



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

21st September, 2015

Northampton's Sports Clubs

In keeping with our commitment to support our sports clubs, we have approved a loan to Northamptonshire County Cricket Club to help support it through its restructuring process. County Cricket means a lot to many of our residents, and the economic benefit of our sports clubs to the town is such that we have a duty to lend our support.

Construction work continues to progress at Northampton Saint's Franklin Gardens ground, where the new Barwell Stand has been made possible by the investment of the Council. With new spectator seating now being put in place, we look forward to the opening of these fantastic new facilities in the coming weeks.

The situation at Northampton Town Football Club continues to be a concern for supporters, residents and councillors alike. Our priority is to protect the public purse and ensure that the loan is repaid in full, while also offering our support to safeguard the future of the Football Club.

Northampton Borough Council Culture Change

The Council, and indeed the town, has been through a period of rapid change over the last few years. Understandably this has also been a period of change and uncertainty for staff. I have therefore commissioned, jointly with the Chief Executive, a review into the culture of Northampton Borough Council so that we can ensure staff are working in ways, and in an environment, that allows them to deliver the excellent services our residents expect. Initial meetings have taken place and the process will now roll out across the council. I would encourage all staff to fully engage with this process, I'm determined for this to be as open and honest discussion between the staff and leadership of the council about how we operate and our future, and that can only happen if people grasp the opportunity.

Customer Service Awards

Northampton Borough Council aims to provide excellent customer service all year round, but National Customer Service Week gives us the opportunity to recognise those staff who have achieved excellence. Congratulations to all those individuals and teams who were nominated.

Customer Excellence Accreditation

Northampton Borough Council Customer Services has been awarded the Customer Excellence Accreditation. In a recent assessment, NBC's Customer Services were not only recognised as fully compliant in all areas but also received a 'Compliance +' rating, the highest score you can receive, in four new areas: empowering staff; performance management; partnership working; supporting local communities.

Town Centre activity

The Council continues to support the town centre and is proud to note that this month St Giles Street has been recognised by the Great British High Street Awards as a nominee in the City Location category. It is clear that people across the country are recognising the importance of this unique area which is home to many independent traders and local businesses. The judges visited on Friday 23rd October and we are awaiting the result

November 19th see's the launch of the town centre Christmas celebrations, this year we welcome back the German Market and our full programme of events will be announced in the coming weeks.

Night Safe

I went out on the Night safe operation on Friday 16th October to see and experience first-hand the night-time economy and the challenges facing our officers and the other agencies we work with to make Northampton and better and safer place. As a result of this and the current consultation on PSPO I have arranged a working group to determine a strategy together.

Business Breakfast Meeting

We had over 50 businesses attend the recent breakfast meeting at the Guildhall. We continue to work closely and support the Town Centre Business's and a special thanks to the Communications team for all their help and support in organising this successful event which was appreciated by all the people who attended.

Landlords Forum

I attended the Landlords Forum on 20th October and was heartened by how much progress has been made in working together with our good Landlords. All credit to the Officers and the Cabinet Member for Housing, I actually received emails the following day from Landlords to say how valuable and constructive the meeting was.

Commemorations

The town's annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony will take place on Sunday 8th November and I hope that members, colleagues and residents will be able to attend. The Mayor will attend the Abington Square Memorial on the Sunday and there will be the annual Armistice Day wreath laying at the Memorial on the Wednesday 11th November at 11am.

The Council is delighted that the Royal Anglian Regiment are planning to exercise their Freedom of the Borough by parading through the Town next year, and further details of this will be announced in the near future.

We also look forward to our annual Diwali celebrations that will take place on Saturday 7th November.

Councillor Mary Markham
Leader of the Council