

Northampton Borough Council

Corporate Plan

2015 update

**Northampton alive with
innovation, enterprise and
opportunity**

February 2015

Corporate Plan 2015

Welcome to Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan. This sets our priorities and explains what we want to achieve during 2015/16.

Northampton's population has reached 216,700¹ making it one of the largest towns and the largest district in the country. By 2020 the population of Northampton is projected to increase to 233,200 and by 2033, to 252,300.²

The Corporate Plan has been reviewed for the start of the financial year 2015/16 to ensure it remains up to date and guides our actions at a time of unprecedented change. It does not aim to set out in detail information about all of the services that the council provides.

Our plan focuses on two themes:

'Your Town', recognising the importance that investment and growth in local business and jobs will have on the long term prospects for the town and those people that choose to live and work here.

'You', acknowledging the significant challenges that the current economic climate and future welfare and housing reforms will have on the lives of people impacted by the changes and the importance of the role the Council will have in supporting people through the change

Our priorities

The Corporate Plan is structured according to the council's eight priorities:

Your Town	You
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Northampton Alive○ Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods○ Celebrating our heritage and culture○ Making every £ go further	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Better homes for the future○ Creating empowered communities○ Promoting health and well-being○ Responding to your needs

For more information about individual services please visit the Council's website or for full descriptions of spending according to service areas these can be found in the Budget Book.

¹ ONS 2013 mid-year population estimate

² ONS Population Projections 2012 Base and <http://www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk/news/item?itemId=16>

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YOUR TOWN

A town to be proud of

A successful vibrant town centre economy is an essential part of prompting growth and prosperity. Our focus is on regenerating the town and raising its national profile. Northampton is one of the UK's most enterprising places and operating costs are low in relation to other parts of the country. The town is also making the UK's fastest economic recovery.

The Council recognises it cannot achieve this alone. It is actively working with others to keep the town clean, safe, attract new investment, visitors and jobs, whilst enhancing the town's heritage and cultural opportunities.

We recognise that our parks and open spaces and the facilities available within them contribute to our sense of wellbeing. We will work with local communities and groups, benefit from their experience and their contribution to improve our beautiful parks and open spaces across the town. Having access to a wide variety of cultural, leisure and sport activities and events is also a key part of having a vibrant and successful town. We will also work with partners to improve access to cultural opportunities such as our museums, cultural events programme and through our support to the local theatres.

Our commitment the Northampton Cultural Quarter provides a driving force for economic and social regeneration of the town. It presents an opportunity to celebrate both the town's rich history and to showcase its unique contemporary offer. Raising the profile of Northampton as a great place to live, visit, work, study and invest, the Northampton Cultural Quarter has realised the potential to significantly enhance the town's reputation as a first class cultural venue, a place with a diverse and extensive offer, a great atmosphere and a tangible energy.

As well as taking a leading role in the future development and growth of Northampton, the Council must ensure that Council Tax payer's money is spent wisely. The Council will continue to review how it is organised, to ensure it has the right skills and capacity and to identify the most effective methods of delivery. This will reduce our costs in order to prioritise spending to allow us to promote the town's economic growth, regeneration and protect frontline services.

Our key priorities for the 'Your town' theme are:

- ◇ **Priority 1 – Northampton Alive**
A vibrant town
- ◇ **Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods**
Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment
- ◇ **Priority 3 - Celebrating our heritage and culture**
- ◇ **Priority 4 - Making every £ go further**
Provide Value for Money to protect local services

Priority 1 – Northampton Alive - A vibrant town

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

Revitalise our Infrastructure to support economic growth

- Northampton Castle railway station – building on the successful completion of a redeveloped £20m station, further phases are being developed to bring forward a 1300 space multi storey car park and land ready for commercial development which will commence in spring 2015
- Successful sports clubs – supporting the redevelopment and expansion plans at Sixfields Stadium and Franklin’s Gardens
- Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone – capitalise on our town’s clear strengths – its central location, diverse economy and appetite for success.
- St James Mill link road – Improved access to the M1 and reduced congestion on match days

Be a hub of excellence to stimulate and energise Business and Education

- University of Northampton Waterside campus – a new £330m university campus built in our Enterprise Zone
- Northampton College and Moulton College – to work collaboratively with our further education institutes to deliver the skills required by new and existing employers
- FOUR Northampton - a landmark new office development at one of the key gateways to Northampton town centre on St Peter’s Waterside
- National Training Academy for Rail in Kings Heath-centre of excellence jointly funded by the government and the rail industry to give a new generation of young people the skills to succeed

Improving our offer to businesses and inward investors

- The Business Team – a team dedicated to supporting businesses to meet their growth plans and requirements for new land and property
- Inward Investment Suite – an identified facility to demonstrate a greater commitment to offering a professional and coherent service to prospective investors

We will

- Progress plans for the Greyfriars site regeneration as part of the wider plans for the town centre leisure and retail offer;
- Business Incentive Scheme – A fund is available to support businesses and stimulate the market, making the town centre a more attractive proposition. Implement the delivery and marketing plan for the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone (NWEZ) that will demonstrate the actions to be delivered from 2015 – 2020. These will include:
 - ✓ a partnership approach to the disposal of public land to support inward investment;
 - ✓ marketing of sites;
 - ✓ promoting the NWEZ and the associated benefits to business;
 - ✓ Make ourselves visible and accessible to existing businesses and prospective inward investors;
- Continue to provide free weekend (and bank holiday) parking in Northampton’s multi-storey car parks plus two hours free on weekdays to encourage visitors to stay & shop longer in the town. Also, we are working to extend 'Pay on Exit' car parking scheme to Northampton Borough Council owned surface car parks.
- Continue to develop Local Development Orders to simplify the planning application process for new businesses;
- Implement a business engagement strategy to simplify the process of accessing Borough Council services and facilities;
- Coordinate an Economic Forum of local partners to ensure sharing of best practice and funding priorities;
- Continue the regeneration and restoration work at Delapre Abbey and Park;
- Progress plans for the development of the Vulcan Works and the Museum and Art Gallery within the Cultural Quarter and further support development;
- Work collaboratively with the Local Enterprise Partnerships for Northamptonshire and the South East Midlands.

Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods

Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- A clean town with neighbourhoods that are tidy and well maintained
- A place where people want to visit and enjoy our parks and open spaces
- A place where visitors and residents from all communities feel safe, secure and protected with low levels of crime
- Less waste and increased recycling through education and waste reduction schemes

We will

- Continue to improve the appearance and cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and open space land across the Town by proactively removing fly-tipping, graffiti and litter and use enforcement, with a zero tolerance approach;
- Improve standards and facilities within our parks to contribute to the achievement of Green Flag status and 'Britain in Bloom' success. We will do this by working in partnership with local groups and Friends Associations, local management committees for our premier parks, local 'park plans', improving public conveniences and ensuring our trees are well maintained. We will also work in partnership with community groups to provide community events in our parks all year round and deliver high quality holiday sports and play programmes for young people;
- Deliver the Community Safety Strategy action plan to improve safety across the town, in particular :
- Work in partnership to deliver a programme of projects throughout the year to tackle local priority issues; alcohol related violent crime, anti-social behaviour and serious acquisitive crime ;
- Review the Council's approach to licensing to ensure that it supports the Council's aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and making the Town centre safer ;
- Improve the mechanisms available for local people to report incidents of Hate Crime and support individuals to feel confident that the Council will act appropriately on the information provided;
- Actively work with Northamptonshire Probation Trust and local communities to utilise the Community Payback Scheme ;
- Reduce waste and increase recycling and focus on fly posting and fly tipping removal and enforcement;
- Continue to maintain the 'Park-Mark ' standard in designated car parks.

Priority 3 - Celebrating our heritage and culture

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Cultural Quarter –an attractive, cosmopolitan cultural environment focused around the town’s four key arts venues, offering a range of entertainment and events, good food and drink, residential opportunities and workspaces for artists, designers and creative businesses
- Boot and Shoe Quarter
- Increased tourism and promotion of the town through Love Northampton
- Improve the town’s museums and galleries through investment and expansion
- Promotion, protection and improvement of our heritage and other attractions e.g. North Gate, Eastgate and Hazelrigg House
- Regeneration and restoration of Delapre Abbey and Park to secure its future as a key visitor attraction
- Delivery of events to celebrate and enjoy the Town’s heritage and culture
- Celebration of national events through a varied cultural programme
- Heritage Gateway – a project that will recognise and celebrate the Town’s rich medieval history

We will

- Continue to incorporate the Marina and the waterways into the life of the Town to exploit it to its full potential as a tourist attraction ;
- Promote tourism to increase the economic prosperity of the Town through the delivery of a varied programme of events;
- Continue to support and promote Delapre Abbey and Delapre Park as part of wider heritage strategy;
- Seek innovative ways to bringing the Town’s cultural museum offer to a wider audience with a broader exhibition programme and to raise the regional profile ;
- Begin work on a £14 million extension of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery that will double the size of the exhibition space and create new galleries, teaching facilities and a retail area;
- Implement a major refurbishment of Abington Park Museum;
- To recognise the important heritage of the Boot and Shoe Quarter around the Mounts;
- Provide support to NN, the Northampton Arts Collective;
- Work together across the Council to improve the way we promote museums and events ;
- Work with others to make the most of the way we promote each other in partnership to consolidate the promotional efforts of all agencies and to achieve the best results for Northampton.

Priority 4 – Making every £ go further

Provide Value for Money to protect local services

The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Public money used to maximum benefit
- Cost savings achieved through the use of shared services, outsourcing opportunities and reduction in the use of consultants
- Delivery of value for money services in terms of service delivery and use of energy
- A modern diverse workforce

We will

- Continue to review Council services to identify the most efficient and effective methods of delivery and identify shared services and outsourcing opportunities to make savings and further improve services;
- Continue to reduce the use of consultants to ensure that skills of existing staff are maximised and resources are targeted towards areas most in need ;
- Further reduce the Council's carbon footprint and energy costs by identifying and implementing energy saving initiatives and purchasing energy wisely. We will also continue to promote sustainable energy initiatives across the wider community ;
- Continue to work with Government to freeze Council Tax wherever possible, and review our local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

YOU

How your Council will support and empower you and your community

In order to have a successful vibrant town, Northampton needs to have the right number and types of homes, across both the private and public sectors, which address the needs of local people. The quality of these homes is also an important factor in determining how people feel about where they live, their sense of pride in their neighbourhoods and the Town overall.

The delivery of new homes has fallen in Northampton over the last few years. With housing demand increasing, it is vital that we facilitate and co-ordinate the delivery of new affordable homes for our customers. Northampton Partnership Homes are working with RSL partners, the Homes & Communities Agency and Institutional Investors to get new homes built in Northampton.

We need to manage any increasing demand in homelessness, prevent homelessness wherever possible and support people in housing crisis by working in partnership with other key agencies. The Council is also proactively working to anticipate the impact of emerging central government Social Housing Reform on local people. The Council will support people with advice and guidance to make the right choices for them and support vulnerable people to be able to live independently, when they want to.

The Council has worked with tenants and employees to establish an arms-length organisation, Northampton Partnership Homes, for the management of its housing stock from January 2015. We will work together to provide high quality homes and services to our tenants

The Council recognises the important work undertaken by voluntary and community groups across Northampton and how this work supports the Government's aspirations to build a Big Society, where people can play an active role in their neighbourhoods and communities. We will continue to work with voluntary and community groups to build capacity and support community management of our community centres. We will also continue to develop our approach to neighbourhood management to ensure we provide support to frontline councillors in their community leadership role.

We provide services to ensure that the community has access to a variety of leisure and sport facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and a sense of wellbeing. The Council will continue to improve such facilities and opportunities, by improving facilities and opportunities to be physically active, across the Town.

Delivering high quality, cost effective services in a way that local people want them is a key focus for the Council. We are committed to delivering excellent customer service, treating our customers fairly and listening to them to develop and improve services and put things right when our standards have not been met.

Our key priorities for the 'You' theme are:

- ◇ **Priority 5 - Better homes for the future**
Helping you to have a home
- ◇ **Priority 6 - Creating empowered communities**
- ◇ **Priority 7- Promoting health and well-being**
- ◇ **Priority 8 - Responding to your needs**

Priority 5 - Better homes for the future

Helping you to have a home

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Managing the supply and growth for the future of Northampton
- Create resilient and cohesive communities
- Deliver well designed, high quality homes, neighbourhoods and services
- Improve customer access, opportunity and choice
- Improve the relationship with private sector housing through engagement, regulation and enforcement

We will

- Review the Council's Housing Strategy for 2015-2018;
- Work in conjunction with Northampton Partnership Homes, the Arm's Length Management Organisation which has taken over the management of the Council's housing stock, to deliver homes for local people;
- As part of the National Empty Homes programme bring forward 40 new dwellings that have been vacant for 6 months or more ;
- Build 100 new council homes on land at Dallington Grange;
- Continue to work with partners to reduce causes of homelessness and support the Homeless Forum, Oasis House and other organisations tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Town ;
- Utilise additional licensing powers and maintain a register for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) within Northampton to drive high standards of safety for tenants;
- Review policies, processes and procedures around Disabled Facilities Grants and Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure an efficient, effective and proportionate response to the needs of our customers

Priority 6 - Creating empowered communities

The outcomes we want to achieve:

- Empowered local communities with a greater capacity to become involved in community life
- Increased capacity of our partners in the voluntary sector to better support communities
- Community managed community centres

We will

- Encourage individuals, communities and groups to get involved and contribute to activities within their local neighbourhoods in order to promote integration and cohesion within communities and foster a sense of pride across the Town;
- Maintain the current investment to help community based projects in Northampton through the small based grants process;
- Achieve better outcomes for communities by improving the way grants are allocated by starting to introduce a commissioning approach;
- Engage and involve young people in shaping services and promoting positive activities within the Borough;
- Work with others to support and develop the capacity of the voluntary sector for the benefit of NBC and local people ;
- Support localism plans for Neighbourhood Planning to increase community involvement in the planning process;

Priority 7 - Promoting health and well-being

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Work with the new local 'Health & Well-being' Board to improve the health of local people
- Promote the health and well-being of residents through continued support of leisure and sporting opportunities in local clubs and the Leisure Trust
- Improved public health

We will

- Support the emerging Health & Wellbeing Board strategy;
- Work with the new Clinical Commissioning Consortia and develop locality plans to influence spend to deliver local priorities;
- Actively support our sports clubs;
- Contribute to the expansion and enhancement of an athletics track in partnership with the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Association, Moulton College and Northampton Town Football Club
- Support the Leisure Trust to deliver healthy living and Children and Young People outcomes and widen participation in leisure activities across all sections of the community;
- Work with businesses and individuals to promote responsible drinking;
- Work to influence our partners to improve air quality and meet Government minimum targets;
- Work with external energy providers to implement the Community Energy Savings Programme to improve energy efficiency standards and reduce fuel bills in some of the Borough's most vulnerable communities;
- Ensure that all council owned homes are fitted with modern fuel efficient heating and insulation.

Priority 8 - Responding to your needs

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Appropriate support provided to those in most need
- All services are fair, accessible and responsive to individual needs
- Residents and customers feel informed and engaged in service quality and design

We will

- Further develop services to support those in most need;
- Support the Council's Equality Strategy and continue to work towards becoming 'Excellent' in terms of equality;
- Expansion of the range of partners providing services in the One Stop Shop and focus on channel shift through the self-service area ;
- Provide consistency of customer service and "one point of contact" for customers by migrating the remaining service areas into the telephone contact centre and one stop shop;
- Continue to create effective dialogue with people so that they can feel involved in the decision making process and ensure developing policy and service delivery takes into account different needs;
- Support individuals affected by Social Welfare and Housing Reforms through effective communications of the changes and impacts upon them.
- Renovate the Maple Buildings (Hope Centre) to support the homeless and vulnerable;
- Work in partnership with others to safeguard children and vulnerable adults