



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TO CABINET 13 JUNE 2018

Report Title	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CULTURE AND TOURISM
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Agenda Status: PUBLIC

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet for consideration, the comments and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the Scrutiny Review – Culture and Tourism.
- 1.2 All Overview and Scrutiny review reports are published on the Overview and Scrutiny page on the Council's Webpage and a copy of this report can be located: www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny - Previous Scrutiny Reviews.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that:
 - 2.1.1 An action plan is devised and ensures the marketing and the promotion of Northampton's culture, heritage and tourism is effective and includes:
 - The action plan includes a vision for the promotion of the town which includes the following definitions:
 - **Culture** - "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively".
 - **Tourism** – "The commercial organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest".
 - **Heritage** – "Valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations".
- and

Aspires to be a city of culture in 2025

- A free map, highlighting key attractions, is produced and disseminated via existing infrastructure, such as the railway station, bus station, public transport and accommodation.
- A review is undertaken of the success of the Britain's Best Surprise and funding is sought to support Northampton's contribution to it.
- An app. that gives details of what to do and where to visit in Northampton is developed similar to that produced by Hull – [Curious Collector App](#).
- Shoes, leather and lace manufacturing are promoted on the website "Britain's Best Surprise."
- The Ghost Hunt is widened to a Heritage Walk/Trail that include tours of the theatres.
- A trail around the town demonstrated by metal shoes is introduced.
- The Green Badge qualification, offered by the Institute of Tourist Guiding (ITG) is investigated for Northampton in conjunction with Northampton BID. This qualification is opened to ward Councillors and Honorary Aldermen.
- Exhibits of museum artefacts in empty retail units are displayed and promoted. As a pilot, a unit in the Grosvenor Centre is used for the display of Museum artefacts.
- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) works with its global brands to collectively promote the Northampton offer to a wider audience.
- A cluster comprising the Borough Council and major shoe companies in the town is developed so that they can network and share ideas.
- Working with NBC's Planning Department, encouragement is given to have a consistent and sympathetic appearance in accordance with Northampton's rich architectural and cultural heritage, for shop frontages.
- Work is undertaken on the promotion of the history of transport including the two double decker buses that have been restored by local groups. The Northampton Transport Heritage Group is consulted regarding the promotion of the history of transport in Northampton.
- In recognising that local historians give Education and Heritage Talks throughout the year; these talks are promoted on the website "Britain's Best Surprise".
- A Tourist Information Centre for Northampton, is investigated located in a prominent place in the town, until the Museum is opened in late 2019; and a café is included in the extended Northampton Museum and Art Gallery is investigated.
- Signs on the entrance to Northampton are erected that says what the town has to offer. "Don't drive through, stop and visit"
- Brand Northampton as an exciting place to visit.

- Blue plaques are introduced around the town.
- Opportunities to promote our cultural heritage with Marlberg are investigated.
- Funding is sought to maintain and upkeep monuments around the town, such as Eleanor Cross, the Tram Terminals and other historic buildings.
- Flower displays are maintained all year round, sponsorship to purchase and upkeep more planters is sought. Branding is in keeping with the signage.
- A Co-Ordinator role similar to that of the Tourism Executive of Leicestershire Promotions Limited is established in conjunction with Britain's Best Surprise aspirations for a Destination Management Organisation.
- A Cultural Strategy for the Borough is developed to look at investment, opportunities, infrastructure to promote Northampton and grow the cultural sector, to make an application to be the City of Culture 2025.

2.1.2 As part of the induction process for Councillors, a leaflet of pamphlet on the history of Northampton is given to all Members. The same leaflet is available for events such as Heritage weekends.

2.1.3 A copy of the report is sent to Michael Ellis, MP, who has the role of Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Digital , Culture, Media and Sport).

2.1.4 Giving consideration to Unitary Status, civic pride and ceremonies are protected.

3. Background and Issues

3.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To promote Northampton's heritage and culture on a national and global platform.
- To increase visitor numbers to Northampton through its diverse heritage and cultural offering.
- To increase jobs and spending linked to tourism.
- To use the vehicle of tourism to provide learning about Northampton.

Key Lines of Enquiry

- To gain an understanding of the culture and heritage within the Borough of Northampton
- To gain an understanding of how Northampton's tourism, heritage and culture offer is marketed and to identify any gaps that can be developed
- To receive an overview of Northampton's heritage assets
- To review the extent to which an holistic image of Northampton as an attractive cultural, heritage and tourism place to visit
- To understand the roles of both Northampton Borough Council and other partners in promoting the town of Northampton

- 3.2 Following approval of its work programme for 2017/2018, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in April 2017 commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review – culture and heritage. An in-depth review commenced in June 2017 and concluded in April 2018. A Scrutiny Panel was established.
- 3.3 This review links to the Council’s corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 1 - Northampton Alive (A vibrant successful town for now and the future.)
- 3.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council’s corporate priorities:

Evidence Collection

- 3.5 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

Background data, including:

Presentation to set the scene: a summary of the current marketing of tourism, culture and heritage carried out by Northampton Borough Council, information regarding the key cultural, tourism and heritage assets within the borough and potential opportunities to attract visitors and the types of attractions which Northampton can offer

- Relevant Legislation including:

National Heritage Act 1983
Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.
National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- Statistics: including:

Website and Social media statistics
Statistics: Visitors to the town and tourism in Northampton, in particular, Cultural Quarter and Heritage Sites

- Relevant published papers, such as:

Central Government’s paper [“Preserving historic sites and buildings”](#)
Central Government’s paper [“Backing the Tourism Sector A Five Point Plan” 2015](#)
[Building Conservation.com “Heritage Protection in the UK – Key Facts”](#)

- Best practice external to Northampton/Case Study examples
- Internal expert advisors:
 - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise, NBC
 - Head of Economic Development, NBC
 - Head of Planning, NBC (for heritage)
 - Cabinet Member for Environment, NBC

- Head of Customers and Culture, NBC, Town Centre Manager (regarding events), Cultural Services Manager (regarding events at the Museums).
- External expert advisors:
 - Communications Director and Director with responsibility for events, Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce
 - Director, Highways, Northamptonshire County Council
 - Director, Northampton BID
 - Director, Northampton Tourism Association
 - Director, Visit Britain
 - Director, The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA)
 - Director, Historic England
 - Northampton Heritage Group
 - Director, Canal River Trust (CRT)
 - Head of History (Heritage), University of Northampton
 - Travel Agents in the town
 - Visitor Groups, Northampton
 - Residents and Visitors (through a survey)

Site visit to various heritage and tourist attractions within the borough

4 Key Findings and Conclusions

4.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

Vision

4.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel felt that would be beneficial for there to be a vision for the town with a goal to be achieved. The vision should be included within an Action Plan. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the vision should be applicable from 2018 to 2025 and include *“that by 2025 the cultural and heritage offer of Northampton is a town that recognises the positives associated with a town of rich heritage and historical significance and that this is at the forefront of the town centre offering to both new and existing residents, visitors and businesses”*.

Definitions

4.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel supported the definitions of culture and heritage:

Culture - “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively”.

Tourism – “The commercial organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest”.

Heritage – “Valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations”.

Promotion

- 4.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges that there is an apparent lack of promotional material available locally and regionally to promote the heritage and cultural offering in Northampton. It highlights that Northampton Borough Council has a key role in the promotion of the town. The use of existing infrastructure, such as the railway station, bus station, public transport and accommodation would be a useful quick and cost effective way of promotion, using a free map. A cost of producing a free map has been estimated at around £2,500 for 5,000 copies.
- 4.1.4 Evidence gathered highlighted that there is a gap in how Northampton Borough Council (NBC) is working with its global brands to collectively promote the Northampton offer to a wider audience.
- 4.1.5 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges the need for NBC to work with various partners and groups in the promotion of the town and what it has to offer.
- 4.1.6 The Scrutiny Panel recognised the value of the role of the Tourism Executive of Leicestershire Promotions; it was further recognised that Rugby Borough Council has the roles of Arts, Heritage and Visitor Services Manager, Town Centre and Tourism Team Leader and Place Marketing Officer.
- 4.1.7a The Scrutiny Panel felt that there was a need to further develop the website “Love Northampton”; particularly with the inclusion of further facilities. The website: www.northamptonshiresurprise.com/. is being promoted at the Grand Prix at Silverstone in 2018. There would be no cost for the development of the two websites for Northampton; it would need to be programmed into work streams.
- 4.1.7b Evidence gathered highlighted that Hull benefits from a website entitled [Heritage Learning](#). The page states that it brings learning to life through diverse art and heritage collections at Hull Museums and Ferens Art Gallery. The webpage includes a number of blogs ranging from information about Rugby football, Museum news, and how early years can benefit from the Museums. An app. has also been developed – [Curious Collector App](#). The app. gives details of what to do and was launched over the summer holidays last year. It became available from August 2017. There would be no cost for the production of a similar app. for Northampton; it would need to be programmed into work streams.
- 4.1.8 Hull was awarded City of Culture in 2013. It has developed a website – [Hull 2017 – UK City of Culture](#) details what’s on, what to visit and how residents can get involved. The website also includes details of the history of Hull and goes back to when it was founded a city in the late 12th century. A guide how to get to Hull is detailed along with useful information and getting around the city. Merchandise, such as T-shirts, tote bags, pencil cases and baseball caps, can also be purchased via the website.
- 4.1.9 The Scrutiny Panel recognised the value of the website “Britain’s Best Surprise” and was pleased to note that Northampton is already promoted on the website and has received a number of hits, from both within Northampton and external to the town. The website includes various historical places and monuments around the town,

such as churches, stately homes and monuments. The Scrutiny Panel realised that some of the monuments, such as Eleanor Cross require maintenance.

- 4.1.10 People need to be aware of what Northampton has to offer and this needs to be well promoted in a number of mediums.
- 4.1.11 It was noted that the leaflets at Northampton train station do not contain information about Northamptonshire. This is similar in a hotel in the borough. It was suggested that the Borough Council could aid tourist attractions as part of package. The production of 5,000 would cost around £2,500 to produce.
- 4.1.12 There is a real need to capture the interest of people coming to Northampton to shop at the shoe factory shop so that they visit other parts of the town whilst they are here. Shoes and lace are core to the town of Northampton. There is a need to promote the shoe factory shops. It was acknowledged that this would be an excellent resource to the town.
- 4.1.13 Evidence gathered highlighted that volunteers are key in the promotion of heritage and culture of a town and that a team of volunteers would be useful in promoting Northampton and what it has to offer. This has been successful in Market Harborough and Rugby. Market Harborough has volunteers for its Cultural Hub, Bloom and litter picking.
- 4.1.14 Historical plaques are located in towns such as Rugby and Market Harborough and the value of which was noted by the Scrutiny Panel.

Retail and Retailers

- 4.1.15 It was felt that a lot of people are unaware of the beautiful architecture of the town, a lot of which is second floor and above of buildings. Use of the upper floors of the beautiful buildings should be encouraged.
- 4.1.16 It would be beneficial for the museum to put exhibits in some of the empty retail outlets in the town. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the Officer responsible for the outreach programme could investigate a unit in the Grosvenor Centre for the display of Museum artefacts. The costs for such exhibitions are around £12,750 for the exhibition production plus staffing costs of £1,300 whilst the exhibition is up.
- 4.1.17 The Borough Council has a good working relationship with the major shop companies in the town and it would be useful to ascertain better working as a cluster. Getting businesses together to liaise and share ideas would be an easy and useful solution.

Heritage Trails

- 4.1.18 The Scrutiny Panel supported the Ghost Hunt and felt this could be widened to a Heritage Walk or Trail. Tours of the theatres could also be included.

- 4.1.19 The Scrutiny Panel felt it would be beneficial to the town for the Green Badge qualification, offered by the Institute of Tourist Guiding (ITG) to be investigated for Northampton. Councillors could be useful guides under the Green Badge initiative

Transport, Engineering and Industry

- 4.1.20 Evidence gathered highlighted the importance of transport, engineering and industry in Northampton; for example the Transport Corporation is well known.
- 4.1.21 There is a need for the history around transport to be promoted; along with the promotion of the two double decker buses that have been restored by two local groups. These buses have previously been involved in Heritage Days and the Scrutiny Panel felt that they could be further involved in the heritage and tourism of Northampton.

University

- 4.1.22 The Scrutiny Panel welcomes the move of the University into the town, noting that it will change the culture of the town but felt that although the town was not ready for all the visitors that the University would create but acknowledged that it is an amazing opportunity for the town.

Heritage Group

- 4.1.23 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed the work of the Heritage Group that is chaired by the Leader of the Council, NBC, acknowledging that the work of this Group complements the work of the Scrutiny Panel, there is no duplication. The Scrutiny Panel looked at promotion and the Heritage Group is undertaking a stock take of heritage and culture.

Education and Heritage Talks

- 4.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges the value of the involvement of historians and those delivering and in education regarding the promotion of heritage and culture. The Scrutiny Panel further realised the importance and value of talks given by local historians. Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel had attended such a talk during the evidence gathering phase of this Scrutiny Review. Hay on Wye has its own history group and is led by an architectural historian. Various talks are given throughout the year, there is a small cost to attend.
- 4.1.25 The Scrutiny Panel recognised the significant cultural tourist attractions around the town, including and not limited to 78 Derngate, Delapre Abbey, Royal & Derngate, Museum & Art Gallery, the site of Northampton Castle, battlefields and various churches.

Tourist Information Centre

- 4.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges the importance of a Tourist Information Centre. For example, Hull has a Tourist Information Centre that is open Monday to Saturday

from 10am to 5pm and Sundays from 11am to 3pm. The Scrutiny Panel felt it would be beneficial for a Tourist Information for Northampton to have a facility such as a café or library so that it is a vibrant place to visit.

Signage

- 4.1.27 The importance of signage is recognised. A sign at the entrances to the town stating “*Don’t drive through, stop and visit*” Would be beneficial. The Scrutiny Panel realised that there may be a need for the relevant licence from the Highways Agency to be obtained to erect such signs and planning permission granted. It is estimated that each sign would cost in the region of £2,000 each.
- 4.1.28 Evidence gathered demonstrated the criteria for the erection of brown signage. Delapre Abbey has brown signage.

5. Options

- 5.1 Cabinet will need to consider the possible options as part of its response to the recommendations.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Policy

- 6.1.1.1 The work of Overview and Scrutiny plays a major part in the development of the Council’s policy framework through its work programme.
- 6.1.1.2 The report and its recommendations have policy implications in relation to the Council’s response to culture and tourism. Cabinet’s response will need to consider these issues in detail.

6.2 Resources and Risk

- 6.2.1 Cabinet will need to consider the resourcing issues for the recommendations made.

6.2.2 Legal

- 6.2.2.1 Legal issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet’s response to the recommendations.

6.3 Equality

- 6.3.1.1 Equality issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet’s response to the recommendations.

6.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 6.5.1 The Committee received evidence from a variety of sources as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of this report.

Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee report – Culture and Tourism (March 2018)
Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 May 2018

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