



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

20th January 2014

2014 is set to be an exciting year for our town, with major events such as the commemoration of World War One, the 825th anniversary of the Borough Charter and the return of Alive@Delapre. The look and feel of Northampton is due to change during 2014 with the opening of the new Bus Station in March, the start of demolition work at Greyfriars, students moving into the new University accommodation at St Johns, the reopening of Abington Street to traffic, work beginning on the redevelopment of Sixfields Stadium and plans due to be approved for Franklins Gardens, plus the opening of the new railway station in the summer. 2014 will be an exciting year for Northampton.

Christmas 2013 proved to be another successful festive period for our town. Borough Council initiatives such as our Christmas free parking offers and the Frost Fairs helped draw people into our town and support local traders. Feedback from local businesses and the public has so far been very positive and plans are already underway to make Christmas 2014 in Northampton even better.

On 18th December the Cabinet approved the budget proposals for 2014/15, which will come before Full Council in February. The proposed budget will continue this Administration's commitment to reduce waste and bureaucracy to make sure that tax payers' money is spent on front line services and investment that will help the local economy.

On 31st January Councillor Markham and I will be joining others to sleep rough for a night at Christ church in Abington to raise awareness of the issues faced by homeless people as well as much-needed funds for the Northampton Hope Centre. The sponsored Big Sleepout is organised annually by the Northampton Hope Centre, which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2014, and is its biggest fundraiser of the year. Last year 65 people slept out at the main event and another three events were supported by local scouts and guides groups, together raising over £20,000 in just one night.

Following the sad news of the death of Nelson Mandela a Book of Condolence was opened at The Guildhall. The public were also able to pay their respects and show their admiration at a service at All Saints Church on Wednesday 18th December. The Book of Condolence and tributes to Nelson Mandela have been sent to the South African High Commission in London.

The Borough Council highlighted our town's many great independent businesses to mark the UK's first- ever Small Business Saturday on 7th December 2013. Small Business Saturday is a Government-backed event to raise awareness of the contribution independent businesses make to the economy and encouraging people to shop local. To show our support for local businesses Councillor Nunn and I visited several small businesses in the Town Centre and Wellingborough Road to listen to their views and speak to them about the many issues facing small businesses in the current economic climate.

Community Safety

A roadshow offering people free home security and personal safety advice visited the Town Centre between 16th and 20th December 2013. The roadshow was the third to be staged by the Northampton Community Safety Partnership as part of its latest Week of Action programme. Partners from the Borough Council, the Police and other agencies gave advice on crime prevention, home security and fire safety as well as tackling concerns raised. Mobile phone and

laptop security registration and bike marking were offered free to those wanting to protect their property.

All Crime, Violence and Serious Acquisitive Crime has continued to fall beyond the annual Community Safety Partnership (CSP) targets. To date there has been a 10.8% reduction in overall crime (2,160 less crimes) and a 13.9% reduction in violence (489 less crimes), which exceeds the annual target. Serious Acquisitive Crime shows a 12.7% reduction (519 less crimes) and dwelling burglary has reduced slightly. Criminal damage has also reduced by 10.4%, exceeding the annual target.

A follow up meeting for the Blackthorn Goldings Week of Action showed that 62 adults and 38 young people visited the Crime Prevention House. Seven tonnes of waste was collected, and the area was still clear a fortnight later. 52 people were engaged with during the Mounts/Abington Square Week and five tonnes of waste was collected. The Town Centre Week of Action (16th – 20th December 2013) focused on street drinking and begging, with many agencies attending throughout the week. The Police also carried out free bike marking and property registering.

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council