



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

15th September 2014

During the summer Northampton has been a vibrant and active place as people have enjoyed the varied programme of events put on by the Borough Council, relaxed in our wonderful parks and open spaces and shopped in our Town Centre.

In just three months this administration's free parking scheme has seen over 23,000 more cars park in the Borough Council's multi-storey car parks on Saturdays. This is a jump of almost 40% compared to the number of people parking this time last year. This Administration wants to improve Northampton and free parking is bringing people back into the Town Centre. Town Centre businesses and local residents told us they wanted more free parking, and we have delivered. The free parking offer is in addition to multi-million pound improvements to the town's public transport including the new North Gate Bus Station and a redeveloped Northampton Castle Railway Station.

In July, with Legal and General, the development agreement which was signed by the previous administration, was terminated. With Legal and General now removed from the redevelopment of the Greyfriars site we are now in a position to push ahead and create a retail and leisure area in the heart of our Town Centre. During August we have been consulting with residents to get their ideas for the future of the site, and demolition work to clear the old bus station is well underway.

I would like to send my congratulations to the community groups and staff who worked so hard to help Abington Park and Delapre Park win the prestigious Green Flag Award after being judged to be among the best parks in the country. Delapre Park received the award for the second year running, but this was the first time it has been awarded to Abington Park.

For the second year running, Alive at Delapre brought three fantastic nights of live music to Northampton. Delapre Park is an amazing location and our town was lucky once again to enjoy some world class entertainment with some big names in live music with a great mix for everyone. Events such as these help put Northampton on the map, and attract thousands of visitors to the town to the benefit of our local economy.

In April we launched the Business Incentive Scheme to make it easier for entrepreneurs and businesses to find new premises or expand. Not only are we seeing more jobs being created, but we are helping to encourage investment with more than £1.2m coming into Northampton as a result of the £200,000 awarded through the scheme. With so many positives coming from the scheme I would encourage any local business or entrepreneur with an idea to talk to us and see what the Borough Council can do to help. When people come to Northampton we want them to see a vibrant and attractive Town Centre that is busy with shoppers and alive with enterprise. Improving shopfronts

and helping to fill empty units is an important part of our work to support businesses, increase footfall and stimulate the local economy.

In August I had the honour of taking part in ceremonies in Northampton to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. On 3rd August I attended a Service of Commemoration at All Saints' Church, and on 4th August I lit a solitary candle at The Guildhall as part of the Lights Out act of reflection and hope organised by The Royal British Legion. The ceremonies in Northampton were very moving and it was an honour to light a candle at The Guildhall to remember Northampton's fallen. These ceremonies help us to remember that we owe a huge debt to those who served in the First World War.

Community Safety

Domestic burglary has reduced by 11.5% and vehicle crime has reduced by 5.6%. Violent crime continues on an upward trend with a 17.1% increase from its baseline figure, which is mainly attributed to a change in national recording that came into place in April 2014. Anti-social behaviour has seen a slight increase of 1.1%, but the number of incidents has started to reduce compared to previous months.

Building on last year's success, the Community Safety Partnership Weeks of Action took place in Semilong in July and Blackthorn in August. Both weeks saw good engagement with local residents and businesses, Community Payback and Enterprise both undertook clean-up and grounds maintenance work, making a visible, positive differences in both areas. The Semilong week culminated with a 'Fun Day' at the community centre which was well attended and enjoyed by residents. The week of action on Blackthorn included a number of activities for young people in the area.

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council