drink Innovation Centre.

Due to SEMLEP's geographic position and road/rail networks, it has an extensive Logistics sector, which is not as innovative as other parts of the SEMLEP economy, and at the national level, is facing a major challenge from a lack of digital culture & training.

#### e. Housing

Delivery in SEMLEP, 2016/17-2025/26 are on target, unlike most to the authorities in the OxCam Arc, to achieve over 130,000 new homes by 2025/26. Delivery varies across the SEMLEP Local Authorities. The South East Midlands accounted for around 6% of total England housing starts and completions in 2018, relative to 3.4% of its population.

#### f. Economic Constraints

Skills and Employment premises both act as significant constraints on local business growth, with 33% citing skills shortages as a barrier to optimum growth in 2017. Within the existing workforce, businesses are most likely to report a lack of job-specific and technical and practical skills and businesses report only a small number of job applicants with the skills they require.

In additions the availability of suitable premises in the SEMLEP area is not rated well by smaller businesses. In particular.

- Other constraints reported by SEMLEP businesses include;
- Electric grid capacity
- Rural broadband
- BREXIT (skills availability and exporting)
- Roads and congestion (particularly East/West)
- Business support (for existing SME's and Start-up)

g. Future Trends

SEMLEP consider the major trends that will impact upon the area include;

- Continued demographic growth (above UK average)
- An aging population
- An economy also expected to grow faster than other areas, even without additional intervention
- Automation and technological advances having a positive overall economic impact, but leading to changes in required workforce skills
- Economic potential in a number of areas, including the Connected and Autonomous Vehicles industry, Food and Drink (including processing) and Manufacturing & Advanced Technology.

## 5. Northampton's Economic Context

a. Industrial structure

Northampton is home to 10,715 enterprises (Table 1: Inter Departmental Register UK Business Counts (2018)). Of these over 90% of companies employ less than 9 people. By comparison Northampton is home to 55 large companies employing over 250 people, this compares well to the rest of the East Midlands and points to the town being one of the strategic locations within the region alongside Milton Keynes, Leicester and Nottingham.

UK Business Counts (2018)				
	Northampton (Numbers)	Northampton (%)	East Midlands (Numbers)	East Midlands (%)
<b>Enterprises</b>				
Micro (0 To 9)	9,705	90.6	158,840	88.9
Small (10 To 49)	780	7.3	16,300	9.1
Medium (50 To 249)	175	1.6	2,930	1.6
Large (250+)	55	0.5	680	0.4
Total	10,715	-	178,745	-

Table 1: Inter Departmental UK Business Counts 2018

An advantage of this structure is that because employment is distributed among a large number of smaller companies rather than being concentrated in a small number of large corporations, the economy is less at risk of economic shocks more likely to be experienced by having a high concentration of large internationally mobile companies. This means that SMEs are well placed to support future job creation.

The economy's structure is also similar to neighbouring towns and cities. There is currently an over reliance on a small number of sectors, which has largely been driven by the location of the town and its proximity to the M1. However with the increasing digitisation and use of technology, in many cases there is less requirement for businesses beyond the logistics sector to be located close to major infrastructure.

This presents a challenge for Northampton, as the town has grown from its connection to the M1. With new technology now driving much of the economy the Borough needs to serve new economic forces and ensure that it captures economic growth from digital business, the creative sector, the knowledge economy – including Health and Environment. There is also a

need to reinvent the image of the town, in order to move away from the current image as a logistics and manufacturing area. The current sector composition is set out in Table 2.

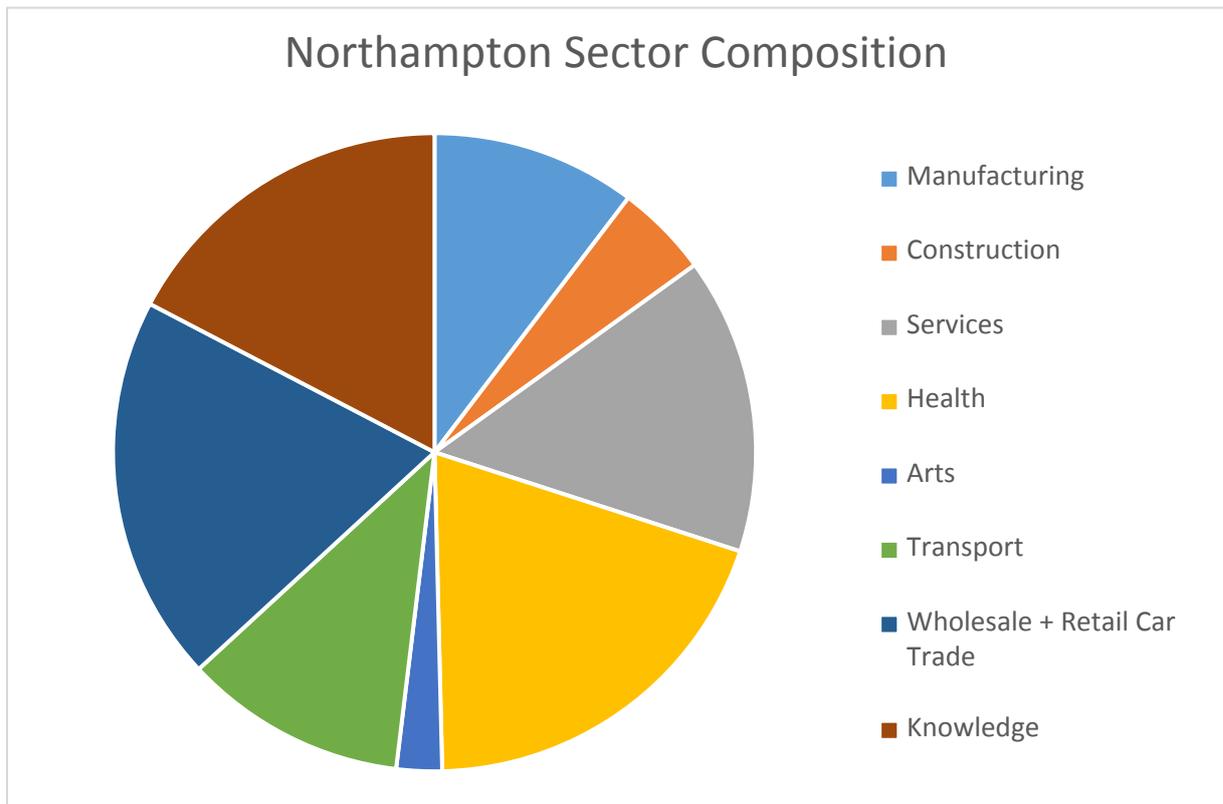


Table 2: Northampton sector composition

#### b. Business and Innovation

Northampton was named the ‘most enterprising town’ for business start ups in 2016 by the Centre for Cities’ within their Cities Outlook 2016 report. This analysis revealed that Northampton had the highest average increase in the number of businesses and the highest margin between start-ups and closures during 2013-14. Based on the 2017 Outlook report, Northampton remained in 2nd place with only London moving above the town. This positioning recognises that Northampton continues to offer an affordable location for business to become established and also demonstrates that the local community have an enterprising outlook.

Almost inevitably locations with high numbers of business start-ups also have a high number of business failures, this is true of Northampton, however the positioning in the Cities Outlook demonstrates that a business has currently more chance of surviving in Northampton rather than anywhere else except London.

Northampton currently has 13.6% of its businesses classified as operating within the ‘Knowledge economy’ (ONS business register 2018). The Knowledge economy is defined as an ‘Economy based on creating, evaluating, and trading knowledge’. It is typically a technology driven sector and is considered to be the leading sector of a modern economy. Within the Cities Outlook 2017, Northampton was position as the 21<sup>st</sup> (17,100 jobs) most knowledge driven economy of the 62 cities analysed. Locally, Milton Keynes was placed 6<sup>th</sup> (32,300 jobs), Peterborough 16<sup>th</sup> (15,200 jobs) Coventry 20<sup>th</sup> (21,300 jobs) and Luton 37<sup>th</sup> (9,600 jobs).

The depth of the Knowledge economy is an important indicator of how the economy is changing to reflect new demands and the adoption of technology. A position of 21<sup>st</sup> reflects that Northampton is changing, but not necessarily as fast as the leading cities. This analysis is supported by the data concerning the number of Patent applications made by business. Northampton in this area has been positioned as 31<sup>st</sup> of 63. By comparison Coventry is in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Milton Keynes 11<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough 13<sup>th</sup>, while Luton trails considerably in 60<sup>th</sup>.

This analysis again points to Northampton's economy being dominated by Small Medium sized enterprises, while the large companies in the area typically have a presence through production centres and distribution units rather than their headquarters or research and development centres. There is an opportunity for the Borough Council and its partners to identify interventions that could assist in developing the existing Knowledge economy further or attracting new investment into the Borough in this sector.

Data that reinforces this picture includes Northampton contributing a Gross Value Added (which is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy) of £6.2bn in 2015. This places Northampton as 35<sup>th</sup>/63, which again reflects the nature of the economy being driven by logistics and manufacturing.

ONS analysis reveals that Northampton is currently 8% less productive than the national average. Although it should be noted that if London were removed from the analysis, Northampton would be significantly closer to the national average. However, this demonstrates that Northampton does need to identify ways of diversifying the local economy further to address some of these inherent weaknesses. Northampton does have a number of opportunities, including the recent opening of the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus, the planned growth and provision of space within the Cultural Quarter and availability of land within the Waterside Enterprise Zone.

### c. Jobs, Wages and Unemployment

Northampton is currently home to 153,000 jobs (Nomis, Annual Population Survey 2018). The Borough has seen a slight reduction in the number of jobs during the year of around 500 positions, including some high profile departures, principally within the Town Centre. The Borough also supports a higher proportion of Public sector jobs compared to Private sector jobs, with the Cities Outlook reporting Northampton in 16<sup>th</sup> position. This reflects the role Northampton plays in the County in hosting the County Council and major Health facilities.

The average weekly wage in Northampton is currently £536.50 per week (ONS Labour Force report). This is reported by the Centre for Cities as an average performing area (32<sup>nd</sup>/63), this again points to the prevalent sectors within the Borough, which are typically employing lower skilled workers. Compared to the National average, the Borough is current lower than the national figure of £571.10 per week.

From the Borough's own conversations with local businesses it is evident that all sectors struggle to find staff, and invariably when they do, the company has to deliver its own training in order to develop required skills sets and expertise.

Table 3 below sets out the local comparison between wage levels. The picture across Northamptonshire is relatively similar, with only South Northamptonshire offering a higher wage than Northampton. This can be attributed to the specialism South Northamptonshire

has around its dominant sectors, which includes high performing manufacturing to support the Motorsport industry.



Table 3: Average Salary County comparison

Unemployment within the Borough continues to be at a lower level than nationally. In June 2018, unemployment in the Borough was recorded at 4.1% while nationally the level was 4.2%. The regional comparison is of more concern where, Northampton compares less well against 3.9% across the rest of the East Midlands. It should be noted that unemployment across the region has been reducing since mid-2017.

Table 4 below sets out Northampton's performance against its County neighbours. This reflects a closely balanced performance on unemployment over the past 20 years.

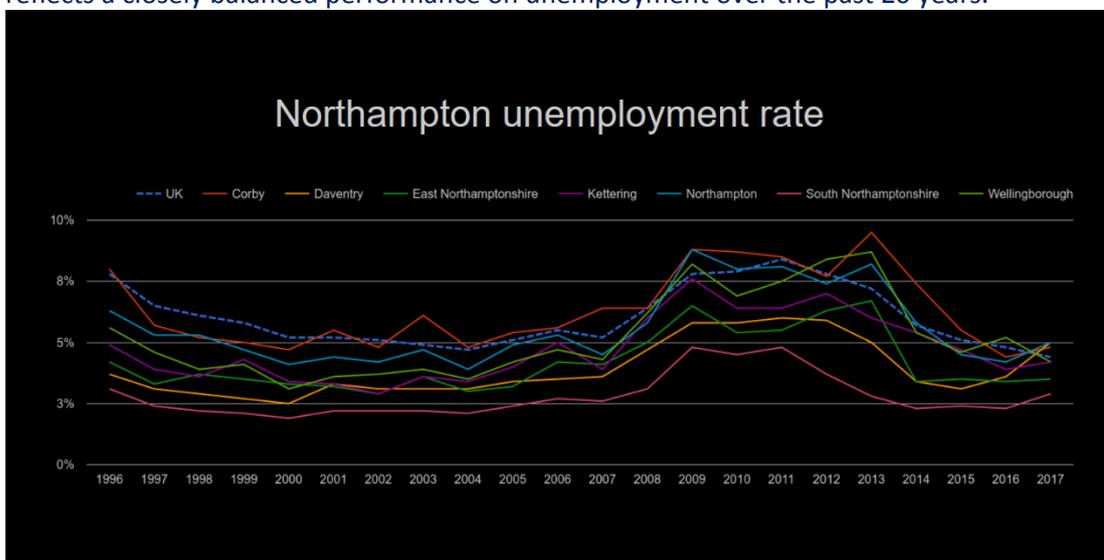


Table 4 Unemployment, Labour Force Survey

Table 5 sets out the detail around Economic Inactivity in the Borough. This data reveals the number of students and those unable to work within Northampton. The table reports a total of 8,800 residents currently seeking employment, while a further 17,200 are reported as not seeking a job.

Economic inactivity (Jul 2017-Jun 2018)				
	Northampton (Level)	Northampton (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
<b>All People</b>				
Total	26,100	18.3	22.4	21.6
Student	8,200	31.5	26.6	26.8
Looking After Family/Home	8,800	33.8	23.7	24.0
Temporary Sick	!	!	2.1	2.0
Long-Term Sick	4,400	16.8	23.0	22.3
Discouraged	!	!	#	0.4
Retired	#	#	14.4	13.1
Other	#	#	9.9	11.3
Wants A Job	8,800	33.9	22.6	22.0
Does Not Want A Job	17,200	66.1	77.4	78.0

Source: ONS annual population survey  
# Sample size too small for reliable estimate (see definitions)  
! Estimate is not available since sample size is disclosive (see definitions)  
Notes: numbers are for those aged 16-64.  
% is a proportion of those economically inactive, except total, which is a proportion of those aged 16-64

Table 5 Economic Inactivity

#### d. Skills levels within the Borough

The levels of skills and education within Northampton are broadly in line with the national data. When compared to regional levels, Northampton performs well and offers a higher standard of skills than its neighbours. This is an important factor in seeking to secure future inward investment. Skills have become an increasingly important consideration for businesses seeking to relocate. Conversely it is also an important factor for businesses that may seek to relocate out of an area, particularly if skills are scarce in other locations.

Despite Northampton not having a broad range of sectors present within the economy, there is need to high level skills across each of the local sectors. From manufacturing to professional services, employers are seeking higher level skills, which Table 6 demonstrates Northampton is able to offer employers.

Northampton has very high job density levels, which significantly exceed national averages, meaning that a very tight labour market operates. Therefore, it is important that all of the working aged population are skilled and equipped to take up employment opportunities. This applies particularly to young people, to avoid them entering into a cycle of long term or very low waged employment.

Qualifications (Jan 2017-Dec 2017)				
	Northampton (Level)	Northampton (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 And Above	55,100	38.9	32.1	38.6
NVQ3 And Above	82,500	58.3	52.0	57.2
NVQ2 And Above	106,300	75.2	70.9	74.7
NVQ1 And Above	121,900	86.2	83.6	85.4
Other Qualifications	9,100	6.4	8.2	6.9
No Qualifications	10,500	7.4	8.2	7.7

Source: ONS annual population survey  
Notes: For an explanation of the qualification levels see the definitions section.  
Numbers and % are for those of aged 16-64  
% is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64

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Table 6 Qualification levels in Northampton

e. Town Centre

Town Centres have been of considerable focus for Local Authorities and their partners for a number of years. The impact of the 2010 economic downturn has served to sharpen this focus even more. Work in Northampton by the Borough Council and partners including the Business Improvement District is focusing on developing a new Town Centre Vision, building upon the work of the recently produced Northampton Retail and Leisure Study.

Town Centres across the country are seeing sizeable changes. The rate of change amongst retailers has been considerable, with a number of major retailers disappearing from Town Centres since 2010. The general view confirms that this trend is likely to continue into the future. Northampton has seen a number of major retailers close within the Town Centre. At present the Retail and Leisure Study reports a town centre vacancy rate of 14.9% within Northampton Town Centre. This figure represents a reduction from the 2010 figure of 17.3%, therein revealing the Town Centre continues to receive investment and a number of new retailers commencing activity across the town centre.

Northampton is current positioned as the 64 highest performing retail centre in the country (Genecom/Beis 2017) although this positioning has been weakening since 2013/4. Table 7 sets out how Northampton is performing within the region. It is noticeable that there is a natural hierarchy developing between ‘retail destinations’ that offer a broad ‘experience’ when allied to a strong cultural and leisure offer, whereas, secondary tier centres, such as Northampton provide a more functional experience as a regional centre. It is this level which is experiencing the most competition, not least as there are many more regional centres within a 50 mile radius of Northampton.

Centre	Classification	2013-2014 Rank	2014-2015 Rank	2015-2016 Rank	2015-2016 Score	Market Position Classification	Market Position Index (Average 100)
Birmingham Centre	Major City	3	4	3	686	Upper Middle	114
Leicester	Major City	14	17	17	401	Middle	106
Milton Keynes	Major Regional	35	29	34	308	Upper Middle	116
Peterborough	Major Regional	54	48	45	267	Middle	99
<b>Northampton</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>96</b>
Coventry	Regional	58	62	66	223	Middle	92
Leamington Spa	Regional	105	84	84	206	Upper Middle	116
Luton	Regional	80	80	91	199	Middle	92
Bedford	Regional	119	105	100	188	Middle	92
Loughborough	Regional	522	188	184	138	Lower Middle	138

Table 7 GENECON/BIS; In the ‘Understanding High Street Performance’ report

The pressure on Town Centres has emanated from a number of sources. Such combined pressure has created the change that is currently being witnessed. The pressures include;

- Progressive rise of online shopping

- Long term and cumulative impact of out-of-town and one stop shopping
- Rise of a convenience culture
- The impact of nationally imposed business rates
- The availability of too much retail space; but the wrong type for new retail entrants.

National commentary is indicating that Town Centres do need to evolve. There are calls for significant changes to Business Rates which supports retail more effectively. There is a need for Local authorities to consider the role residential units can play in supporting Town Centres, particularly in terms of using large redundant units. The role of leisure has also been identified as a potential area for Town Centres to develop in order to offer diversity to visitors.

The Borough and its partners will be developing a Town Centre Vision that develops a new approach to supporting the town centre and ensuring that the area is supported, rejuvenated and high performing into the future.

#### f. Measuring Economic Performance

Using GVA per head as an indicator of total economic performance reveals that, whilst a LEP area, Northamptonshire as a whole was the slowest growing LEP area (2014-15) with no growth;

#### ***Local enterprise partnerships with the highest and lowest gross value added growth rates, 2014 to 2015, England***

<b>Local Enterprise Partnership</b>	<b>%</b>
Oxfordshire	5.3
Swindon and Wiltshire	5.2
Greater Birmingham and Solihull	4.7
Thames Valley Berkshire	4.2
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	4.1
The Marches	1.1
Greater Lincolnshire	1.0
Coventry and Warwickshire	0.4
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	0.3
Northamptonshire	0.1

Source: Office for National Statistics

However, Northampton Borough has consistently performed better than other parts of the county, as can be seen by comparing county by county data for the SEMLEP area, from the 2017 ONS GVA figures;

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>GVA Per Head (2017)</b>
Aylesbury Vale	£25,432
Bedford Borough	£23,895
Central Bedfordshire	£20,338
Corby	£22,221
Daventry	£26,460
East Northamptonshire	£16,621
Kettering	£22,602
Luton	£24,339
Milton Keynes	£46,780
<b>Northampton</b>	<b>£27,963</b>
South Northamptonshire	£20,808
Wellingborough	£20,792
SEMLEP regional average	<b>£27,140</b>
London	<b>£46,482</b>
England average	<b>£27,108</b>

Northampton continues to outperform both the SEMLEP average and that of England.

g. Housing

The table below identifies the housing stock available in Northampton;

<b>Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)</b>	<b>Housing association</b>	<b>Other public sector</b>	<b>Private sector</b>	<b>Total</b>
Year; 2010				
12,215	3,690	25	75,290	91,220
Year; 2014				
11,980	4,220	30	77,030	93,260
Year; 2018				
11,540	4,890	0	80,200	96,630

Source: Housing growth by district, ONS

In addition, due to the housing crisis in the country, the Government is expecting that housing growth will be delivered within all communities. The table below gives the new completed house build numbers in 2018;

	<b>Private Enterprise</b>	<b>Housing Associations</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>All</b>
Aylesbury Vale	990	310	0	1,300
Bedford Borough	850	230	0	1,080
Central	1,290	230	0	1,520

Bedfordshire				
Corby	600	70	0	670
Daventry	510	230	0	740
East Northamptonshire	330	70	0	400
Kettering	350	80	0	430
Luton	180	70	0	250
Milton Keynes	1,430	310	20	1,760
<b>Northampton</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>370</b>
South Northamptonshire	670	190	0	860
Wellingborough	240	70	0	310
<b>SEMLEP</b>	<b>7,740</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9,690</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>84,550</b>	<b>22,060</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>107,980</b>

Source: Housing growth by district, ONS

Northampton has built between 290 and 6390 new homes per year since 2010, at an average of 426.

Northampton's contribution to SEMLEP's total new build in 2018 was just under 4%, with SEMLEP contributing 6% of the house builds for England.

## 6. Sources

The Data Pack has drawn together information from the following sources:

- Local Industrial Strategy White Paper
- Demos-PwC Good Growth for Cities Index (LEP Datasets)
- European Innovation Scorecard 2017
- Office of National Statistics
- Unesco
- Innovate UK Beta
- Research Excellence Framework
- Innovate UK Data Hub
- Centre for Cities – Cities Factbook 2017
- ThinkBroadband.com
- NHS Atlas of Variation 2016
- District Commuting intensity; Census Data Service
- Oxford Econometrics forecasts; May 2019

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