

## **Town Council Consultation**

### **Labour Group Opinion**

#### **A Strong Voice for Northampton**

There should be a Northampton Town Council that covers all the town except for the existing Parish Councils- unless the Parish Councils choose to join the Town Council.

Any new Parish Councils should be democratically decided on by local people. Consultation is expensive but would need to take place before any new Parish is formed.

#### **Principals**

- **A Strong Voice for Northampton**

We need a strong voice for Northampton in the new Unitary Authority. This can only be done through a democratically elected town council. The more Parishes there are the more diluted the voice. Northampton needs its identity protected.

- **A Cost Effective Council-**

It will cost less to have elections for one Town Council plus the existing 10 Parish Council, as opposed to 45+ parish elections.

A Town Council will need staff but this will be less than 45+ parish clerks.

A Town Council will need offices but this will be less than 45+ parish council offices.

A Town Council will have to set a precept to cover costs but this will be much less than the combined cost of 45+ parishes.

- **Looking after the town's Services and assets**

Many assets and many services cover the whole of the town. It would be unfair and unrealistic to expect a parish council to adopt really expensive assets like Delapre Abbey, like the Guildhall, like Abington Park. Where services are devolved budgets will be devolved. Important local decisions affecting the town should be devolved to a body with overarching and inclusive responsibilities- a Town Council.

- **The Mayoralty**

The Northampton Mayor should be the Mayor for the whole of the Town, the cost of which would be in the precept.

- **Representation**

Parish councillors customarily represent between 200 and 1000 people. For a town of 230,000 people that is an unrealistic requirement. Parishes already have difficulty recruiting parish councillors with some unfilled vacancies. Parishes are allowed to co-opt but even this is not always possible.

A Town Council would expect to have more residents per councillor and be able to draw on a bigger more representative pool of people. A Town council, and the Parishes should be reflective of the people they represent.