

CABINET AGENDA

Wednesday, 15 July 2009

The Jeffery Room

6:00 pm

Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor: Tony Woods (Leader of the Council)

Councillor: Brian Hoare (Deputy Leader)

Councillors: Sally Beardsworth, Richard Church,

Trini Crake, David Perkins, Paul Varnsverry

Chief Executive David Kennedy

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact Jo Darby 837089 or jdarby@northampton.gov.uk

PORTFOLIOS OF CABINET MEMBERS

CABINET MEMBER	PORTFOLIO TITLE
Councillor A. Woods	Leader
	Partnership and Improvement
Councillor B. Hoare	Deputy Leader
	Engagement
Councillor S. Beardsworth	Housing
Councillor R. Church	Planning and Regeneration
Councillor T. Crake	Environment
Councillor D. Perkins	Finance
Councillor P.D. Varnsverry	Communities

SPEAKING AT CABINET MEETINGS

Persons (other than Members) wishing to address Cabinet must register their intention to do so by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

Registration can be by:

Telephone: (01604) 837101, 837089, 837355, 837356

(Fax 01604 838729)

In writing: Solicitor to the Council,

The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE For the attention of the Democratic Services Officer

By e-mail to democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

Only thirty minutes in total will be allowed for addresses, so that if speakers each take three minutes no more than ten speakers will be heard. Each speaker will be allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes at each meeting. Speakers will normally be heard in the order in which they registered to speak. However, the Chair of Cabinet may decide to depart from that order in the interest of hearing a greater diversity of views on an item, or hearing views on a greater number of items. The Chair of Cabinet may also decide to allow a greater number of addresses and a greater time slot subject still to the maximum three minutes per address for such addresses for items of special public interest.

Members who wish to address Cabinet shall notify the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting. Such addresses will be for a maximum of three minutes unless the Chair exercises discretion to allow longer. The time these addresses take will not count towards the thirty minute period referred to above so as to prejudice any other persons who have registered their wish to speak.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at the The Jeffery Room on Wednesday, 15 July 2009 at 6:00 pm.

D Kennedy Chief Executive

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES
- 2. MINUTES
- DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
- 6. MINUTES OF WEST NORTHANTS JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 17.02.09 & 21.04.09
- CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN
 Report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration
- JOINT CORE STRATEGY UPDATE
 Report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration
- HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
 Report of the Director of Housing Services
- OPTIONS APPRAISAL REVIEW
 Report of the Director of Housing Services
- BID FOR HCA FUNDING FOR COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING
 Report of the Director of Housing Services
- 12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair to Move:

"That the Public and Press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act."

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 February 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Tony Woods (Chair); Councillor Chris Millar (Deputy Chair);

Councillors Wendy Amos, Sandra Barnes, Jim Bass, Robin Brown, Richard Church, Stephen Clarke, Keith Davies, Bernard Ingram, Ken Melling, Paul

Varnsverry, and Andrew Wilby and Mr David Dickinson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Jane Hollis, Ben Smith, Andre Gonzales de Savage and John Townsend.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2008

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Keith Davies as an attendee, the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee were signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD

The Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit submitted a report that set out a draft supplementary planning document on the provision of affordable housing in West Northamptonshire for public consultation. A supplementary planning document was intended to provide interim supplementary policy guidance based on the saved Local Plan Policies of the three districts of West Northamptonshire until the adoption of the Affordable Housing Development Plan document and Core Strategy. The Director of Planning and Regeneration noted that the references on page 18 in paragraphs 5.23 and 5.28 to "ten to fourteen dwellings" and "between four and fourteen units" needed to be removed and the wording amended accordingly.

David Dickinson commented that the reconciliation between this draft document and the WNDC document was very good. He noted that the Government was likely to introduce a number of new policies in the next few years. WNDC had included a statement in respect of planning obligations should the Government introduce new policies so that they were potentially encompassed by the document.

In answer to a question it was noted work had been undertaken in respect of the evidence base for a rural threshold starting at four dwellings.

Councillor Wendy Amos commented that the document needed to reflect the intermediate

situation, ie the economic downturn, as targets, for example for shared ownership now seemed questionable. The Director of Planning and Regeneration noted that cascade clauses would be needed in Section 106 Agreements to provide flexibility of provision having regard to viability.

It was also noted that a consultation programme would be undertaken and members would be advised of what would be involved through a briefing note.

The Chair observed that the draft document enshrined the district councils' existing policies in terms of 35% and 40% thresholds and that further consideration would need to be given as to what standard to adopt in the light of any up-dated housing needs evidence. This would be taken into account in any new development plan document.

RESOLVED: That the draft SPD on affordable housing be approved for public consultation for a six week period to commence as soon as possible.

6. RISK REGISTER

The Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit submitted a report that set out the key risks to the work of the Committee at this time. In answer to a question it was noted that future reports would include all the then current risks and the covering report would draw attention to issues on an exception basis.

RESOLVED: That the risk register and the role of members in managing risk be noted.

7. CHARETTE

The Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit commented that the term "charette" historically had been applied to architects' work and was used to describe an intensive period of considering a design solution within a tight timescale for a particular project. In the modern context the technique was used to brainstorm a problem on the basis that no single individual could know all the answers. It brought a wide range of people together. In this case attendees had come from each Council and the WNDC in the form of senior officers or specialist officers. The process had commenced on 20 January 2009 and was scheduled to end in the next two weeks. The results of the charette would be sent to members and thereafter used for engagement with all groups including landowners and developers.

The objective of the charette had been to gain a collective understanding of the process and to identify gaps in the knowledge or evidence base. Maps, discussion guides and feedback had been used and the results would contribute to the plan-making process in defining the planning role; the relationship with the region and sub-region; issues in respect of towns and villages; and infrastructure and transport. All the information gained would be written up and provided some answers but also raised further questions. Some discussion had taken place around strategic choices and givens, national policies in respect of key settlements, key directions of growth and rural areas.

In answer to a question from Councillor Chris Miller, the Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit commented that the work of the charette fitted in to the planning timetable and the current timing was right with the document process. The current economic situation needed to be taken into account and flexibility needed to be built into the plan, which would have a life of twenty to thirty years. It was clear that new build was not proceeding at the rate originally anticipated.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration noted that the charette would help convince any

planning inspector that a robust process had been gone through. He also noted that whilst targets would not change, over time, the trajectory of delivery would alter to take account of the economic situation. During March or April work on the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Portrait would be brought to the Joint Committee and following in April and May would be the start of a debate for the growth around Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley. Agreed options would then be included in the preferred submission, probably in November 2009. Any delays would be reflected in the risk register, reported separately to the Joint Committee. In answer to a question the Director noted that a briefing note would be produced for Councillors for discussion within their authorities in respect of preferred options to allow advance warning of what was being discussed.

Councillor Richard Church noted that the process should not deliver merely a package of preferred options to Councillors but should lead members towards those options, ie members needed involvement in the criteria for urban extensions rather than just receiving a list of where they could be. It was noted that this was inherently part of the process.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit submitted a report that set out progress on the approved Local Development Scheme Programme and evidence based work streams to date and elaborated thereon.

In respect of the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study in paragraph 1.14, the study would be published by the end of March. It was clarified that in the report to the previous meeting it had been stated that that the study would be completed by mid December 2008; this had been a reference to the completion of the first draft. This had been completed on time.

In respect of the Towcester and Brackley Landscape and Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Studies in paragraph 1.14, the study would be published by the end of April. It was clarified that in the report to the previous meeting it had been stated that that the study would be completed by mid December 2008; this had been a reference to the completion of the first draft of the report. This had been completed on time.

In respect of the West Northamptonshire Sports Facility Strategy in paragraph 1.15, it was noted that Sport England's concerns had been of a technical nature. It was now anticipated that the study would be completed by the end of April. Although later than anticipated this had no inpact on the approved LDS milestones.

In respect of Pursuit of Evidence of Service Needs workstream in paragraph 1.16, it was noted that discussions had commenced with a variety of service providers including education and the PCT.

In respect of West Northamptonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in paragraph 1.18, it was noted that the Level 1 report would be issued by the end of February. The procurement process for the Level 2 report for Northampton was now underway. The Level 2 reports for Daventry and South Northamptonshire had been sent to the Environment Agency for checking. In the report to the previous meeting it had been stated that the Level 1 report would be finalised in December 2008. This timescale had not been met as a result of delays in receiving comments from the Environment Agency.

In respect of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, in paragraph 1.25 it was clarified that at the previous meeting some additional viability

assessment may be required and which might need to be commissioned early in 2009. This work would be needed for the Joint Core Strategy. This work was not required for the Affordable Housing SPD as this document provided interim supplementary policy guidance based on the Saved Adopted Local Plan Policies. The scope of the viability assessment work was being considered.

In answer to a question, the Interim Head of the Joint Planning Unit noted that discussions with utilities were underway in association with WNDC. This would feed into an infrastructure plan that would include costings and planning steps. Councillor Sandra Barnes noted particular problems at Silverstone in respect of utilities provision and noted that some villages throughout South Northamptonshire and Daventry were not on mains sewerage. David Dickinson requested that the Brown- field Land Assessment also be included in the evidence base.

The Chair enquired whether this information could be made available to members via an online library and it was noted that the JPU website was being reviewed with a view to making many of the documents referred to available.

RESOLVED: That the progress on the approved Local Development Scheme milestones and the evidence based work streams be noted.

9. REVIEW OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING; PROPOSED CHANGES

The Director of Planning and Regeneration submitted a report that set out a review of the Memorandum of Intent in the light of progress experienced and recent decisions of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee so as to bring it up to date. He drew particular attention to paragraphs 3.1, 3.3 and 3.5. It was noted that the Director of Planning and Regeneration at Northampton Borough Council would be the line manager for the Head of the Joint Planning Unit. It was also noted that a financial protocol was currently being drafted.

- **RESOLVED:** (1) That the proposed changes to the Memorandum of Intent as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be recommended to the constituent local authorities for formal approval.
 - (2) That the Joint Planning Committee delegate to the Director of Planning and Regeneration at Northampton Borough Council in consultation with the Monitoring Officers of the constituent local authorities any necessary authority to make further and consequential future changes to the Memorandum of Intent prior to recommending those changes to the constituent authorities for formal adoption.

The meeting concluded at 19.05 hours.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 April 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Tony Woods (Chair); Councillor Chris Millar (Deputy Chair);

Councillors Weny Amos, Richard Church, Stephen Clarke, Keith Davies, Jane Hollis, Chris Over, Andre Gonzales de Savage, Ben Smith, John

Townsend, Paul Varnsverry and Mr David Dickinson.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Sandra Barnes, Jim Bass, Daniel Cribbin and Ken Melling.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2009

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Planning Committee held on 17 February 2009 were signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1. Councillors Church, Miller, Smith and Woods declared personal interests in Item 5, "Working Draft Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives", insofar as the discussion might relate to the WNDC, as Board members of that organisation.
- 2. That Mr D Dickinson declared a personal interest in Item 5, "Working Draft Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives", insofar as the discussion might involve WNDC of which he was a employee.
- 3. Councillor Over declared a personal interest in Item 5, "Working Draft Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives", insofar as the discussion might relate to the ICON Board of which he was a member.
 - 4. County Councillor De Savage declared a personal interest in Item 5, "Working Draft Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives", insofar as any discussion might relate to the Groundworks Trust of which he was a member.
- 5. County Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in Item 5, "Working Draft Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives", insofar as any discussion may relate to the Anglian Flood Defence Board of which he was a member.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

5. WORKING DRAFT SPATIAL PORTRAIT, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Interim Head of the JPU submitted a report that sought approval to use the Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives for inclusion in the Joint Core Strategy up to the production of

the emergent strategy. She referred to the two appendices, which were working documents, and which set out a spatial portrait and emergent spatial vision respectively. She reminded Members that these were high level strategic documents and should not refer to finer detail; they would need to reinforce the links with the University of Northampton; and to include the latest information of national indicators. She advised that these documents would need to be made more concise and strategic and the number of objectives reduced.

A discussion on Appendix 1, the West Northamptonshire Spatial Portrait, ensued it being noted:

- That although the figures for jobs had been taken from the 2005 RSS8 this was considered to be too low and might lead to a dormitory town situation and that more recent evidence from SNEAP indicated the need for jobs to be in excess of fifty thousand. The need for compliance with the RSS was an issue and the number of jobs would need further consideration.
- Where lists of places were shown, and deemed necessary, these should be clarified as examples as opposed to being assumed to be inclusive.
- That the reference to canals be amended to include "canal corridors" so as to refer to the canals themselves, towpaths and any immediate hinterland.
- That it be made clear that it is considered that there is an existing infrastructure deficit even before the effects of any growth are taken into account.

A discussion ensued upon Appendix 2, Emerging Spatial Vision, it being particularly noted:

- That the Spatial Objectives needed to underpin the Vision and that impact on other objectives needed to be appreciated.
- Further consideration needed to be given to including a list of places requiring regeneration and, if required, Northampton East to be identified.
- That the Emerging Spatial Vision must be a high level strategic document where layers of documentation beneath it and other DPDs would set out details.
- That the evidence base for the places named in paragraph 8 be confirmed.

RESOLVED: That subject to the amendments as accepted, the draft Working Spatial Portrait, Vision and Objectives be agreed with further consideration being given to those issues identified.

6. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Interim Head of the JPU submitted a report and noted in paragraph 1.4 the references to "preferred strategy" should read "emerging strategy". She highlighted paragraph 1.17, Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment and slippage, reported by the consultants contracted by NEL, and paragraph 1.20, West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and ongoing discussion as to the need for primary research. She informed Members that recent Counsel's advice was that the evidence base generally speaking was robust.

Comment was noted that the CACI report on the West Northamptonshire Retail Study was now available online and was clear in its conclusions.

The Interim Head of the JPU referred to the key milestone of the programme set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the Chair referred to discussions at the Business Sub-Group in respect of the planned meeting of the Joint Committee on 2 June 2009 to consider for approval the emergent strategy for the sole purpose of public consultation. The Business Sub-Group had concluded that as the report was to require approval for consultation only and so as to avoid any unecessary delay in the publication of the pre-submission Joint Core Strategy in November 2009 that the meeting on 2 June 2009 should go ahead. The Interim Head of the JPU confirmed that the Joint Committee would be asked to approve an emerging strategy that would set out options and indicate preferred approaches as supported by the evidence base. This would comply fully with requirements of Regulation 25. It was also noted that two workshops would be held before the proposed meeting on 2 June for members to discuss and understand the criteria for the selection of strategic sites and the options for consideration.

Concern was expressed that agreeing a preferred approach to the locations of development growth even for the purpose of consultation was likely to be politically controversial. Further concern was made that policy positions should not be perceived to have been agreed ahead of the County Council elections or for these matters to become a focus for electioneering.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration commented that any rescheduling of the Joint Committee meeting to a date after 2 June 2009 would have consequences for the Programme, and place at risk the delivery of the LDS timetable. Officers assured Members that they would seek to minimise any impact on the programme. The importance of good Member attendance at the arranged workshops and positive outcomes from those workshops before the next Joint Planning Committee meeting was even more critical.

The Joint Planning Committee discussed the issues. Consequences and risks. A view was advanced by Councillor Church that the meeting on 2 June should go ahead as originally discussed at the Business Sub- Group. The majority of Members did not favour such an approach.

RESOLVED: That the proposed meeting of the Joint Planning Committee on 2 June 2009 be rescheduled to 25 June 2009 by virtue of the exceptional circumstances caused by the County Council elections on 4 June 2009.

7. CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The Interim Head of the JPU submitted a report and made particular reference to paragraph 1.4.1 in terms of the identification of key audiences and paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 in terms of engagement with Councillors. It was noted there would be regular briefings for Councillors and all stakeholder groups.

Comment was made that communication was very important and it was noted that each of the constituent authorities' communications teams were working alongside the JPU to ensure timely and consistency of the public message.

A discussion ensued in respect of the likely timing of the Inspector's decision on the Daventry appeals and that it may coincide with the submission of the Joint Core Strategy in March 2010 and its possible impact and how it might be dealt with.

RESOLVED: That the Consultation and Communication Strategy and Consultation Action Plan be agreed in principle.

8. RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Interim Head of the JPU submitted a report and commented that an appointment of a Head of the JPU had not been made. The post would be re-advertised with the assistance of consultants and a targeted search process. However, successful appointments had been made to the positions of DPD Team Leader and Senior Planner. It was also noted that some of the people employed on a temporary basis were also applying for permanent positions.

The Interim Head of the JPU also drew attention to the issues raised in the discussion on the evidence base in respect of the Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment and the slippage reported by the consultants contracted by NEL. Every effort was being made by NEL's project officer to accelerate the work. Mr Dickinson offered to speak to NEL direct which was accepted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 20.20 hours

Agenda Item 7

Appendices

3



Item No.

7

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Central Area Action Plan – Emerging Plan Consultation

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date: 15th July 2009

Key Decision: Yes

Listed on Forward Plan: Yes

Within Policy: No

Policy Document: Yes

Directorate: Planning and Regeneration

Accountable Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Church

Ward(s) Castle, Delapre, St. Crispin

1. Purpose

1.1 The report and appendices sets out details for and seeks Cabinet approval of the emerging strategy for the Central Area Action Plan. It also outlines the consultation process anticipated on the emergent strategy. This is part of the process of moving towards a submission draft of the Plan to be issued in November 09.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Consider the report and approve consultation on the emerging strategy document contained within Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Delegate to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration amendments to the document in Appendix 1, if required, prior to starting the consultation process.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In its role as a statutory plan making authority, the Council is obliged to meet its commitment as set out in the Local Development Scheme to prepare a Central Area Action Plan for Northampton. The anticipated adoption date is May 2011. The Action Plan sets out a more detailed policy framework for the development of the centre. It has to be consistent with the broad vision for West Northamptonshire which will be set out in the Core Strategy and also that contained within the East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS8).
- 3.1.2 The Council previously carried out an Issues and Options consultation in September and October 2007. It was anticipated at that time that a further round of consultation, then known as Preferred Options, would be carried out. The planned consultation was in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004(b) and associated good practice guidance. In 2008 however, there was an amendment to regulations and associated guidance, which effectively removed the recommendation of undertaking the Preferred Options stage. Nevertheless, officers consider that it would still be prudent to undertake some wider targeted consultation on the emerging strategy for the plan. This is because of the advances that have been made on the Plan since the Issues and Options consultation in September and October 2007.
- 3.1.3 It is considered that this consultation would tease out the extent to which there is support, or major objection, prior to the next statutory stage in the process; Publication of Pre-Submission Draft. At that stage, government guidance advises that the Plan should really only be subject to very minor amendment prior to the Submission stage, when the Plan is considered by an independent planning inspector. Government and the Planning Inspectorate have become more pragmatic in accepting changes at the Submission stage, but with the continued emphasis on 'front loading' of the plan process, it is unlikely that this pragmatism is a scenario that can be relied upon to continue.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The consultation will outline the Council's emerging thoughts on a number of policy areas, with a view to revising its approach if considered necessary before preparing the Publication of the Submission Draft. Officers have been working closely with partners, in particular the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and Northamptonshire County Council in taking forward work on the Plan. In line with the emphasis on implementation and delivery within the new plan, there has been an attempt to provide some rigour to a delivery plan, particularly within the first five years, to ensure that the Plan is not based on aspiration.
- 3.2.2 The emerging plan has been based on a wide-ranging evidence base, examples of which include the CACI Retail Strategy for Northampton and the emerging Roger Tym and Partners Town Centre Health Check. Nevertheless, there are still some key pieces of work that, whilst well advanced, need to be finalised. These include the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Strategic Employment Land Assessment (now out to consultation) and the Transport Model for

- Northampton Town Centre. This research, or its substantive findings, are planned to be available before Publication of Submission Draft in November.
- 3.2.3 The emergent strategy has been shaped by the results of the Issues and Options consultation and on-going dialogue with partners and stakeholders. Council members have had the opportunity to have an input into the process through one to one sessions throughout May and a workshop on 11th June 09. Key changes to the document as a result of the members' event have been an amendment to the vision and the boundary of the Central Area. Further changes will relate to the detail on individual development sites and testing of transport options, in particular those that seek to reduce the severance effect of the inner ring road, allowing the centre to expand and connect better to surrounding communities.
- 3.2.4 In terms of consultation, it is proposed that the emergent strategy (as set out in Appendix 1) will be placed on Limehouse a web-based consultation platform. A shorter summary leaflet in plain English of up to 12 A4 sides will be produced, together with a short questionnaire, or the ability to make comments. Every person or organisation that had given an indication of wishing to be kept informed of further stages of the Plan will be contacted to be made aware of the consultation and those contained within the Statement of Community Involvement. In addition it is anticipated that there will be a number of public consultation events, this may include a display in the Grosvenor Centre with officers on hand to answer queries for short periods, presentations to forums, e.g. Older Persons' and Disabled Persons' and partnership groups such as the Local Strategic Partnership and the Town Centre Partnership.
- 3.2.5 Appendix 1 gives an outline of the text of the emergent strategy that will be issued for consultation. There may be a need to consider revisions of its content if new information comes to light before the planned consultation period starts, simplify its language in parts so that it is more accessible to a wider range of people and alter the questions asked so that are more focussed on elements where consultation input can make a real difference to the emerging strategy. If this is the case, it is requested that Cabinet allow amendments to be made to the document in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration prior to it being released to the public.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 There are a number of choices available to Cabinet. It could either decide that the consultation should:
 - not be undertaken;
 - be delayed
 - be undertaken as set out in this report, with any additions Cabinet may consider appropriate, which can clearly be evidenced as appropriate in planning terms
- 3.3.2 Given that the preparation of a Local Development Framework is a statutory requirement and the Council has signed up to the Local Development Scheme, the first bullet point is not appropriate. It could lead to significant issues being raised at the consultation stage of Publication of Submission Draft. Substantial changes in the document in between this stage and prior to

Submission are considered inappropriate in guidance, so it is possible that the Council would have to undertake another round of consultation redoing Publication of Submission Draft. Delaying consultation on the emerging strategy severely limits the opportunity to effectively take into consider representations that would be received when consultation did occur if the milestone of consultation on the Submission Draft stage in November is to be met.

3.3.3 The third bullet point is the recommended preferred approach.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The Central Area Action Plan will when it is adopted will replace parts of the saved Northampton Local Plan 1997, and along with the East Midlands Regional Plan and the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy become part of the statutory development plan for the central area.
- 4.1.2 An up to date CAAP will provide a clear policy framework as the principle basis for the determination of planning applications to guide discussions and to underwrite bids for third party funding.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The production of the Plan is a very resource intensive process. Changes to the production timetable of the document as set out in the Local Development Scheme and uncertainty over commissioning planned pieces of research with partners associated with creating an effective evidence base resulted in an under spend in 08/09. Nevertheless the need for this work to occur to ensure that the Plan is sound has not gone away. Consequently there is a need for this underspend to be carried forward to 09/10 to provide an adequate resource base to keep the plan sound and to programme. Appropriate levels of budget for future stages of the Plan have been sought and attained through the Council's Medium Term Plan budgetary process.
- 4.2.2 The Local Development Framework process is complicated. There have been several cases, particularly within the early years of the move towards Local Development Frameworks, of plans being found to be 'unsound' and therefore not being able to be adopted. Precautions have been taken in terms of risk analysis and support has been given by instruction of counsel and a critical friend from the Planning Officers' Society. These have been able to advise on plan content and procedures to minimise risk of the plan not being found sound. In addition the Planning Inspectorate now gives advice prior to examination on any submitted Plan identifying any potential 'show stoppers' which would mean that they would be unlikely to support the plan. Therefore in reality the Plan is unlikely to get to submission and be found unsound. However, there is still a small risk of the potential need to redo some stages prior to submission should any deficiencies in the content or approach be identified.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 See section 4.1 and 4.2 above. The weight attached to the emerging Plan is still limited, although it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Plan becomes the principle consideration when

found sound by the Inspector, and the weight to be attached to its policies increases as the various stages are achieved.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 A screening of the Issues and Options document indicated the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment of the Plan. Issues were identified that could potentially have an adverse effect on the following equalities strands: race, disability, gender and age. These issues include accessibility in terms of transportation and movement and accessibility to facilities; the fear of crime and personal safety; and restrictions on opportunities for some land uses. Officers are aware of these issues and will seek to ensure that adverse impact is limited, or turned into a positive.
- 4.4.2 Analysis of the demographic of the previous consultation responses indicated a balanced representation from most of the equalities strands the only exception being an under-representation of younger people. Steps are being taken to ensure that this is addressed through more active and targeted youth engagement. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in firming up the Plan at Pre-Submission Draft and Submission stages.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 In the production of the Plan there has been continued consultation with internal departments, including legal, finance, housing, procurement, regeneration, public protection, neighbourhood environmental services, policy and community engagement, communications and the director of Northampton Local Strategic Partnership. A presentation has also occurred at one of the Chief Executive led Managers Sessions. Member engagement initially was through the Local Development Framework Steering Group and more recently, drop in sessions and a Members' Workshop.
- 4.5.2 In addition external consultation has occurred with the Northampton Local Strategic Partnership, Northamptonshire County Council, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit and in association with the Unit the Environment Agency, River Nene Regional Park, major infrastructure providers such as the utilities and the emergency services.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

The Plan is essential to the future prosperity and planning of the centre of Northampton as part of the wider growth agenda, cementing its role at the subregional level. It provides civic leadership in drawing together all public sector agencies into agreed and focussed priorities. It is a key document in addressing all the Council's five corporate priorities.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Northampton Central Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Discussion Paper September 2007.

Paul Lewin, Planning Policy and Conservation Manager 01604 838734

Appendix 1

CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN - EMERGING STRATEGY

Foreword

This emergent strategy is about how the centre of Northampton will develop over the next twenty years and beyond. It is not a final strategy, but is work in progress representing thinking that is relatively well progressed. The strategy however could be subject to change if reasons warrant it, for instance new evidence from the feedback given from this period of consultation. It contains some of the key decisions that will affect the centre, however the Pre-Submission version of the Central Area Action Plan, produced after the end of consultation on this document will contain more detail and policies.

The future of Northampton's centre is reliant upon well focussed planning and investment. There is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the fortunes of the centre. It must become a place that takes advantages of the opportunities that the growth of the town's population from approximately 200,000 to around 300,000 by 2026 will bring. This transformation will be an integral part of ensuring that Northampton and West Northamptonshire are regarded as a place that people want to be to live, to work and for leisure.

The Central Area Action Plan will complement regional planning policy and the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. It provides more detail on how central Northampton will meet the ambitions set out for it in these documents. It is a 'spatial' policy document, meaning that it deals with places and the activities that happen within them. It will eventually replace parts of the Northampton Local Plan adopted in 1997.

The Plan will set both the broad framework for developing the centre to 2026 and beyond and more detailed policy requirements for particular parts of the centre. This will provide a clearer picture of the future of the centre for residents, investors and businesses. It will also help focus the spending plans of a range of public sector organisations from the Borough and County Councils, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Homes and Communities Agency, the Primary Care Trust, the emergency services and the Environment Agency.

It seeks to solve some of the current problems experienced such the relatively poor performance of the centre in terms of its retail offer; the recent limited investment in employment premises, in particular offices; the under-use of large areas within the core of the centre and on what can currently be seen as its edges; and the limited emphasis placed on positive natural features that could be real assets, such as its rivers and associated open spaces.

This document is the 'emerging strategy' for the town centre. It explains the current thinking and is designed to test out ideas. It follows on from the Issues and Options document that we consulted on in October 2007. The Pre-Submission version of the

Plan, which to all intents and purposes should be considered the final version, will be published in November 2009, prior to submission to the government for examination in June 2010.

This document is part of the consultation process as set out in Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. Although it has contains a number of questions on the emerging strategy for the Central Area for inclusion within a Pre-Submission Action Plan, the Council is not seeking to limit representations about what the Action Plan ought to contain, and indeed welcomes any additional representations.

Purpose of the Emerging Strategy

The purpose of this document is to explain the current thinking of the Council and to obtain responses from all interested parties to these thoughts. This is an important step forward in the production of the Central Area Action Plan. However it is not the complete plan, nor at this stage is anything completely fixed. The strategy and proposals set out here have been developed after careful consideration, and appear to be the best approach available. However, if further evidence suggests some change of approach or emphasis that may lead to changes for example the conclusions of the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

A lot of testing of ideas has already taken place and this emerging strategy explains how some of the important choices for the area are being informed, as well as our thinking on the best way forward. On reflection, our issues and options document put forward too many options, particularly for potential uses within areas. A significant amount of work had already been undertaken through consultation with many people and organisations, for example in the production of the BDP Northampton Central Area, Design, Development and Movement Framework published in November 2006, to which a significant level of consensus had been achieved.

In this document we justify why we have taken decisions on the preferred options, but do not address why we rejected all others. Further information will be provided in further technical papers in support of the Pre-Submission document. Out testing of these ideas will help to inform further technical work.

This document is for everyone who is interested in the future of Northampton. It will have impacts on communities, businesses, landowners, developers and other investors. It is also intended to increase the dialogue we already have with bodies such as the Environment Agency, River Nene Regional Park, English Heritage and a range of public services operating in the area.

This emerging strategy document has been prepared taking into account consultation responses received through the informal consultation prior to the Issues and Options stage, the formal consultation that took place at that stage and subsequent continual dialogue with partners, plus feedback as and when from others such as the Town Centre Commission and Councillors. Together these have helped shape changes to the plan proposals,

Since the publication of the Issues and Options document additional evidence has been collected which forms the basis of the policies and proposals which will be included in the Pre-Submission document.				

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

Area Action Plans are documents targeted at planning for areas of significant change and conservation. The Government wishes to see them integrate land use, transport and regeneration proposals with clear mechanisms for delivery.

Northampton is a key component in the Government's programme of developing sustainable communities. By 2026 the whole town will have grown significantly towards a population of 300,000. Past change is evident in the town's unique built heritage; however the town must adapt and revitalise to meet the challenges of change while conserving its historic past. To enable these two challenges to be faced the Central Area Action Plan will provide a Spatial Plan to guide future development.

The Central Area includes what most people would identify as the 'town centre', the central retail, leisure and commercial hub of the town, together with adjoining areas of commercial, residential and mixed use. These adjoining areas are included because it is anticipated that they will be developed to enhance the role and functioning of the centre in its expansion to become of a stature as a principal focus for a settlement with a population that will grow to 300,000 by 2026 and probably also more beyond this date. It is anticipated that, as part of this expansion Northampton Town Centre will become Northampton City Centre, with all the associated scale and density of development and uses that that implies.

The Central Area Action Plan includes within its boundary the area shown within Figure 1. Meetings with stakeholders and discussions with others led to a revised boundary. The original boundary proposed at the Issues and Options stage can also be seen in Figure 1. A large amount of the existing residential areas where no 'actions' are planned has been removed. This allows the Plan to focus on areas where change is going to happen or needed, and where a clear view on the type of development is required. A large area to the south of the old boundary has also been added to the boundary. This is the Waterside and also associated large development areas at Ransome Road, where there is an opportunity to capitalise on the opportunities provided by the River Nene and Grand Union Canal. The new boundary also has areas of public greenspace land to the south-east which includes Midsummer Meadow and Barnes Meadow Nature Reserve.

The Central Area Action Plan will provide the basis for co-ordinating the actions of a range of partners (for example the County Council, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited and the Borough Council) with an interest in the Central Area.

The existing town centre is an area which is beginning to show clear signs of being in relative decline. This decline is due to a combination of factors, including lack of investment and growth in shopping provision to meet demand, the effects of out of town retailing and the draw of other shopping destinations, in particular Milton Keynes. This combined with the loss of major employers in the town centre to out of town locations and lack of sufficient investment in the public realm have all contributed to the decline.

The Plan aims to halt the decline in the first instance and to implement a sustainable future for the centre of Northampton, whilst respecting and protecting the historic environment. It will provide a framework for high quality employment, retail, housing, leisure and cultural development and investment.

The Central Area Action Plan will also establish planning policies for the Central Area of Northampton until 2026. These will manage growth and change, whilst ensuring the protection of areas and places sensitive to change, such as the historic core.

The Plan must also be deliverable (as much as anyone can be certain over these timescales). As such it gives details of the key partners that can make change happen, therefore trying to provide a degree of certainty when looking ahead twenty years.

The plan will provide a framework for future decisions made in the Central Area by landowners, investors and businesses; local authorities and other public sector organisations such as the emergency services, health providers and the Environment Agency; and will also be a key consideration in decisions on planning applications.

The Borough Council in association with its partners has been, is and will continue to work on a number of town centre and Northampton wide studies (such as retail and economic development) to inform decision making on the Central Area, plus site specific Masterplans. As a significant landowner, the Council can also take the lead on some developments within the Central Area such as the Grosvenor Centre, sites included within the Bridge Street/St John's/Angel Street Masterplan and the regeneration of Spring Boroughs.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Central Area Action Plan must be generally conform to several higher tiers of policy, set out at national, regional, sub-regional and Borough wide level

National

At the national level town centres are still regarded as the priority areas uses that attract large number of visitors and activity, for example retail, leisure, office and hotel uses. The most pertinent policies relating to town and city centres is contained within Planning Policy Statement 6. This however is likely to be replaced by a revised Planning Policy Statement 4, currently going through a phase of consultation on a revised draft.

Paragraph 6 of Draft PPS4 outlines the Government's objectives for achieving prosperous communities, and these include the aim to promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities and ensure that they are economically successful recognising that they are important drivers for regional, sub-regional and local economies. This is to be done through the following:

- New economic growth and development to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services in an attractive and safe environment
- Competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially excluded groups
- The historic, archaeological, architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity

The policy relating to site selection and land assembly for can be considered main town centre uses (Policy EC7) requires the application of a sequential approach to site selection and an impact assessment of the development on existing centres. These uses include: retail, offices, leisure, entertainment facilities and arts. This will have implications on proposals for out-of-town locations, as the Government reinforces a "town centre first" message.

Regional

The East Midlands Regional Plan adopted in March 2009 sets out the assumed level of growth of housing and employment associated with the expansion of the town. It sets out a minimum of an additional 40,375 homes in the period 2001-2026 for Northampton and 37,200 jobs for West Northamptonshire for the period 2001-2021. This takes forward the Government's objectives set out within the earlier Sustainable Communities Plan of providing additional significant growth in housing development to cater for the needs of the population and increased employment opportunities to retain the economy's competitiveness at a national level.

In East Midlands Plan (RSS8), Northampton is identified as a principal urban area, along with cities such as Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. Therefore there is an acknowledgement that the role of Northampton will be similar to that of larger existing cities within the region and that Northampton will have a significant role to play within the Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, and Bedfordshire sub-region. A clear policy direction for the Council is set out in the Plan for Northampton Central Area.

Policy MKSM SRS Northamptonshire 3 within the East Midlands Plan states:

"Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other relevant bodies, will prepare a Local Development Document to provide a long-term framework for revitalising and upgrading the quality and facilities of the central area, including:

- Developing the area around and including the railway station not only as a transport hub for the town, but also as an attractive and vibrant gateway to the town centre and focus for development;
- Improving the range and quality of retail provision by increasing comparison and convenience floorspace, and linking this into a revitalisation of the rest of

the central area incorporating attractive links to the railway station and waterfront areas:

- Making the central area the focus of a range of employment opportunities with a particular emphasis on office space. From the provision of large office space through to small office suites in both new and converted accommodation;
- Developing cultural/heritage tourism by enhancing the existing cultural heritage facilities and attractions, and through the provision of new facilities; and
- Increasing the range of centrally located overnight accommodation"

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, which is at the same stage in its preparation as the Central Area Action Plan will set out the critical role that Northampton centre will have in being an integral part of ensuring that Northampton and West Northamptonshire are regarded as a place that people want to be to live, work and for leisure. The emerging Core Strategy's vision for West Northamptonshire states:

".....Northampton City is repositioned as the key economic driver at the cultural heart of the sub-region fulfilling its role as the leading retail, entertainment, employment health and learning centre based upon a thriving mixed economy including the services it offers relative to neighbours and proud of its theatres, museums and professional sports teams. All communities have access to many opportunities......"

It also identifies that "with government and regional policy focusing on Northampton's role within the Growth Area, there is a compelling need for a major step change in the delivery of an attractive, lively and commercially successful town centre." (para 4.5.1.2)

It states the "Northampton Central Area will lie at the heart of a new city and will serve as the economic and cultural hub for the county. Castle and Spencer wards of which Castle includes part of the central area are identified as priority communities in need of regeneration". (para 4.5.1.3) "Employment growth will be promoted in urban centres through an urban concentration policy to help realise objectives for regenerating and revitalising urban centres." (para 4.3.10)

It identifies that: "Northampton's centre, in particular, has been damaged over the years by the unhealthy range of out of centre retail areas that have diverted investment away from the centre and contributed nothing towards its regeneration. There is a strategic well evidenced necessity to reverse this damage and improve Northampton so that it fulfils its regional, county and West Northamptonshire role to its full potential. The Joint Core Strategy will address these strategic issues through policies to resist any further retail development outside the central shopping area (as

defined by the Central Area Action Plan) or the other defined centres." (para 4.6.5-4.5.6)

Northampton's centre is identified as a "City Centre: serves as a hub of business and cultural activity in the sub-region and county. It is the most intensive form of development for housing, employment and public transport. The City Centre will continue to serve as the finance and commerce, government, retail, tourism, arts and entertainment centre for the sub-region and county." (para 4.6.12) The Core Strategy will also "Promote the development of additional cultural and tourist facilities close to popular destinations for example: Northampton arts and culture quarter....(and)..waterfront areas in Northampton" (para 4.8.4.6)

Community Strategy

Government Policy is clear that the Plan should also be reflective of the Community Strategy. The Action Plan will be a key part in meeting the aims of Northamptonshire Sustainable Community Strategy of:

- Being successful through sustainable growth and regeneration
- Developing a growing economy
- To have safe and strong communities
- To have healthy people with a good quality of life

THE EVIDENCE BASE

The emerging strategy has been developed through an examination of a variety of sources of information and specific pieces of research designed to inform policy. This evidence base consists of national and regional planning policy, best practice guidance, background studies, census statistics and other published data, and consultation feedback. See Appendix A for a list of the evidence base considered.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

The Area Action Plan has been informed and modified throughout by the process of Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This assesses the Plan's effect on a wide range of sustainability environmental, economic and social aspirations objectives. The emphasis is on ensuring that the Plan minimises any adverse impact on these objectives, and where possible seeks to improve them. The Appraisal has been used in working up the emerging strategy and will also be used again in the next stages of taking the Plan through to its Submission Draft. In addition to this an Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. This has concluded that the Plan has the potential to impact on some of the six equalities strands. This related amongst other things to the impact of the plan on older and younger people, particularly with regards to safety and the perception of crime, accessibility for women, the young and the old and those with a disability and impact of restrictions on uses disproportionately affecting particular ethnic minorities. Therefore a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in

the run up to the Pre-Submission document to inform and influence the policy approach.

CENTRAL AREA CONTEXT

The Central Area Action Plan includes the main shopping areas of Abington Street, St Giles, the Drapery, Gold Street the Grosvenor Centre and the Market Place, together with adjoining areas of commercial, residential and mixed use. To the west the boundary extends to include Spring Boroughs, the railway station and sidings and the out of centre St. James and Nene Valley Retail Parks. To the south it follows the old Northampton to Bedford railway line, with the exception of the area around Ransome Road, which will be subject to significant change in the future, linked into the Waterside area based around the canal, River Nene and its Brampton Arm tributary. It also includes a significant area of 'greenspace' or 'green infrastructure' around Midsummer Meadow up to the A45 and Barnes Meadow. To the east it includes the hospital area along with large scale commercial premises, before being drawn more closely into the historic core of the town which tends to be defined by the inner ring road. (see Figure 1)

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

BRIEF SUMMARY

Despite recent growth in the population of Northampton and Northamptonshire, the investment within Northampton's centre is below what would have been anticipated. There has been a lack of substantial investment by the development industry, with extremely limited retail and office provision in particular over the last 20 years. On the other hand there have been significant opportunities and investor appetite for out of centre retailing and employment development. This has resulted in several major employers and retailers moving out of the Central Area.

More recently there has been a growth of new apartment development and a rise in the number of pubs and restaurants operating within the centre, particularly along Birdge Street. There has also been a substantial investment in the Derngate Theatre complex. These changes have been particularly successful at bringing people into the town in the evenings and at the weekends. However, there has been a particular emphasis in the market on places that attract younger drinkers with the consequential associated problems. To many the centre can feel intimidating and unsafe in the evenings.

Although Northampton centre can in comparison with other centres across the country be regarded as relatively successful, it is clearly underperforming in relation to the catchment that it serves. There is a need to turn around its fortunes. It needs to be able to take advantages that the opportunities of sustained growth of the population and associated employment opportunities will bring. It needs to become an integral part in ensuring that Northampton and West Northamptonshire are regarded as a place that people want to be to live, work and for leisure. It has to take on the mantle of being a city centre that serves a population that will approach

300,000 by 2026 and have all the characteristics of a major urban centre. It also has to have an eye on the future, in the assumption that growth is likely to occur beyond 2026 for Northampton as a whole.

This emerging strategy outlines how the Council and its partners plan to ensure that this happens, starting out with the vision, strategic objectives, it also outlines policies that will support this vision, gives further detail of ambitious development anticipated in substantial areas and identifies how public sector partners and other organisations will work together to assist the private sector in delivering the majority of the proposed change and how the success of this will be monitored.

RESIDENTIAL

- The Central area is home to around 9% of Northampton's population. It has a mix of homes, but the majority are in the form of high density apartments, with a high proportion of them being in the social rented sector.
- Most of the housing stock in the Central Area is pre-war (1939), although as there has been a substantial amount of apartment development in the last decade.
- Spring Boroughs, a substantial residential area in the Central Area is within the top 5% of deprived areas in England and has a range of poor quality housing.

CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

- The Central Area retains a considerable amount of its historical character Four conservation areas are designated. There are also many Listed Buildings, some Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Locally Listed Buildings
- Some areas have however suffered from significant intervention through highway widening schemes, or wholesale clearance, particularly during the late 1960s, early 1970s. Many of these have been poor quality developments resulting in disjointed and poor environments, particularly for the pedestrian and cyclist
- The river and its valley is a natural resource located to the south of the Central Area. The potential of this area has in the main, until relatively recently, been neglected
- Although there are some very pleasant areas, and a programme of recent investment there needs to be an improvement in the public realm and signage
- Visitors rate the town centre poorly in terms of cleanliness, safety and character

EMPLOYMENT, RETAIL AND LEISURE

- Northampton centre attracts only half the retail spending of the town's residents, with a lot of spending going to Weston Favell on the east of the town, Milton Keynes and other competing centres.
- Provision in the town centre of convenience shopping is currently underprovided for so most spending is at edge of centre or out of centre food stores:
- The large purpose built Grosvenor Centre is beginning to show its age
- The centre is regarded at by occupiers as low income. Thus is despite its
 population catchment having a high level of per capita spend, so the centre
 should be able to attract more and better retail and restaurant operators;
- The perception is that it has a poor selection of multiple retailers, although in terms of key attractors it is on a par with Leicester (although it is true that there is a lack of premium retailers).
- The town centre needs a broader range of comparison shops, with some higher quality shops to improve its attractiveness. These types of operators are usually looking for large modern units within central locations
- Restaurants are under-represented and in particular higher quality outlets a
 restaurant cluster should be encouraged and marketed to overcome the
 perception that the town centre is not an eating out location;
- There has been little investment over the past 20 years in new employment development. Consequently a significant proportion of the existing available stock is unsuitable for modern day occupier requirements.
- The Northampton General Hospital is located to the east of the Central Area.
 It provides facilities for a wider area and is the largest employer within the central area.
- There is one main employment site at Bedford Road. However there are several other industrial sites including Carlsberg Brewery and the railway sidings at Castle Station

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

- A purpose built bus station is located to the north of the Grosvenor Centre;
- Castle Station, whilst not on the direct line, provides links with both London and Birmingham, along the West Coast Main Line

- Although access by public transport is good, both the railway station and bus station are peripheral and dated
- Much of the historic centre is enclosed within an inner ring road of varying lane size – whilst providing access to the town centre, this also acts as a route for through traffic and is a significant barrier to movement across it, in particular by pedestrians
- There are a number of one-way systems in operation around the Central Area, and the town lacks 'permeability' the ability to drive easily through the town
- Abington Street, which is one of the main shopping areas, is pedestrianised

PART TWO - VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Northampton City Centre Vision 2026

By 2026 Northampton City Centre will be firmly established as the economic and cultural hub for Northamptonshire. It will be the destination of choice for people within the County and beyond to live, work and relax. The city centre will be using its strengths, in particular its architectural heritage, its riverside, a distinctive retail offer and its cultural offer as a key to its success.

The City Centre will have developed:

- A distinctive retail offer that combines the best in major high street names in The Greyfriars (which will have replaced the Grosvenor Centre and bus station) with niche and specialist retail and leisure in Northampton's traditional streets and market
- A new inter-city railway facility at Castle Station with a key employment area providing a high quality gateway to the city, supporting the regeneration of neighbouring sites including Spring Boroughs
- A lively St. Johns Quarter providing a centre for arts and culture alongside a base for public services and employment
- A new focus on The Waterside enhancing a long neglected asset as a new destination for employment, living and leisure with a new marina at its heart
- Our city centre will provide facilities equal to or better than the best European cities of a similar size

Question: Is the vision appropriate? How could it be improved?

DRAFT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO 2026

Strategic Objective 1: Regeneration

To expand retail and other town centre facilities and the scale of employment opportunities in the centre to match Northampton's future role as a city at the heart of its sub-region, maximising the use of previously developed land

Strategic Objective 2: A well designed city centre

To ensure new design is of the highest standard that reflects the rich architectural heritage and adds to the sense of place

Strategic Objective 3: A destination of choice

To revitalise the Market Square as the heart of the new city and create and develop cultural initiatives based around St John's and the Derngate Theatres area

Strategic Objective 4: A walkable city

To make the Central Area pedestrian friendly and 'walkable', with an improved Public Realm and linkages between key destinations

Strategic Objective 5: Public Transport and cycling

To ensure good public transport and cycle accessibility, and develop a dedicated public transport route on the disused railway line linking the City Centre with the major growth areas

Strategic Objective 6: Quality places

To provide an appealing and safe environment within the urban framework and along The Waterside

Strategic Objective 7: Repopule the centre

To substantially increase the resident population through redevelopment of redundant industrial areas and the regeneration of Spring Boroughs

Strategic Objective 8: Sustainability

To ensure the Central Area develops in a sustainable manner and helps create a positive framework for action on climate change

Question: Are the objectives individually and collectively appropriate? How could they be improved?

PART THREE - SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BDP Northampton Central Area, Design, Development and Movement Framework published in November 2006.

The Council together with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly English Partnerships) commissioned BDP to undertake the Northampton Central Area, Design, Development and Movement Framework in 2006. It was recognised that the existing Northampton Local Plan adopted in 1997 was increasingly becoming out of date. The Local Plan adopted in 1997 could not have taken into account the type of centre that would be required for Northampton to be the successful place anticipated through the substantial growth agenda set out in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan published in 2002.

The Northampton Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework sought to provide a strategic vision for the town centre that could be used to guide the work and priorities of these partner organisations and the private sector prior to the adoption of the Central Area Action Plan. In progressing with the Central Area Action Plan to the emergent strategy, the Council has had regard to the piece of work that BDP did. It has sought to refine the Framework through more rigorous assessment and testing, but has not sought to start again.

The BDP work identified significant areas of opportunity. The Framework document took into account the characteristics of the opportunity areas and their connections to the wider town, as well as the centre. It set out preferred principles for the development of the sites and the connections between them. Development should include anchors to create points of activity within the town which would then be connected by strong pedestrian movement routes either obviously signposted or through enhanced public realm, many of which overlapped, for example the retail circuit and the north/south/east/west cross created through historic routes. Work on improving the connective glue between the opportunity sites has started through an agreement on a Public Realm Implementation Framework. This has been instrumental in the first phases of public realm improvement from Castle Station, along Marefair and Gold Street to All Saints. Work has been and will continue to occur on refining the development opportunity sites and connections between them through masterplans and identification within the Submission draft of the CAAP about the priority connective routes.

A simplified overview of the basic BDP strategy for the centre is included in Figure 2. A simplified Spatial Plan of the Emerging Strategy for the Action Plan is shown in Figure 3

Shopping in the Central Area

Three distinct pieces of work have been commissioned as part of the evidence base for developing retail policy for the Northampton sub-region. The *West Northamptonshire Retail Study 2026* by Consultants CACI (May 2009) gives advice on retail capacity and needs within West Northamptonshire, whilst the *Retail Strategy*

for Northampton Town Centre also by consultants CACI in May 2008, gives a specific assessment on retail matters within the town centre. A Town Centre Health Check has been commissioned and is being undertaken by Roger Tym and Partners and is expected to be completed at the end of July 2009. This will provide further retail analysis (and other town centre uses) in association with a wider understanding of the health of the centre.

CACI describe the town centres within the sub region as 'embattled' due to a number of successful out of town retail locations situated around the urban area of Northampton. In addition the centres face strong competition from large format supermarkets and Milton Keynes, this is particularly attractive to residents in the south west areas of Northampton. Currently Milton Keynes takes 11% of the spend from the Northampton town centre catchment area. This is about the same as Weston Favell District Centre, which is to the east of Northampton. However, the competition posed by Milton Keynes and Weston Favell will increase due further expansion of their retail offer through extensions, which was permitted some time ago. Figure 4 shows the split of spending within Northampton's retail catchment.

In order for the CAAP to provide realistic and deliverable policies for the regeneration and reinvigoration of the town centre and the emerging city centre, it will be necessary for there to be policies in the Joint Core Strategy that restrict the development of new and the expansion of existing out of town and edge of town retailing. This approach is confirmed above in the Policy Context section.

The St. James' and Nene Valley Retail Parks and B&Q are included within the boundary of the Central Area. These currently function as out of centre retail parks and retail warehousing with no evidenced linkage to the primary shopping area and are in part in competition with the town centre. Given the advice in CACI the Council is keen to see that in the future this area does not have further retail provision to undermine the centre. In the longer term, taking into account the growth of the centre and in particular the ambitions for the adjacent Waterside area, the Council regard this as having great potential to provide additional capacity for medium to high density mixed use development, including offices, residential and other non-retail uses appropriate for an area adjacent to a central area. Given recent investment that has occurred in the retail units it is anticipated that this will be towards the end of the Plan period, or in the period shortly after its end.

Question: Do you think that this would be an appropriate response to ensure that the town centre is strengthened and enhanced?

Question: Would it be appropriate for the CAAP to include specific policies to change the use of St. James' and Nene Valley Retail Parks and the B&Q site from retail to high to medium mixed use areas primarily for employment and residential uses when proposals come forward for their redevelopment?

Overall the town centre takes only 46.2% of the trade from its catchment area. (see Figure 4). The Retail Strategy for Northampton identifies the aim to; *To see Northampton attain the status of dominant sub-regional centre, upgrading from an 'average major centre' to a 'quality major centre', by improving the amount of retail*

floorspace to a city sized level. To also encourage 'niche' retailing and more family friendly restaurants.

The Strategy identified the following issues to address to deliver this ambition;

- A strong need for additional retail floorspace to accommodate contemporary requirements from larger store operators
- An under-provision of Health and Beauty retailers
- A gap in the market for 'Upper' and 'Upper Middle' premium clothing retailers
- A strong need for an improved catering offer
- An opportunity for premium home 'lifestyle' retailers including specialist electrical and furnishing offers

It identified that in order to increase its attractiveness to shoppers and performance that a potential 44,200 sq.m of floorspace could to be provided in the period to 2026, as well as a change in focus of the retail offer in line with the Retail Strategy for Northampton to a higher quality, more distinctive offer. (identified as Option C) Taking this evidence into account, the Council believes that there is the need to proactively plan for this floorspace to be delivered within the centre.

The CACI work also identified that there is also a need for a substantial amount of food retailing shopping within the town centre, enough for a medium sized store, or a range of smaller ones. (3,017 sq m net to 2016 and 4511 sq m net to 2026)

Currently there appear to be limited number of choices for large scale retail provision sites in the centre. The most obvious solution which the Council has been pursuing with Legal and General, the current owners of the Grosvenor Centre, is a reconfiguration and significant expansion of the centre northwards. This would remove the obsolete bus station and has the potential for positively addressing the extremely poor townscape caused by remodelling undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s. The Council, which owns most of the land that it is anticipated the extension will be built on, is close to signing a development agreement with Legal and General which would commit both to delivering a significant proportion of the additional retail floorspace capacity that needs to be provided.

The Grosvenor Centre redevelopment could be the key part of delivering the retail strategy required to improve the long term prospects of Northampton's centre. (See Figure 5 for boundary of development site) Although negotiations are still on-going, it is anticipated that the expanded Grosvenor Centre will have approximately 42,000 sq m net of extra retail floorspace. It will be a comprehensive redevelopment that will include demolition of the Bus Station, and creation of new anchor stores. It is anticipated that the expansion plans will increase the size of the current supermarket. Nevertheless, it is likely that this would still allow for the possibility of more food retail to be provided on another site within the town centre. CACI considered that the provision of more of this food floorspace on another site in the town centre would be

beneficial to assisting in increasing its vitality and viability. The Council considers that the location of the additional supermarket floorspace should be in the northern half of the central area to balance against existing provision in the south and provide better access to resident populations to the north of the centre to a supermarket.

In addition to the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment, in order to meet the longer term needs of Northampton and to provide greater investment choice a further substantial retail led development will need to start. The Council has identified two additional site options that it considers have the potential to provide greater choice. Both of these options are in the vicinity of the primary shopping area.

North of Abington Street

The first site is an area on the north side of Abington Street, primarily covering the area formerly occupied by the Notre Dame convent which was redeveloped in the 1970s. (see Figure 6 for site boundary) This would assist in enlivening Abington Street where it begins to peter out in terms the amount of pedestrians it has and the associated feeling of vitality that this creates. Site assembly of all the land is likely to be more difficult than the options where the Council is the only, or principal landowner, although the Borough Council do own some of the land. This location could also provide offices and a new supermarket. A more modest scheme could see the buildings on the Abington Street frontage parcelled together to provide an opportunity for additional convenience retailing such as a modest sized food store.

Land in between College Street and Horsemarket

The other site is in the Horsemarket/College Street area to the rear of the Drapery. (see Figure 7 for site boundary) The proximity of this site to the Market Square has the potential to strengthen the footfall there and enhance the role that the emerging strategy sees for it as a focal point of the centre. Redevelopment of this site will involve relocation of the Park Inn Hotel to another site, or its accommodation within the redevelopment. This will be a high quality retail led mixed use development that overlooks St Katherine's Gardens with cafe/restaurants making use of the improved open space,. Office, hotel and residential uses above this development would be required. Site assembly should be easier as the Council own all the land in the area. The redevelopment of this site would strengthen the links between Spring Boroughs and the central area, further supporting its regeneration.

On balance it is considered that the land between Horsemarket and College Street is a stronger option for the next generation of large scale retail floorspace. It is a site that is likely to be easier to assemble, is larger and would put the retail focus more towards the Market Square, enhancing its role as a key focal point for the central area. .

The start of the Horsemarket/College Street development will need to be considered along side delivery of the Grosvenor Centre and the needs of the town.

Question: What do you see as the advantages / disadvantages of such sites? What are the possibilities for the Council of promoting quick wins to deal with

some of the more immediate retail needs without undermining the business case for a major shopping centre?

Upgrading the quality of the retail offer:

In addition to the large format national multiple stores, CACI identified the need for the town centre to focus on creating a higher value shopping experience in Northampton. This would play on the differentiating characteristics that the centre has in terms of its competitors, namely its and history and sense of place. This would increase its competitiveness in relation to other centres. It would attract the higher spenders who are currently under-represented as shoppers in the town centre. Specialist shopping of this nature will help Northampton attain a status of dominant sub-regional centre, upgrading from an 'average major centre' to a 'quality major centre'.

The Plan will seek to build on the existing higher order shopping in some of the current secondary shopping areas and eventually the opportunities that might become available within existing primary shopping areas once the Grosvenor centre extension opens. This retailing is likely to be based in the Market Square, Gold Street, Abington Street, The Drapery and St Giles, based on a circuit proposed by CACI. (See Figure 8) This will need a much more interventionist approach from the Council and others than through planning policies alone. It could require amongst other things encouraging selective letting from the Council and others as a landlord, investment in signage, marketing, improving shopfronts and buildings, creating high quality public places and streets.

Question: Do you support the idea of higher quality retailing? Where are the best locations? How can this approach best succeed?

Primary Retail Frontages

To ensure the vitality and long term viability of the town centre, it is crucial that at its core it has mainly attractive retail uses (part of Use Class A1). Some non retail uses, for example banks/buildings societies (part of Use Class A2) and restaurants /pubs/cafes (Use Classes A3 and A4) are appropriate as long as they do not dominate.

There are two key definitions here set out in Government policy;

- Primary Retail Frontages which have a high proportion of retail uses, and;
- Secondary Retail Frontages which contain a greater diversity of uses and may also be found outside of the town centre

Primary Retail Frontages are areas where shops predominate (or should predominate) and pedestrian flows are at the highest (or are to be encouraged such as The Market Square).

The Borough Council has reappraised the town centre and in line with the Retail Strategy and aspirations for the Market Square and defines the following as Primary

Retail Frontages; Grosvenor Centre, part of St Giles, part of Abington Street, part of The Market Square, Wood Hill, Mercers Row and the Drapery.

The following are defined as Secondary Frontages; Gold Street, Fish Street, part of St Giles, George Row, Derngate (from Castillian Street west), part of the Market Square and Abington Square.

The extension of the Grosvenor centre, additional retailing in the northern half of the town and the emphasis on a quality retail offer is likely to lead to changes in the role of frontages over time. The Council wants to ensure that the refocus will be supported by policies that seek a further diminution of retail offer in some existing secondary frontages. This will be more fully addressed in the Pre-Submission document.

The primary and secondary frontages are identified in Figure 9

Question: Are the frontages identified correct? Should there be more or less included?

In order to be compliant with Government policy, as well as highlighting the primary shopping area, the Council also needs to define what it considers to be the 'town centre'. This provides clear guidance on where uses given priority in government guidance for being accommodated within town centres should go, and what can be regarded as edge of centre and out of centre.

Figure 10 shows the Council's defined town centre.

Question: Are the town centre boundary identified correct? Should there be more or less included?

The Market Square

The Market Square lies within the All Saints Conservation Area. It is an historic and unique piece of the town which could act as a real draw in its own right if enhanced. The Town Centre Health Check has identified that it is already popular with visitors. Within the BDP Framework it was anticipated that the Market Square would function as the heart of the centre, to which key connecting pedestrian routes would run. There is the opportunity for it to become a focal point and a strategic asset to an attractive town centre.

The Market Square is also in poorer health in terms of trading, retail and catering than it was several years ago. Footfall has fallen consistently over a number of years, mirrored by the decline in stall holder occupancy. The economic downturn has led to a rise in vacant shop units on its edges. The remaining retail offer is weak and there are lower order services e.g. betting shops, recruitment agencies. The catering offer is limited with two public houses fostering a volume drinking culture and two fast food vans catering for an eat-as-you-go populace.

However, the public realm is acknowledged as being poor. The street level building frontages and poor quality shop fronts, as well as poor street furniture lack respect and empathy for this historic environment and the outstanding architecture above.

Substantial work has already begun in seeking to increase the attractiveness of the market through the implementation of the Market Square Project in 2009. This has been supported with investment from our Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited. Rationalising the amount of stalls and creating an events area has been successful in creating a feeling of additional vitality and drawing people into the Market Square for events. Work is about to commence on a water feature at the 'gateway' entrance to the square.

The square has also been subject to detailed analysis of the building frontages, which formed the basis of a recent unsuccessful bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to improve building frontages. A bid for funding to consider the public realm improvement solutions to the Market Square and Abington Street is awaiting decision.

Future plans include the creation of catering outlets around the edge that can be easily moved to allow more flexible use of the space, canopied seating area and an improved 'gateway' area situated at the south end of the square. Furthermore a new lighting scheme is proposed to greatly improve the architectural appeal of the historic buildings

Improvements to the Market Square, to increase its appeal and potentially make it the heart of the centre and Northampton, as with the specialist retail circuit, will require more than just planning policies. It will need action on the public realm, additional work on promotions and events to ensure it draws people in, changes in letting policies from landlords and investment in building frontages.

Question: What could transform this area into the true heart of the centre? How could this realistically be achieved?

Question: Do we need more outdoor pavement cafés that appeal to all people, or family friendly restaurants? How can we actively ensure that if these types of uses are allowed, that they are of a type to create a quality place?

Office and Employment

Northampton as a whole has, until 2008, had a relatively vibrant economy which has led to a healthy and expanding property market for employment space. Over the last 5 to 10 years, employment land allocations in the existing adopted local plan were consistently taken up, leading to an increasing supply of floorspace, predominantly within the strategic distribution sector.

Central Northampton however, has not been recently recognised as a major office location. There has been a lack of office investment in the centre. The consequent inability of the centre to attract new office employment opportunities within it has limited its attractiveness to new businesses and meant that existing ones have not

been able to be accommodated as their need for premises have changed. Many of these office occupiers abandoned the town centre and relocated to strategic employment areas out-of-town, including the Barclaycard to Brackmills.

This has marginalised the commercial role and importance of the centre. There has also been an impact on the day time economy and the ambiance of the centre. The service outlets that might ordinarily thrive if supported by office workers on their breaks, or way in or out to work are limited. The decline in office occupiers has in itself created a dynamic that will be difficult to break, as some of the advantages of being located in a centre, e.g. networking, higher quality eating and drinking establishments disappear. Compared to other centres, there is a definite lack of high earners and spenders being within the town centre. This is something that needs to change if the centre is to thrive. It is also part of making Northampton and the wider economy successful. Northampton needs to attract higher earning employees within higher value added business sectors, such as the knowledge based firms to broaden the economy to the extent desired in the Core Strategy. These types of people and businesses expect certain types of facilities and characteristics within city centres that appeal to them.

In the past, investment has been drawn to easy to develop greenfield sites, where lower rents are available, making investment in the more difficult to assemble sites in the town centre less appealing. The remaining town centre stock therefore tends to be older and more obsolete accommodation, where the pressure for conversion to alternative uses, predominantly residential, exists. All these, cumulatively, have contributed to a shortfall of office provision in the town centre. This shortfall was confirmed in the Draft Strategic Employment Land Assessment, which identifies that good quality space of 500 sq m to 1000 sq m is almost non-existent and floorspace in this category is mostly poorer quality secondary and refurbished space. In order to increase the likelihood of new high quality office development within the town centre, the ready availability of supply of sites needs to occur. There also needs to be a restriction on the amount of out of centre office development that is allowed. This restriction on supply out of centre will need to come through policies in the Joint Core Strategy.

There are a number of choices for employment sites in the Central Area. The position in the emerging strategy is that the Plan will support the following;

- The level of office provision set out in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, in conformity with the requirement to meet annualised job growth targets for the strategic area of West Northamptonshire, and
- Conforms to and delivers the phasing strategy set out for key regeneration sites

Key areas where significant levels of high quality office development will be supported are located within the main regeneration sites, namely the Castle Station site, Avon/Nunn Mills, St John's (including Bridge Street and Angel Street) and the Waterside. Other locations are anticipated as part of the major new retail developments.

Employment provision and extensions, particularly office use, will also be supported in areas outside the key regeneration sites, including those at;

- Lady's Lane
- Victoria Street
- The Old Postal Office in Barrack Road
- The Commercial Area around Bedford Road
- St Peter's Square

The Plan would also seek to retain existing office employment areas within the Central Area where relevant. The emerging Strategic Employment Land Assessment gives an indication of the sites where it is considered appropriate to retain existing employment uses. For sites recommended for retention, applications for change of use or redevelopment into alternative uses will only be considered favourably if it can be demonstrated that the site has been vacant for at least two years despite proven efforts for marketing the site for B1 uses being demonstrated. Figure 11 shows the areas where protection of employment uses will be sought and new employment opportunities identified.

Creative Industries

The Council is promoting a business growth facility in the St John's area to house creative industries which also includes art and fashion companies. It is proposed that the studios would be open to the public to buy the locally created goods by graduates of the School of Arts in the University of Northampton. The provision of these studios is seen as important in seeking to retain skilled graduates who will otherwise leave the area once getting their degrees from the University. It is also part of creating a distinctive attraction in the existing cultural area around the theatre / museum that will draw people into Northampton centre.

Residential

There has been a significant amount of investment within the Northampton centre in residential development over the last ten years. This has predominantly been through the provision of apartments. This market is currently saturated and has also been disrupted by the current economic conditions.

An updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been commissioned by the Joint Planning Unit and is being undertaken by the consultants ORS. This will provide more insight into the type of housing that will be needed in the area in the longer term, once demand and building activity again picks up. However, it is anticipated that there will still be a significant market for apartments and the demand for a city living experience, particularly from some of the people associated with the economic profile which it is the ambition to attract and retain in the area. Bringing more people into the centre to live will add to the vitality and viability of the centre as residents will use its restaurants, shops, leisure and other facilities on a regular basis. However, it is also considered that areas such as the Waterside, Ransome Road and

Avon/Nunn Mills and Spring Boroughs will provide opportunities for quality family housing close to the centre.

However, some of the main residential areas within and around the Central Area have high levels of deprivation; in particular there is a significant concentration within Spring Boroughs. The majority of the housing stock is owned by the Borough Council and will fail the Decent Homes Standard in 2010. It will either need refurbishment, redevelopment, or a combination of both.

The emerging strategy is that there will be policy support in the plan for residential in the following areas;

- New residential areas in the St John's area
- Spring Boroughs to be identified as a Key Regeneration Area for renewal to be brought forward early during the plan period
- New residential areas along The Waterside, around St Peters Way, Avon/Nunn Mills and Ransome Road

It is anticipated that the thresholds for affordable housing, the amount sought and the type will be set out in the Core Strategy, or the associated Development Plan Document on Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing. These policies will be based on the up-to-date Housing Market Assessment.

A more detailed approach to Spring Boroughs that builds upon policies within the Action Plan and takes its direction from the community will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. SPD may also be taken forward where it will assist the development of more coherent proposals for other areas.

Question: Are the areas appropriate, should more areas be identified?

Leisure and recreation

There is a varied leisure and recreation mix in the Central Area, including:

- The Royal & Derngate Theatre, with more than 350,000 visitors a year
- Sol Central, a leisure complex that includes a ten screen cinema, an hotel, restaurants, gyms and bars and a casino
- The main leisure area of Bridge Street with pubs and nightclubs
- The Roadmender music venue

The existing facilities are better than in some comparable towns, but on the whole there is a sense that Northampton should improve the leisure offer, particularly restaurants, of which there is a deficiency within the central area.

There is a great deal of potential along The Waterside, and in Becket's Park, both for formal and informal leisure and recreation that could add to the visitor or resident experience of the centre.

The policy will support;

- Enhancement of leisure uses including a cluster of restaurant uses in the redeveloped St John's area, with a pavement cafe culture and new public squares, creating synergy with the Theatre. This would encourage theatre users to dwell in the centre for longer, as well as encouraging other groups not yet catered for to venture in,
- Creation of a informal and formal leisure destinations along The Waterside, this would include facilities for boating, and other water related activities, walking, fishing and playing, public houses and places to eat
- Encouragement of restaurants and cafes elsewhere in the town centre, in particular in the market square, the Grosvenor Centre extension and some of the secondary frontages once the Grosvenor Centre extension opens
- Use of the Market Square for a varied events programme for families and young people
- Extension of the museum to house the national boot and shoe, and leather craft collections in any potential redevelopment at St Johns which would release existing accommodation within County Hall.

Question: Do you support the idea of more restaurants in the centre and if so where?

Question: Do you support the idea of developing the Waterside and Becket's Park for leisure and recreation, including visitor attractions such as pubs and restaurants associated with the new marina?

Transport

'The scale of growth for Northampton is unprecedented,' says the Northamptonshire Transport Strategy for Growth - Transport Prioritisation Framework. By 2012, the County Council believe car use could be 107% more than in 2001 (Transport Strategy for Growth). The County Council have the key role to play in managing this as the Highways Authority for all the roads in the town centre. The Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan 2006/7 - 20010/11 is the strategic plan for all types of transport, which also sets out the authority's plans for spending money they hope to secure from the Department for Transport.

Their long term strategy is based on Central and Local Government's four shared priorities of reducing congestion, improving accessibility, improving safety, and improving the environment. To this the County Council has also added three local

priorities; encouraging healthier travel, improving maintenance, and accommodating growth.

Northampton is well connected nationally, with large scale logistics at various areas within the Borough. As part of this connectivity several radial road routes enter the town centre, where the 'concrete collar' of the inner ring road circulates the traffic. Within the inner ring road the ability of the car to move around is limited with one way systems or restricted access.

On the main roads congestion is bad during the normal peak periods, but not as bad as would be the case if the considerable amount of office and employment dispersal had not happened in the wider Borough. This poses an interesting dilemma; we need more office workers and shoppers in the town centre (discussed in more detail later), yet we also know the potential increase in traffic will cause more congestion problems.

The Local Transport Plan proposes a network of Park and Ride sites on several of the radial routes on the edge of Northampton. Progress on delivery of these sites has so far been limited but it still remains part of the long term transportation strategy for Northampton recommended in the Multi-Modal Study that informed the development of the Plan. The Borough Council's ambition in the longer term is to ensure that more people come into the town centre by public transport and by means other than the private car. However, in the short term it is recognised that the centre is particularly limited in terms of its offer and attractiveness to certain groups. A pragmatic view will therefore have to be taken to accommodating the needs of those that wish to travel by car as long as it does not cause significant congestion with its associated problems. However, once the centre develops its offer and proves to be more of an attraction that people are willing to travel to, despite potentially not being able to use the car, there will be an emphasis on prioritising public transport in the later phases of the plan.

The Central Area Action Plan emerging strategy is to support a 'walkable' centre, with the following elements;

- Reducing the barriers of the inner ring road along St Peters Way, Victoria
 Promenade, and Horsemarket. The aim is to reconnect some of those areas
 currently 'cut off' from the historic centre by these roads, in particular through
 creating pedestrian friendly links to the surrounding residential areas of Spring
 Boroughs and to the north in the Mounts, also Avon/Nunn Mills, and the rest of
 The Waterside.
- Ensuring that the demolished bus station is replaced with new bus facilities that encourage greater use of buses as well as bringing more public transport into the heart of the town
- Ensuring that existing car parking provision is used much more efficiently through improvements to signage and routing and developing that which is under used with alternative uses

- Limiting the amount of cars circulating, particularly within the historic core, to reduce congestion and air pollution and improve the environment
- Possible increased public transport penetration within Abington Street, along part of its length, depending on its impact on pedestrian movements and the ambiance of the shoppers experience
- Provision of a new dedicated, strategic public transport route making use of
 the disused railway line to the south of the city centre, to connect the city
 centre with Brackmills and potentially out to substantial urban extensions to
 the south east identified within the emerging Joint Core Strategy tying into
 this the possibility of dedicated public transport only links through Delapre
 Park linking Ransome Road and Eagle Drive, and also through Becket's Park
 from Nunn Mills Road through to Derngate(subject to confirmation of need
 being established through a transport assessment and satisfactory
 environmental assessment).
- Key transport routes into the city centre will be redeveloped as gateway sites, providing a sense of arrival and local identity to the central area

The County Council is currently updating the transport model for the town centre. This will allow a more comprehensive testing of alternative transportation solutions. It will provide a greater understanding of the extent to which the character of the inner ring road can be changed. For example Horsemarket dual carriageway is a major barrier for residents of Spring Boroughs, and also cuts the city centre of the future in two, as it discourages pedestrian and cycle links between the retail core to the Castle Station area.

The updated model will allow the possibility of testing of transport options that could have wider beneficial impacts, rather than just improving traffic flows and congestion. For example St Peter's Way and Victoria Promenade could be downgraded. This could involve routing a lot of traffic to the north around Upper Mounts/ Grafton Street, and maybe only allowing public transport and limited car access. The main advantages would be connecting The Waterside area to the town centre and changing the whole feel of the south of the town. Difficulties would include the need to reroute Towcester Road traffic - perhaps along St James Mill Road via a new link over the disused railway line; and the feasibility of other roads taking the traffic. The Plough Junction improvements will go ahead regardless of this modelling work as the road needs to be improved from the present gyratory system.

Question: Does this seem feasible? Would you support this idea?

Currently it is proposed that the transport model will test several options for the Inner ring road, including:

- Keep the volume of traffic passing along it the same but change its character so that it is a lot more pedestrian friendly and easier to cross through traffic calming and signalling
- Close parts of it altogether and reassign the traffic to other parts of the network, such as from Horsemarket to St. Andrews Road

- downgrade parts of it for public transport
- create a new boulevard for the public realm with tree planting etc

Potential options for testing are shown in Figure 12

Question: Would you support this idea to change the character of the Inner Ring Road? How would cars then move into the town centre and to the Grosvenor Centre?

Climate Change and sustainability

Climate Change is a reality and there is a need to take action on this within the Central Area. The UK Climate Change Programme aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by;

- Promoting changes in habits that seek to reduce the amount of energy used
- Improving energy efficiency (through design of buildings)
- Stimulating new and more efficient sources of power generation (for example through proven technologies such as Combined Heat and Power and photovoltaics)
- Cutting emissions in the transport sector

The Core Strategy will include policies that seek to ensure the improved sustainability of new development, through recommending standards that new houses and commercial buildings should reach for example in terms of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREAM standards. It will also give an indication of the amount of renewable energy required in association with new developments to reduce green house gas emissions. There may be an opportunity for the action plan to include policies that are more specifically relevant to the central area. The density of development in the central area, together with a mix of uses may enable the use of Combined Heat and Power, or communal heating systems for example within Spring Boroughs. The Borough Council will produce later in 2009 a document titled *Achieving Carbon Reduction in Northampton - Guidance for Developers*. This document provides a guide for the emerging master plans and major development proposals in the Northampton Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) leading them towards the achievement of Zero Carbon Development in terms of:

- What technology is feasible and potentially viable for Northampton Central Area
- What the developer needs to demonstrate in terms of carbon reduction and how it will be delivered

Question: To what extent is a specific policy for the central area appropriate? What would it add that a policy in the Core Strategy could not include?

Flood Risk

Northampton central area has previously suffered from flooding, with the last notable flood occurring in Easter 2008. Since then the Environment Agency, along with the Borough and County Council, English Partnerships (now the Homes and Communities Agency), the emergency services and local residents have worked hard to ensure that the risk of flooding is substantially diminished. This has been through a programme of improved flood defences, both in terms of up stream measures to reduce the volume of water that passes through Northampton in times of flood and also improved physical barriers such as higher walls in some areas, to protect from flooding. There is also much more effective early monitoring of the potential for flooding and emergency procedures are in place, should there be a significant flood event.

Improved planning arrangements have meant that inappropriate development within the floodplain has been avoided. In addition, where development has been built in areas that might have previously flooded but are now protected by flood defences, suitable precautions have taken place to ensure that the risk to property and people has been diminished, e.g. raising floor levels above likely flood levels. Consequently Northampton central area has some of the highest standards of flood defences and protection from flooding in the country, much higher than the level required in national government planning policy.

Decisions will have to be made about the suitability of developing sites that sit behind flood defences, taking into account the inherent levels of risk that will exist. This will be guided by a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, consistent with Government Planning Policy in PPS25 and the Environment Agency's guidance. The Council in association with partners within the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit has commissioned this work. It is likely to be finalised by the end of August 2009.

Question: Is the approach being taken in the central area appropriate?

Built and Natural Environment

Critical to the improvement of the town centre will be an emphasis on new buildings and the spaces between them being developed to the highest design quality. This is in terms of its appearance, materials and functionality, its relationship to other buildings and spaces in the locality, the wider central area and depending on its height, potentially wider Northampton. To this end new development in the Central Area will be guided by urban design principles aimed at improving the quality of new buildings, their surroundings and the place as a whole. Good design has an important role to play in raising the profile of the Central Area, creating and reinforcing a distinct local identity and sense of place, strengthening confidence in the town and promoting inward investment.

It is anticipated that the core strategy will set out an over arching design policy which will set a benchmark for principles to which new development must adhere. There is

already a plethora of generic advice on good design at the national level published by Government and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, (CABE).

Some basic character assessments have already been done in association with the public realm implementation framework, conservation area appraisals, WNDC draft design guide and the Council's work on tall buildings and key views, The Submission draft plan will identify additional work if required to assist in informing the locally distinctive character that new developments must adhere to. The emerging strategy is to ensure that new development proposals are required to provide design and context statements that show how they have taken into account and responded to the character of the central area. These should draw on the characterisation studies that exist.

Taking into account the character of the centre and in association with work seeking to identify key views the Plan will also identify the key locations for 'tall buildings'. There is guidance in CABE publications about what a tall building is, but for Northampton, in the main it is buildings that are over four storeys in height. (See Figure 3) A background technical paper will provide more detail to substantiate the approach that will be taken in the Pre-Submission draft.

Policies will be developed for 'Gateway' sites where new development of a sufficient scale and use would be desirable to give the impression of entering a reinvigorated central area. (see Figure 3 for the gateway sites)

The legacy of historic buildings is evident today in some of the fine examples of architectural quality that remain. There are scheduled monuments and numerous examples of listed buildings afforded protection for their architectural merit. Many of these buildings are located in one of the four conservation areas within the Central Area. In addition there are some other examples of buildings of a relatively high architectural quality that have not been afforded nationally designated protection, although they have been judged by the Council to be worthy of identification.

The Central Area has four Conservation Areas to protect their character and attractiveness. They are;

- Derngate
- St Giles
- All Saints
- Holy Sepulchre

(see Figure 13 for the conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings)

To a large extent there is strong national policy direction that ensures effective protection of listed buildings and conservation areas. Local policies have historically tended to add nothing of local distinctiveness to differentiate them from the generic national policy. It is recognised that most people consider the historic environment of the centre as something that is important and helps give Northampton its sense of

place. Consultation has highlighted the concern that change and the need to address the growth agenda will result in the loss of more buildings and places of heritage value, thus undermining the character of the area. It is certainly not the intention of the Plan to allow this to happen. The Plan Vision is clear about the desire to use the particular strengths that the centre already has such as its architectural heritage as a key to its success. The emerging strategy will include within it policies on specific development areas such as the need to address specific heritage features that are relevant to that site, for example the impact on adjacent conservation areas. However, it is not anticipated that there will be general generic policies on archaeology and heritage as these are thoroughly covered in national and regional guidance.

Question: Is this approach appropriate? Are there any locally distinctive elements of archaeology or heritage protection that would require a locally specific policy to overcome deficiencies at the national or regional level?

PART FOUR - REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

A number of development sites in the Central Area are either at Masterplan or Outline Planning Application stage. Some of them will require policies to facilitate land assembly, all of them will need a set of Policies to Guide their design and development principles. The Pre-Submission draft will contain diagrams illustrating the key urban design principles that will need to be addressed by any development proposals for these sites.

Question: What level of detail do you think that the key urban design principle diagrams should contain?

Grosvenor Centre development area

The Grosvenor Centre redevelopment will include the area shown in Figure 5. It is a key element in improving both the supply and the quality of retail development in the town centre. The development will add substantially to the stock of retail premises suited to the needs of multiple retailers, and cater for other town centre services such as eating places, leisure and office accommodation (check there is office provision). There may be the options for office or residential in the future as the scheme develops. It will also be more appropriate in scale and design than the existing centre and Greyfiars building, and provide better opportunity for pedestrian movement through it and to other parts of the centre.

The approach in the draft Submission Action Plan will support a development that will:

- Initially provides a gross internal floorspace of up to 40,000 sq.m. net of additional retail, with additional floorspace for family orientated restaurants and leisure, office, hotel and ancilliary accommodation.
- Provide suitable alternatives for bus passenger set down and pick up and for accommodating long distance bus services in the short term whilst the development is being built out and in the longer term once it is completed to the compensate for the loss of the Greyfriars bus station. This must improve public transport penetration into the central area, be mindful of the needs of public transport operators and users to be able to link up with other bus services with ease and overall increase the attractiveness of public transport. It will not be acceptable to merely provide stopping facilities on Lady's Lane;
- Take the principles outlined in the BDP report of increasing the pedestrian connectivity between the areas currently north and south of the development area, including Abington Street, the Market Square, Sheep Street and Wellington Street, Newlands and the Mounts providing safe and secure streets actively overlooked, with a sense of vitality;
- Seamlessly link the existing Grosvenor Centre to the proposed new development and improve the quality of the existing units that would remain;

- Rationalise significantly the amount of land allocated to highway, by altering either Lady's Lane or Greyfriars as a heavily trafficked route;
- Reinstate active building frontages along the broken connection between Sheep Street at an appropriate scale and sympathetic design taking into consideration the historic character of this street. Remodelling will include some rationalisation of the existing Mayorhold car park to also provide a sympathetic frontage along Sheep Street, ideally including new buildings;
- Provide a development that is as outward looking as it is inward, with active frontages at street level on all its edges that face publicly viewable areas, that it links in well with and is sympathetic to the characterisation of the surrounding areas, in particular the designated conservation areas;
- Supports the ability to provide additional development opportunities above any
 main retail building that will occupy the current Greyfriars bus station site, or
 car parking to the north on the upper Mounts car park, mindful of the desire to
 create additional office or significant trip generating uses appropriate to a
 central area within the future, particularly given that the Greyfriars site has
 some potential to accommodate tall buildings;
- Removes subways that exist on Broad Street/Marefair, Mayorhold, Sheep Street and Wellington Street/Upper Mounts, to provide an environment that supports better pedestrian movement in these areas.
- Contribute towards environmental improvements in the adjacent conservation areas and traffic calming and other measures required to rationalise traffic and public transport in the area arising from the proposed development
- Provides enough flexibility in the parking solutions sought to, in the longer term, allow removal of the Mayorhold car park and its replacement with a more sympathetic building and street design.
- The likely scale, intensity of development and proposed mixture of uses on this site offer the opportunity to make use of Combined Heat and Power, which is an option that should be explored, along with other options for reducing carbon emissions through using renewable energy supplies.

Question: Are these criteria appropriate in assessing the future development of the site?

Castle Station development area

The railway station has been on its present site for 150 years, and covers approximately 11 ha. The current station was the result of a rebuilding in the 1960s, following plans to modernise the West Coast Main Line. (see Figure 14 for the extent of the boundary of the site)

The station is currently managed by London Midland, and offers train journeys to destinations like Milton Keynes, Birmingham and London. It offers three services per hour to London and two to Birmingham.

The platform capacity is adequate for current needs but is not expected to cope with the expected growth in traffic, generated by increasing demand and new services providing direct connections with the West Midlands and North West.

The concourse itself is a low lying building with very little presence or visibility from the main road passing the station. The facility is cramped and provides basic passenger facilities only.

Much of the southern end of the site is given over to surface car parking, the central and northern parts of the site are rail sidings, which are variously used for storage and delivery of goods, including aggregates for Lafarge.

The review of the property market in 2006 established a clear opportunity for a major new office development providing a step change in the current town centre office market. There is also clear interest in residential development and for an hotel. Retail and leisure uses would need to be limited to ancillary uses for the station in order to protect the town centre.

Various options for the station site were evaluated with reference to the growth objectives for the wider area and town centre. They looked at the transportation benefits that could be achieved, deliverability in terms of market forces, the order of cost and constraints such as the existing freight activities. Whilst the options were only discussed in outline terms, there was a clear consensus for a comprehensive redevelopment.

The Policy will support;

- Development of a new transportation hub and business location
- A rail and bus interchange, with greatly improved passenger facilities, including car parking
- 28,000 37,000 sq metres of office and business accommodation
- A new hotel
- 600-700 medium to high density residential units
- Improved connections / links from Phase 2 towards the Market Square through Spring Boroughs which would actively encourage pedestrian movement
- The likely scale, intensity of development and proposed mixture of uses on this site offer the opportunity to make use of Combined Heat and Power,

which is an option that should be explored, along with other options for reducing carbon emissions through using renewable energy supplies

 In recognition of the site's historical use as a castle, a thorough assessment of the archaeology that remains, with the development positively addressing the site's history through appropriate incorporation wherever possible of any historic features that remain.

The current redevelopment of the site is planned in two phases, with Phase 1 beginning in 2010. This will see a new station at an upper level visible from the road and a multi storey car park. Phase 2 includes the area currently used as sidings.

Question: Are these criteria appropriate in assessing the future development of the site?

St John's/Angel Street/Bridge Street development area

The St Johns area is also part of the Derngate Conservation Area. Guildhall Road has benefited from the refurbishment of some of the old warehouse buildings. The area has been the subject of a Masterplan commissioned by the Borough Council in association with the County Council undertaken by Taylor Young in 2008. (see Figure 15 for the extent of the boundary of the site)

Angel Street Area is the largest of the three study areas in the Masterplan. The majority of the perimeter of this area is characterised by historic buildings of excellent townscape value (many of them are Listed). The current developed heart of the area is Bridge Street, which is dominated by A2,A3 and A5 uses and is particularly busy in the evenings and post midnight. At the southern end of Bridge Street the area is mainly made up of commercial/industrial land uses, vehicular repair garages and car hire centres. There is one pub and two restaurants/takeaways. Bridge Street is part of the boundary of the Carlsberg Brewery Site with a two metre boundary fence fronting the edge of the pavement. The area consequently has poor frontages and is not of a character expected on a gateway entrance to the centre.

The route from the south into the Bridge Street area is poor and gives a negative impression on entry into the Northampton town centre and is therefore identified on the Spatial Plan as a Gateway area in need of improvement.

The Policy will;

- Provide the focus for business start up, creative industries and strengthening of the cultural quarter around St John's
- Enable town centre expansion, including niche retail, leisure and commercial uses, supporting employment growth, particularly related to the creative/cultural industries as well as small scale office in St John's incorporating a hotel

- Be a focus for civic uses, providing the opportunity for the County and Borough Councils and potentially others in the public sector to make a positive commitment to taking forward the Vision for the central area by relocating as much as possible of their office requirements to this area;
- Provide public squares with cafe facilities and outside seating
- Provide town centre living opportunities as part of a sustainable community that are built to high environmental standards
- Support an evening economy of restaurants that complements the town's existing offer
- Make the most of the area's assets whilst incorporating quality urban design that reflects the local vernacular
- The likely scale, intensity of development and proposed mixture of uses on this site offer the opportunity to make use of Combined Heat and Power, which is an option that should be explored, along with other options for reducing carbon emissions through using renewable energy supplies.

Question: Are these criteria appropriate in assessing the future development of the site?

The Waterside

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation has commissioned work on a Waterside Masterplan. The area covered by the Masterplan is extensive, and as its name would suggest is based on the River Nene and its tributaries that run through the centre. This is an asset that so far in Northampton not addressed in the most positive manner. In particular the River provides the opportunity for what could be a real environmental asset providing substantial opportunities for leisure, recreation and increased ecology within the centre. It could be part of a green ribbon that brings the surrounding countryside into the heart of Northampton, adding another component to the centre in creating a real sense of place.

The Masterplan area includes land running from an area adjacent to the Brampton Arm of the River Nene to the south of Castle Station, south and eastwards to include Avon/Nunn Mills and Becket's Park, Midsummer Meadow and Barnes Meadow. The Masterplan will seek to tie together the different areas along the Waterside. The emerging strategy will seek to address the River Nene and Brampton Arm as a whole as a leisure and recreation area for example through promoting continuous pedestrian routes and improving the ecology. However, for ease of understanding, the emerging strategy seeks to split the area up into smaller development areas to which more specific policies will apply.

Avon/Nunn Mills and Ransome Road (part of Waterside)

The former Nunn Mills Power Station has been subject to a series of development proposals in the past, but it was the availability of the adjoining Avon Cosmetics site (which is no longer to form a manufacturing base for Avon) that led to proposals for a comprehensive form of residential led, mixed use development coming forward.

The Avon/ Nunn Mills sites have an extensive frontage to the River Nene and are within reasonable walking distance of the town centre. The Ransome Road site adjoins the Avon/Nunn Mills site although are divided by a disused rail freight line which served the Brackmills employment area. (See Figure 16 for boundary)

It is anticipated that the Avon/Nunn Mills area could provide around 1,250 dwellings, and the Ransome Road area about 800 dwellings. Principles for development will provide for a mix of house types and tenures to accord with local and regional assessments of housing need and which promote a quality urban design, and seek to provide homes to a high environmental standard. There will also be 28,000 sq metres of office buildings (which includes a new base for Avon Cosmetics), an extended electrical transformer site, neighbourhood level retail facilities and play areas. The development of this area provides an excellent opportunity to link in and use the leisure assets within the immediate vicinity, in particular Delapre Abbey and Park, Beckett's Park and the more informal recreation areas of Midsummer and Barnes Meadows. The likely scale, intensity of development and proposed mixture of uses on this site offer the opportunity to make use of Combined Heat and Power, which is an option that should be explored along with other options for reducing carbon emissions through using renewable energy supplies.

It was anticipated that the following transport elements will be necessary to enable development of both the Ransome Road and Nunn Mills sites;

- A vehicular link between Bedford Road and London Road, with junction improvements and the construction of a bridge over the railway;
- Provision of a public transport service linking the area with the town centre
- A pedestrian bridge between the two sites at the western edge of development and other measures to actively encourage walking/cycling to the town centre and rail station:
- Measures which safeguard the rail line as a public transport corridor;
- Provision of a public riverside walkway and cycle path to link with existing routes;
- Development and improved cycle links to Hardingstone and Brackmills

Question: Are these criteria appropriate in assessing the future development of the site?

Brampton Arm to South Bridge (part of Waterside)

This area covers a wide swathe of land from Castle Station, including St Peter's Way, the Freeschool Street area, St Peter's Square, the site of two gas holders, before carrying on towards South Bridge. (Figure 17)The policy for this area will support a mixture of high to medium density dwellings, office and employment opportunities, a leisure / cultural attraction of regional importance, along with enhanced riverside leisure experience. The likely scale, intensity of development and proposed mixture of uses on this site offer the opportunity to make use of Combined Heat and Power, which is an option that should be explored, along with other options for reducing carbon emissions through using renewable energy supplies

The policy will support the following development principles for The Waterside;

- Demolition of the gas holders with new office and residential redevelopment
- Improved access via a downgraded roads of St Peter's Way and Victoria Promenade (subject to transport model assessment mentioned above)
- Creation of a landmark building and leisure attraction to the south of the River Nene
- New river crossings
- Improved pedestrian and cycle access along the watercourses, including the 'missing link' around the southernmost gas holder area

Question: Are these criteria appropriate in assessing the future development of the site?

Question: What sort of leisure uses could be encouraged here?

Question: Are there any other opportunities for this area?

Question: How can we improve links between this area and the town centre?

Becket's Park and the New Marina (part of Waterside)

Becket's Park is a traditional park located on the River Nene, and forms a green gateway to the town of Northampton. (See Figure 18 for boundary) It occasionally hosts events and it is a place to gather, relax, walk and cycle. It has access to the river for fishing, boating and walking. Other facilities include the hard surface tennis courts and a relatively new children's play area.

However, there are no facilities for older children/teens and no toilet facilities on the site. The boating lake on the island is not currently in use. The park is currently underused and perceived by some as unsafe after dark. Its character is urban and it does not currently exploit its proximity to the river or to that of Midsummer Meadow and Barnes Meadow.

The emergent strategy for Beckets Park is to develop;

- Residential development on the western edge of the park, on the site of the old railway embankment
- A new Marina, Visitor Centre, play areas, plaza and 'wellness gardens'
- a leisure and recreational destination linked to the Marina and to encourage visitors to the Park
- To provide high quality network of footpaths, cycle routes and bridges

Question: What types of development would help to draw people to the new marina? For example, a café, a public house, a restaurant, Children's Play areas, anything else?

Midsummer Meadow and Barnes Meadow (part of Waterside)

This is a swathe of green infrastructure that runs from Becket's Park and continues south east of the Bedford Road. (See Figure 19 for boundary) Situated in close proximity, south of the Meadows, is the Delapre Boating Lake and Charterwood. Midsummer and Barnes Meadows form part of the Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridor known as the Nene Valley (Northampton – Wansford) route.

Midsummer Meadow is predominantly used for informal recreation and Barnes Meadow is a designated Local Nature Reserve. They are situated on the river corridor which supports a number of habitats considered to be of ecological value to both wildlife and flora. However, some of the existing habitats are ecologically poor and could be restrictive in allowing adequate movement and dispersal of local species

From Bedford Road both are obscured by a long bank of bunding which has led to the area becoming secluded. There are a number of reports of anti-social behaviour taking place. It is also noted that there is a lack of amenities and facilities as well as poorly defined access, signage and interpretation.

The emerging strategy is to seek to improve the leisure, recreational and ecological potential that the area has, so that it can become

Question: What should the future of the greenspace area look like? A built

development of leisure uses? Informal leisure uses such as walking and cycling? Or should it be mainly for wildlife? Are there

any other opportunities in this area?

Question: How can we stop anti social activities? Should we remove the

bund alongside Bedford Road (it is not a flood defence) to open

the area up?

Spring Boroughs

Spring Boroughs is recognised by Central Government as being one of the most deprived areas in the country. The area is in the top 5% nationally in terms of the indices of multiple deprivation, with key issues being income deprivation, poor

standards of education, skills and training, crime, health problems and unemployment. (See Figure 20 for boundary)

The Government has set a target that all social rented homes should meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. In order to be decent, the Government definition is that a home should be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities

In Spring Boroughs, by the end of the Plan if nothing is done within this area all of the Council's housing stock will fail the Decent Homes Standard. Taking into account the unacceptable scenario with regards to housing and all the issues of multiple deprivation that exist in this area and have done for successive generations, now would appear to be the right time to fundamentally reassess what is the future of the area should be. The combination of issues, together with the opportunities provided by the growth agenda are such that it is likely that radical solutions that seek to break the cycle of multiple deprivation that occurs in the area should be pursued.

The emerging strategy is to identify Spring Boroughs as a Key Regeneration Area for which a Supplementary Planning Document will be produced. This will support a comprehensive community led approach for the area that seeks to satisfactorily address the adverse issues that currently exist and takes recognition of the position of the area between the city centre and a redeveloped railway station area and the Waterside. We will work closely with the existing community in taking forward a detailed plan for the area.

It is recognised that there is an existing community in the area, many of whom may want to continue to live in Spring Boroughs, or within the central area, and this is something that will be a key priority. Opportunities will exist through the provision of replacement affordable housing on site and also in other developments within the Central Area. There is great potential for Spring Boroughs to be an integral part of a very successful central area. The policy would need to address the following:

- Redevelopment of some of the housing stock which fails the Decent Homes standard to a mix of private and affordable homes;
- Redevelopment which encourages a mixed community, and provides a good range of community and social facilities, seeking to address deficiencies that currently exist in the area, e.g. the need for additional capacity at the primary school, limited open space within the area and a medical centre;
- Opportunities for a greater mix of uses within the area, in particular employment and office, neighbourhood scale retailing and leisure;
- Redevelopment which improves the layout of the area, and encourages high quality urban design, improved community safety, sense of place and meets with the criteria in other policies
- Improved crossings of Horsemarket to improve links with the town centre

Question: What do you think of these ideas about the potential future of

Spring Boroughs?

Question: What additional facilities need to be put into the area to overcome

existing deficiencies and a growth in the community?

PART FIVE - IMPLEMENTATION, DELIVERY & MONITORING

The Phasing Strategy for the CAAP will be set out in three phases, each covering five years.

Infrastructure work will identify both social and physical features required in association with new development, including new utilities requirements, new roads, bridges and flood defences and community facilities.

The initial 5 year phasing will be in a position that is relatively robust. It will identify who is the lead organisation in delivery, who else will be involved, any funding third party required, particularly from the public sector to ensure that it is delivered, and also a basic risk analysis of the potential for disruption to the projected period of delivery. The second and third phases are also set out however, there is not the same clarity associated with the position of all elements contained within them. For instance funding of all the projects is likely to be more uncertain. Depending on changes in circumstances, there may also be projects that are contained within subsequent phases that need to be added or removed.

Implementation and Delivery

Delivery is one of the key issues that new style LDF Plans are tested on by Planning inspectors, who need to be confident there are mechanisms in place to deliver, and that a plan is not a 'wish list' in order for the plan to be sound.

The Central Area will develop in three Phases; Short Term, Medium Term and Long Term, each one covering five years up to 2026. WNDC as the delivery vehicle for the next five years has an Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP). This IDP currently identifies projects that are relevant to the delivery of the Action Plan. It is anticipated that in association with improved co-ordination on delivery and prioritisation of projects that the IDP will be integrated into a West Northamptonshire Delivery Plan. Relevant projects within the central area will be included within this delivery plan. Further detail on the delivery plan will be issued in association with the development of the Core Strategy, the Pre-Submission Area Action Plan and eventually the Affordable Housing and Developer Contributions Development Plan Document.

At the moment a list of new or improved infrastructure needed in the Central Area to accompany development is being prepared for inclusion within the Pre-Submission Action Plan. This will include new road junctions, new cycle paths and bridges, improved utilities, flood defences and improved biodiversity.

All the Central Area projects are at different stages in negotiations, however the current economic climate means that certainty about delivery is not as easy to give as it would have been a year ago. The Borough Council therefore have a key role with its partners due to the amount of land we own in the Central Area. The locations where the Council can facilitate development in the Short Term are the Grosvenor Centre and surrounding area, St Peters Square and St Peter's way area, St

John's/Angel Street/Bridge Street Area, Becket's Park (leisure oriented uses) and Spring Boroughs.

WNDC has agreed a development strategy with the Rail Operator for Castle Station, and is in detailed negotiations with developers about the Avon/Nunn Mills area. They are also assembling land to the south of Castle Station and at a number of other locations.

The mains sources of funding WNDC intends to use are their standard charge allocations on each new dwelling, stakeholder funding from delivery partners, the Community Infrastructure Fund and the Growth Area Fund. WNDC will also use CPO powers if necessary to secure these objectives

WNDC and the County Council have agreed the following list with the Borough Council for the phasing of development in the Central Area.

Short Term Phase 1 (up to 2016 – see figure 21)

- Demolition of Greyfiars Bus Station relocation of overnight bus storage to an alternative site - provision of new street bus pick up / drop off facilities and other support bus facilities in the town centre
- Market Square changes new water feature and events square, improvements to public realm, signs and shopfronts
- Plough Junction land assembly and new road layout with removal of the gyratory road
- Castle Station Stage 1 of project begins with demolition of old station, construction of new Station raised to road level with improved facilities, and new multi storey car park
- The Waterside two gas holders for demolition and remediation around St Peter's Way and Towcester Road, including the acquisition and demolition of some of the existing buildings and start on site on Green Street
- Avon/Nunn Mills ongoing new office and residential development plus new junction on London Road and Ransome Road
- Becket's Park development of new Marina
- St Peter's Square car park redeveloped for mixed use scheme
- St John's/Angel Street/Bridge Street redevelopment work around existing surface car park area
- Midsummer Meadow work begins on improvements

 Spring Boroughs SPD completed and development partners identified and land assembly/disposals advanced

Medium Term Phase 2 (2016-2021 – see figure 22)

- Avon/Nunn Mills most of site finished
- Ransome Road most of site finished
- Public transport link work begins on redevelopment of disused railway line
- Duston Junction/St James Mill Road new road link
- Waterside development underway around St Peter's Way
- Castle Station new station and car park finished, offices started
- Spring Boroughs major work begins on regeneration of area
- St John's/Angel Street/Bridge Street development of rest of area underway, including new public square/new offices for Borough Council and County Council
- Grosvenor / Greyfriars Site ongoing redevelopment plus start on additional retail site
- Becket's Park development of new leisure facilities in park
- River Nene new leisure facility south of the river developed
- North of Abington Street new supermarket
- Freeschool Street work begins
- St Peter's Square finished
- Midsummer Meadow on going improvements
- Work begins on redevelopment of the Park Inn site for additional major retail led scheme

Long Term Phase 3 (2021-2026 – see figure 23)

- Grosvenor Centre finished (and additional retail site)
- Castle Station Phase 2 new residential and office development will be ongoing (likely to be finished)

- Spring Boroughs work will be nearing completion.
- Avon/Nunn Mills and Ransome Road final stages
- Between College Street and Horse Market start on site

Obviously no-one can predict with any certainty where we will be in 10-15 years, which is the Long Term Phase of the plan. However most of the Central Area regeneration and redevelopment will be finished. It is possible some new development sites may have come forward by then, but they are likely to be small scale

The above phasing is not intended to constrain delivery. Unless development would put at risk key objectives of the Action Plan, there should not be any objection in principle to advances in progress of sites.

Monitoring

The new regulations require annual monitoring of the Policies to see if the strategy is being implemented. The submission version of the CAAP will contain information on how the vision, objectives and policies will be measured for their effectiveness. It will also outline who will undertake the measuring and what actions will need to be taken to address any problems identified by the monitoring.

PART SIX - THE CITY CENTRE IN 2026

By 2026 the Central Area will have been transformed. Imagine it as it will be, with all the changes this plan has helped bring forward, and you have our City Centre description by someone who is already there, a part of this exciting future;

Arriving in the City of Northampton by high speed train, on time and relaxed, we wander through the modern station concourse away from a financial services company's new headquarters and are sign posted towards the town centre. To the north the regeneration of Spring Boroughs is nearing completion. An example of community planning at its best with high standard homes, great schooling and new office jobs. The renewed architecture along Gold Street is impressive and the range of niche shops and restaurants with their activity spilling out onto the street captures our interest. All Saints Church provides an impressive welcome to the central retail area and we are soon in the Market Square. The red and white canopies of the market stalls provide a distinctive sight alongside café's and bistros full of shoppers and office workers enjoying lunch 'al fresco'. A school band provides the entertainment as children paddle and chase each other through the fountain. The Greyfriars Centre with its strong retail offer and contemporary style is hugely busy and has been recently upgraded as a result of the planned opening of the new shopping centre to the west of the Market Square. The link through to Abington Street provides an easy route to more shops and the local bus services.

We take a short walk to Beckets Park, past the 2015 Sterling Prize winning civic office headquarters renowned for its cutting edge environmentally friendly contemporary architecture, the Derngate's new cinema, the St John's hotel and office complex to enjoy the waterside and the marina. Twice now this has been the venue for the Inland Waterways Festival and is just one of the gems along the town's popular waterside. At the Avon headquarters we get on the rapid public transport system returning on the direct link to the train station on the route that runs to and from the significant urban extension to the south east of Northampton, on the other side of Brackmills. Gliding towards the station looking northwards, the gasometers at the Tanner Street end are long gone and have been replaced by homes and offices which provide good jobs and fuel the town centre with customers during the day and night. These people are spoilt for choice for professional sport in the afternoon and the theatre at night.

New neighbourhoods are being completed and already a sense of community cohesion is being developed. Northampton city deserves its reputation as a great place to live, to work, shop and play.

TECHNICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE THE CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN

Title	Context	Prepared By	Status/Date Completed
National			
1000 bodg 2000			
PPS1, PPS3, draft PPS4, PPS6 (and consultation), PPS12, PPG17, PPS25			
Regional			
RSS8	Regional policy guidelines and targets	EMRA	March 2009
Regional Economic Strategy for East Midlands 2006 – 2020	Aspirations and vision for the region over the next decade	EMDA	
Countywide			
Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/2011	Strategic plan for the County and it sets out the plans for spending transport capital investment which the County hopes to secure from the Department of Transport	NCC	March 2006

Page 47

Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Accessibility Strategy 2006/7 - 2010/11	To develop a framework for an accessibility strategy to help meet local and national objectives including improving employment opportunities for residents in socially deprived areas and reducing inequalities in healthcare	NCC/Atkins	March 2006
Northamptonshire County Council: Cycling and Walking Corridors	Provides a simple methodology for the identification and assessment of the key corridors in each of the chosen towns (Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby)	NCC/Atkins	Draft
Northampton County Council: Getting Northampton to Work (Cycle Parking Scope 2006/07)	Getting Northampton to Work project aims to encourage more employees to cycle to the town's business areas. This study was requested to assist in facilitating the installation of cycle parking around the town to further encourage cycling	NCC/Atkins	Draft
Transport Strategy for Growth	Provides an overall review of the County's transport policies in the light of challenges faced in Northamptonshire. It will assist in the preparation of the County's 3 rd Local Transport Plan	NCC	September 2007
Northampton Town Strategy Bus Priority Technical Note (Town Centre Area)	Assessment of the junctions leading into Northampton Town Centre, with a view to suggesting some bus priority measures for each junction (9 junctions were assessed)	NCC/MGWSP	July 2008
Sustrans Connect 2	Funding is available to increase public awareness about the benefits of walking and cycling. Also includes the creation of new cycle routes. Contract to be signed this side of Xmas. Ambitious 5 year programme	NCC	Ongoing
Northampton Multi-Modal Study	To identify the most cost effective, affordable, safe and environmentally acceptable measures to reduce the impact of current and future travel demand	Ove Arup and Partners	December 2003 (minor revision March 2004)

Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment	Employment land review for the County up to 2026, in line with Government Guidance Note 2004. It will address the employment requirements of the County's growth agenda, and provide a framework to guide planning and economic development policies and programmes. Issues such as supply will also be included	Lambert Smith Hampton/Atkins	End May 2009
Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan	Lists the most threatened habitats and species in the County and sets out targets for action to aid their recovery	Northamptonshi re Wildlife Trust	2008
Making the connection – the Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Strategy	Presents a fully integrated Green Infrastructure Strategy for Northamptonshire	River Nene Regional Park	2006
Joint Planning Unit			
West Northamptonshire Wider Retail Study	Identify hierarchy of retail centres and the need and capacity for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace at those centres to 2026. Also identify the scope for any retail development at existing and new out of town locations; and how the strategic approach and spatial strategy for retail should be set out in the JCS	CACI	April 2009
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 report	To conform to the requirements of PPS25	Scott Wilson	Completed March 2009
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 report	To conform to the requirements of PPS25	Scott Wilson	Scoping study completed and procurement process underway

Page 49

Northamptonshire Landscape Sensitivity Study and Green Infrastructure Strategy	To gain an understanding of the natural and cultural resources of the area and how they contribute to the setting and character of Northampton	Living Landscapes	Completed – see website
Water Cycle Study		Halcrow for EA/WNDC/Angli a Water	Due to complete end May 2009
West Northamptonshire Sports Facility Strategy	Comprehensive local assessment and strategy for sports facilities within West Northamptonshire	Syzergy Leisure	Completed – see website
Northampton Borough Council			
Corporate Northampton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2011	Outlines the Local Strategic Partnership's vision up to 2031 and how this can be achieved	Northampton Local Strategic Partnership	2008
LDF General			
Northampton Local Plan	Forms the basis for all decisions relating to land use within the Borough	NBC	June 1997
Statement of Community Involvement	Sets of the Borough's policy for involving the community, both in the preparation/revision of Local Development Documents and significant development control decisions	NBC	March 2006
Affordable Housing (Council's Planning Policy Statement)	Framework for negotiations with developers for the provision of affordable housing	NBC	December 2004

Housing Strategy (enabling and Sets out goals, delivering housing choice) 2006 - housing vision of 2011	objectives and action plans to deliver the NBC over the next 5 years	NBC	March 2007
LDF Technical Studies including Central Area			
Central Area, Design and Development Framework and supporting documents	To inform the development of the Area Action Plan for the Central Area	BDP and CBRE	November 2006
Public Realm Implementation Framework (final draft)	To act as a guide to the selection, design, installation and care of Northampton's public real and its historic preservation	вор	Final draft October 2007
Northampton Employment Land Study	Assessment of the likely demand and need for employment land to 2021. Assessment of planned land supply. Comparison of forecast demand with planned supply to establish market balance	Roger Tym & Partners/Innes England	July 2006
Northampton's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit	Assessment of local needs and audit of open space, sport and recreation, to provide the Council with a clear vision, priorities and a direction for allocation of resources	PMP	September 2006
Northampton Playing Pitch Strategy	Outlines current provision and makes projects about future requirements	PMP	2005
CAAP Issues and Option consultation – summary of responses	Statistical summary of the responses received from the consultation to issues and options paper in September/October 2009	Community Engagement Officer	
Northampton Town Centre Health Check	Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the Central Area, in accordance with PPS6 requirements	Roger Tym & Partners	Draft June 2009

Economic Intelligence/ Regeneration			
Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy	Sets out clear targets for the transformation of Northampton's economy connecting regional, sub-regional and local needs	NBC	May 2008
Retail Strategy for the Town Centre	Aims to ensure that there is a retail plan that will entice people back into Northampton	CACI	May 2008
Building Frontage Appraisal – Market Square and Abington Street	Looks at the buildings in Abington Street and Market Square and suggests how to bring the heritage and history back into Northampton	Rodney Melville and Partners	May 2008
Market Square Business Plan and Feasibility Study	Assesses the feasibility of an events space on the Market Square, the options for the Market Square and how to implement these options	Playdell Smithyman	May 2008
The Chrysalis Centre Feasibility and Options Analysis and Business Plan	Explore the possibility of a Creative Business Centre in the town and the best way to implement the centre	Greenborough	March 2008
Leisure Study	Assesses what leisure facilities already exists in Northampton, what facilities need to be improved and increased. Also includes a Business Plan for a major new facility	ККР	Expected September 2009
Car Parking Strategy	Looks at current car parking facilities in Northampton and the best way to improve the facilities for the future	White Young Green	Expected September 2009

Open Space Strategy	Following the production of the OSSR study (PMP 2006), this Strategy is being prepared. It will include an Action Plan that will direct and priorities activities towards the enhancement of existing and creation of new open space and green infrastructure	NBC in conjunction with CABE Space	Expected November 2009
Open Space Audit update	Updates the Open Space, Sports and Recreation study in terms of the standards that were done by PMP in September 2006	PMP	Expected mid July 2009
Regeneration/ Masterplans			
Waterside Masterplan	Development framework for the Nene Valley River Corridor from Duston Mill Reservoir to Barnes Meadow	Halcrow	January 2005
Beckets Park Masterplan: Stage 3 – Development of Preferred Masterplan (NB: not been to Cabinet: delivery identified as an issue)	Masterplan for Becketts Park with the future aim of securing funding and implementing the proposals. Land uses proposed include visitor centre hub, residential development and marina	Halcrow (with GVA Grimley, D5, EWA)	August 2008
St John's Masterplan	Identifies the comprehensive and co-ordinated redevelopment of key locations within Bridge Street/St Johns/Angel Street areas and how they could be developed in the longer term	Taylor Young (with LSH)	February 2008
Northampton Waterfront Regeneration Opportunities Study	Should eventually provide a vision for Northampton's waterfront and an integrated strategy for regeneration which links existing initiatives and identifies clear steps. Boundary broadly starts from west of Nunn Mills Road through to Harvey Reeves area	Taylor Young	In progress

WNDC Infrastructure Delivery Programme (Consolidated report)	To develop an infrastructure delivery programme reflecting sound decision making and robust data analysis and process	EC Harris	August 2008
Waterside Northampton: Interim Report	A Masterplan for the river frontage area from Castle Station through to Avon Nunn Mills area, incorporating the gasholder site	David Lock Associates for WNDC	May 2009
Castle Station Redevelopment Project: Gold Street area to began in January 2009	Public realm improvement	NCC	Ongoing
Avon/Nunn Mills	Regeneration statement consulted: site to be an economic driver and leisure/visitor attraction and make a major contribution to extend the scale and offer of the town centre through the provision of office based employment opportunities and complimentary cultural retail and leisure/visitor facilities, to become an integral part of the town centre	WNDC	Ongoing
Draft Strategic Northamptonshire Economic Action Plan (SNEAP)	To develop an economic action plan for the County which would deliver the economic vision	SQW Consulting and Cambridge Econometrics	Consultation completed in Mar 2008
Planning Obligations Strategy	Establish robust arrangements for securing appropriate developer contributions towards the provision of necessary strategic and local infrastructure needed in the West Northamptonshire area to support the developments that are coming forward	WNDC	Approved

Page 54

Renewable Energy	Looking at sustainable energy solutions	Faber Maunsell	Ongoing
WNDC Refreshed Programme of Development (Growth Funding 2008/09 – 2010/11)	Refreshed programme of deliverance, with a greater emphasis on project prioritisation, and funding requirements.	WNDC	October 2008
A Cultural Investment Plan for West Northamptonshire	A Cultural Investment Plan for Position culture at the heart of the planning and development Tom Fleming West Northamptonshire Creative Consultancy	Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy	November 2008
People and Places Strategy	Target markets to deliver WNDC's vision	CACI/Scott Wilson	October 2008

21 FIGURE ,

- **Bus Station** Demolition
- Market Square Changes
- **Plough Junction** Finish work
- Waterside (Green Street)
- On-site within 5 years Waterside (Gas
 - remediation works Demolition of gasholders & Works)
- Avon / Nunn Mills New junction with lights, new road and bridges. Start of
 - residential & office development Ransome Road
 - New junction 2009. Start development & remediation
- **Becket's Park** New marina
- **St Peter's Square** Started
 - St John's (part) Started
- Midsummer Meadow
 - Work begins
- Spring Boroughs
 Masterplan and
 development partner
 identified

Central Area Action Plan

Phase

July 2009

FIGURE 22

- Large amount finished (more in phase 3) Avon - Nunn Mills
- Large amount finished (but more in phase 3) New public transport link Work begins
 - St James Mill Road link
- **Waterside** Development underway around St Peter's Way
 - Castle Station Development finished
- **Spring Boroughs**Begins
- St John's / Angel St , Bridge St Area Begin work
 - **Grosvenor Centre** Ongoing

- **New Supermarket**
- 11 Freeschool Street
- **St Peter's Square** Finished in phase 2
- Midsummer Meadow
- On-going improvements River Nene – New Leisure Facility
- College Street & Horsemarket

Central Area Action Major retail-led scheme

Plan

July 2009

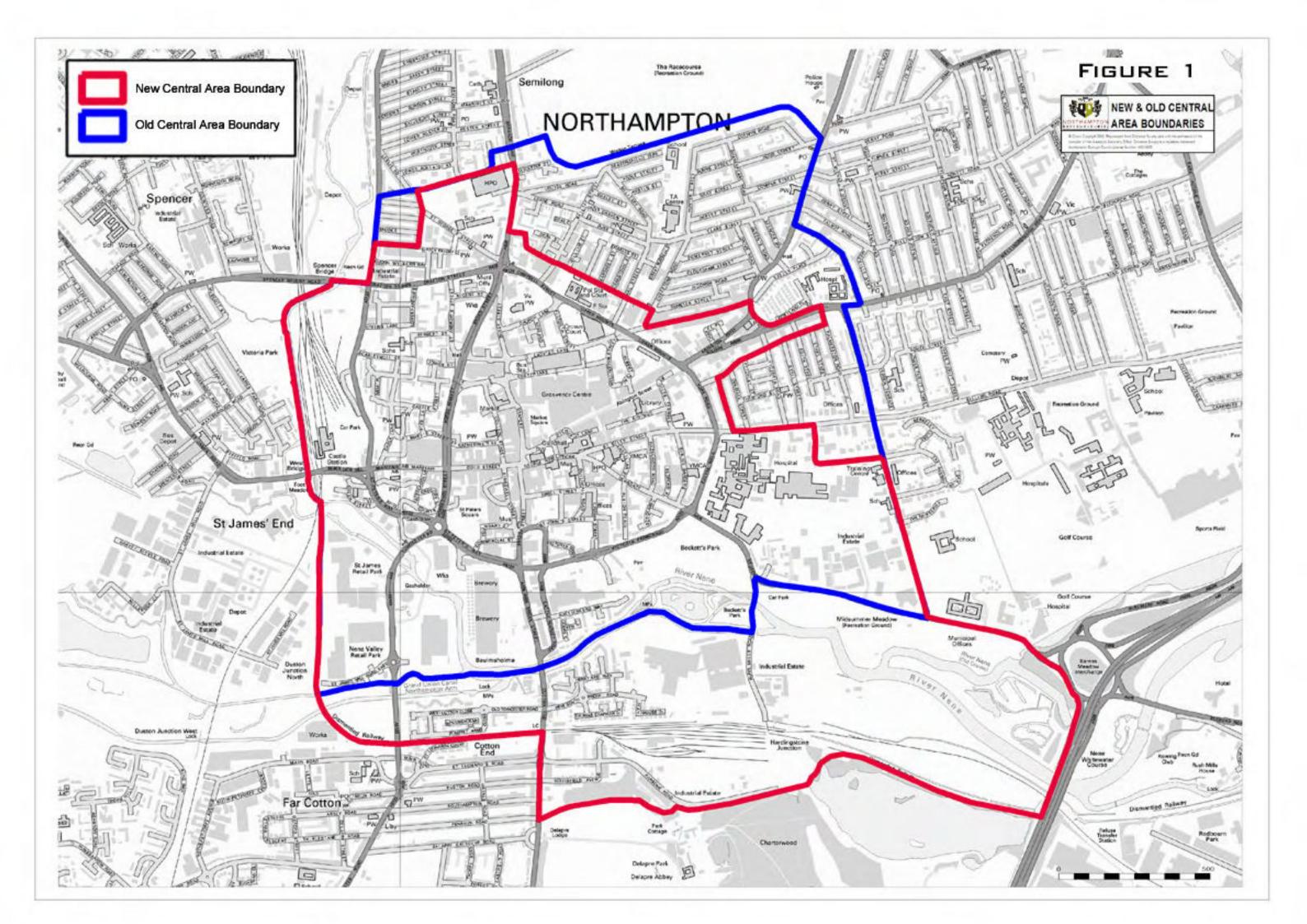
© Crown Copyright 2008. Northampton Borough Council Licence Number 100019655.

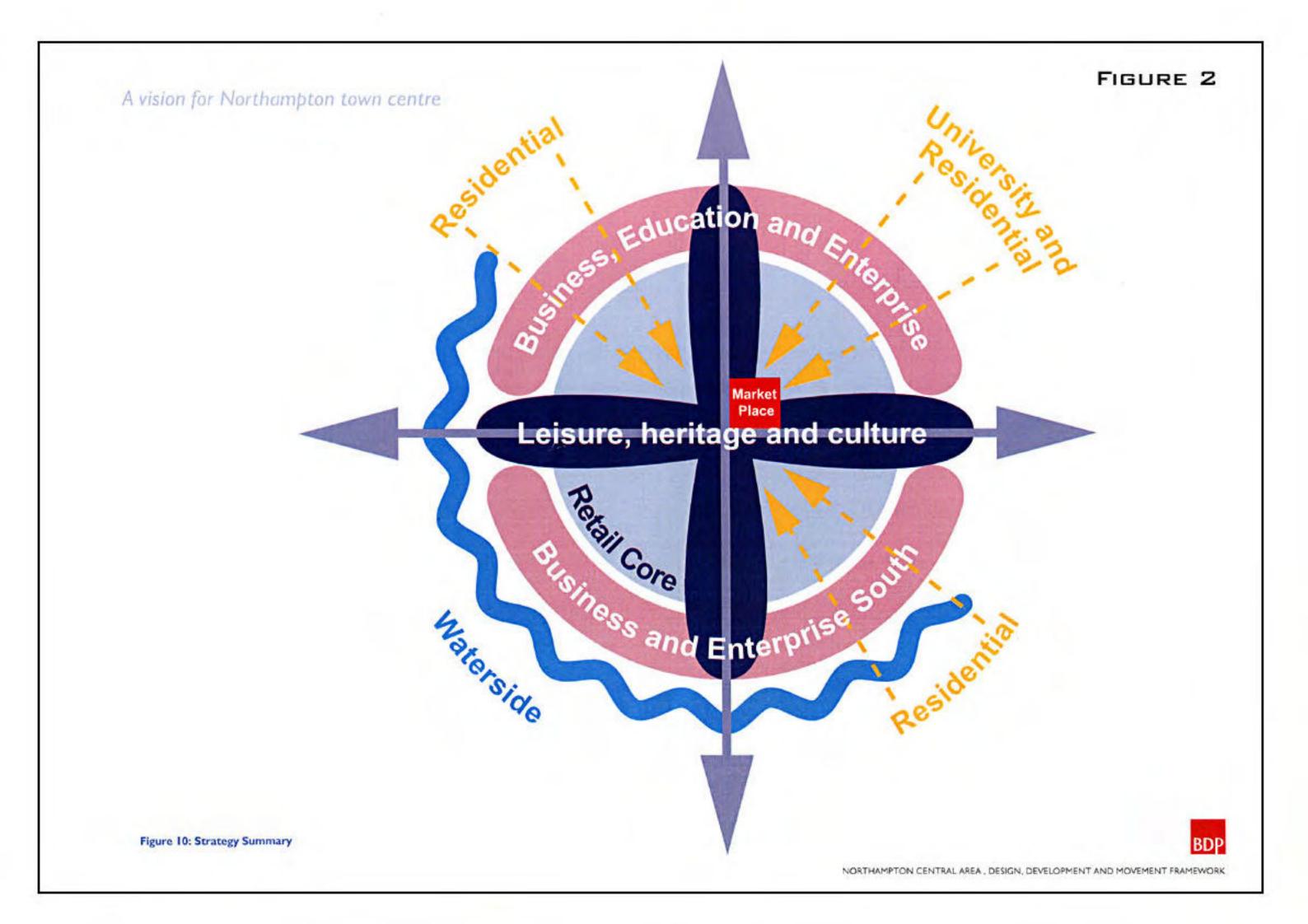
Works

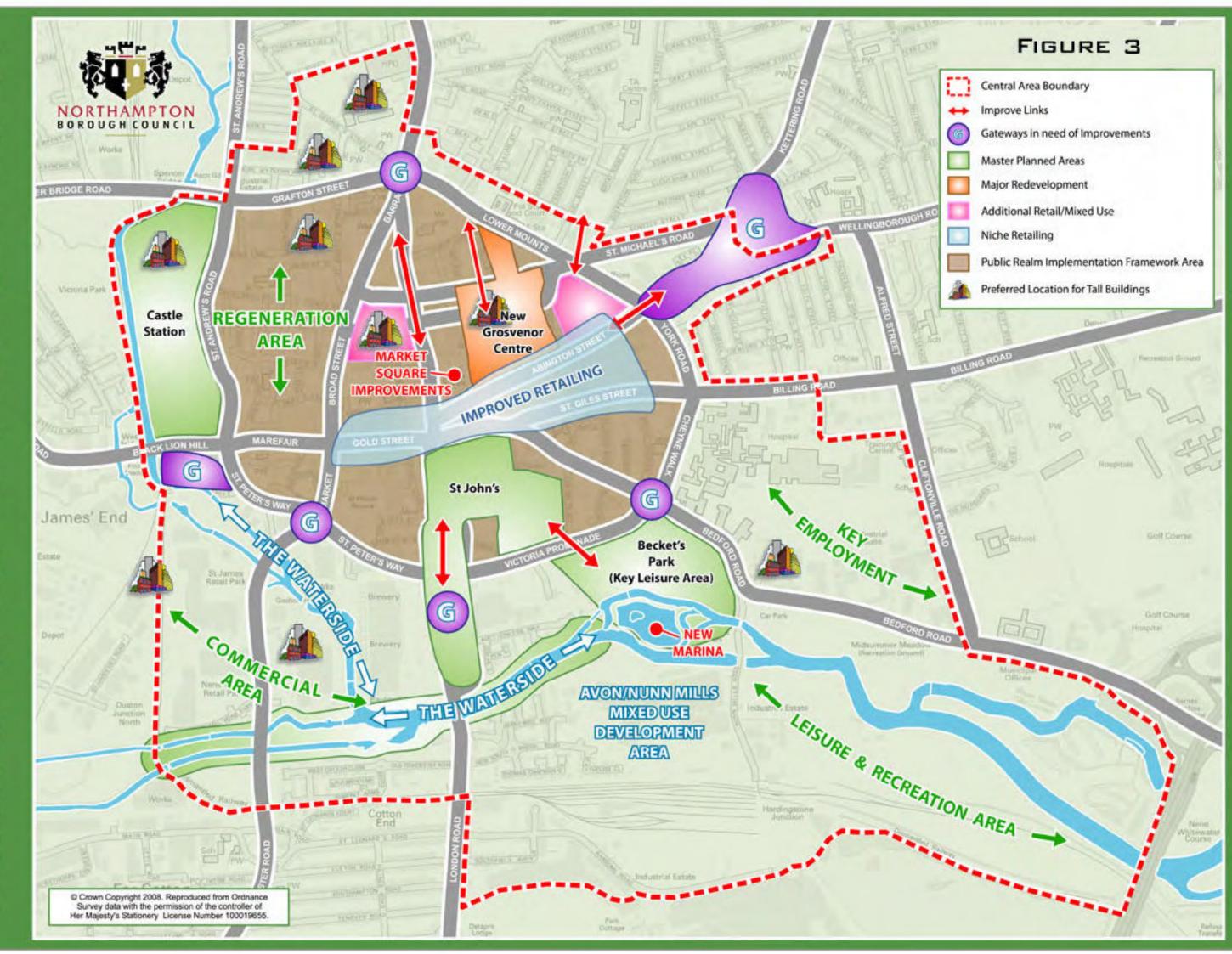
Central Area Action Plan

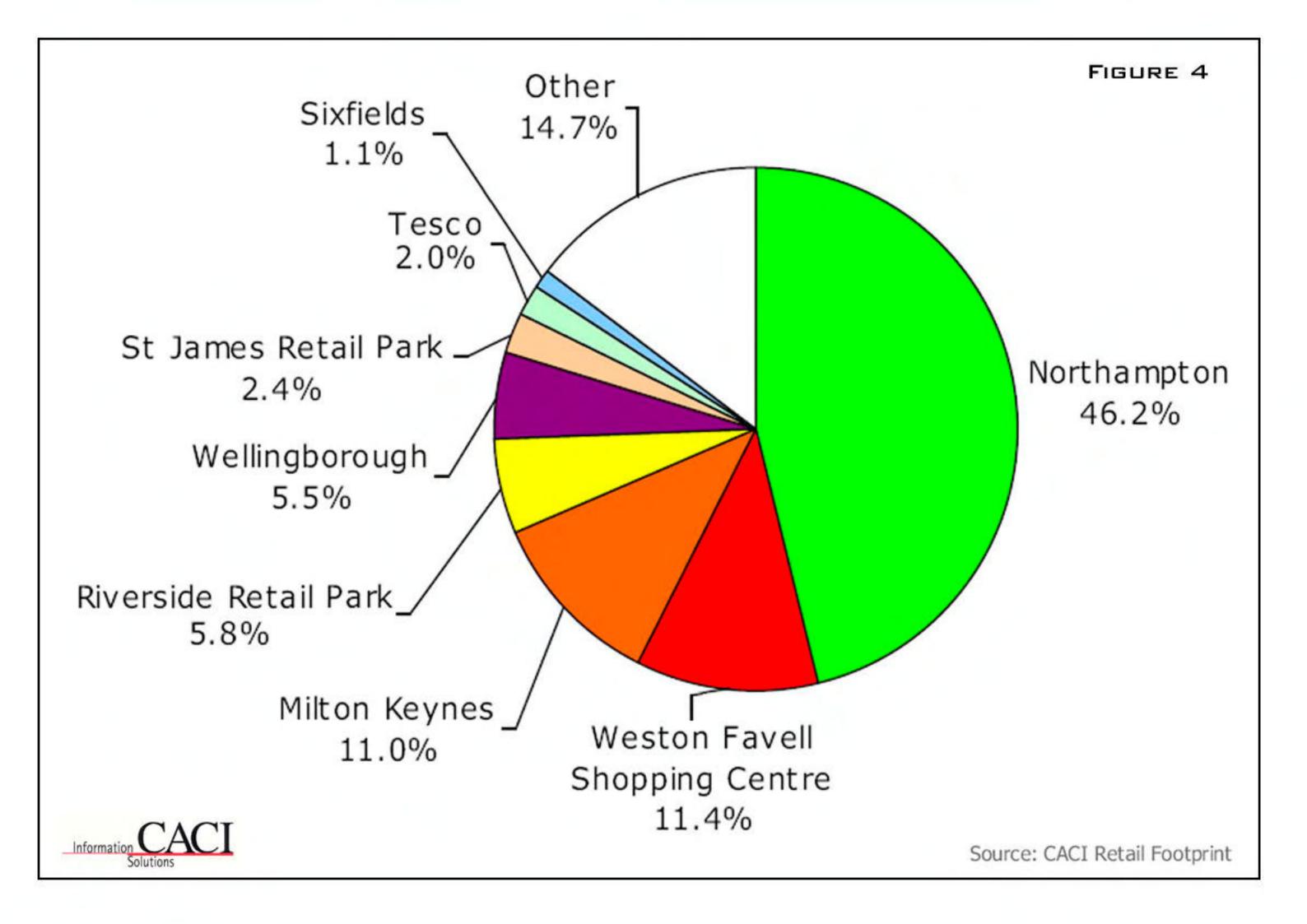
3 Phase

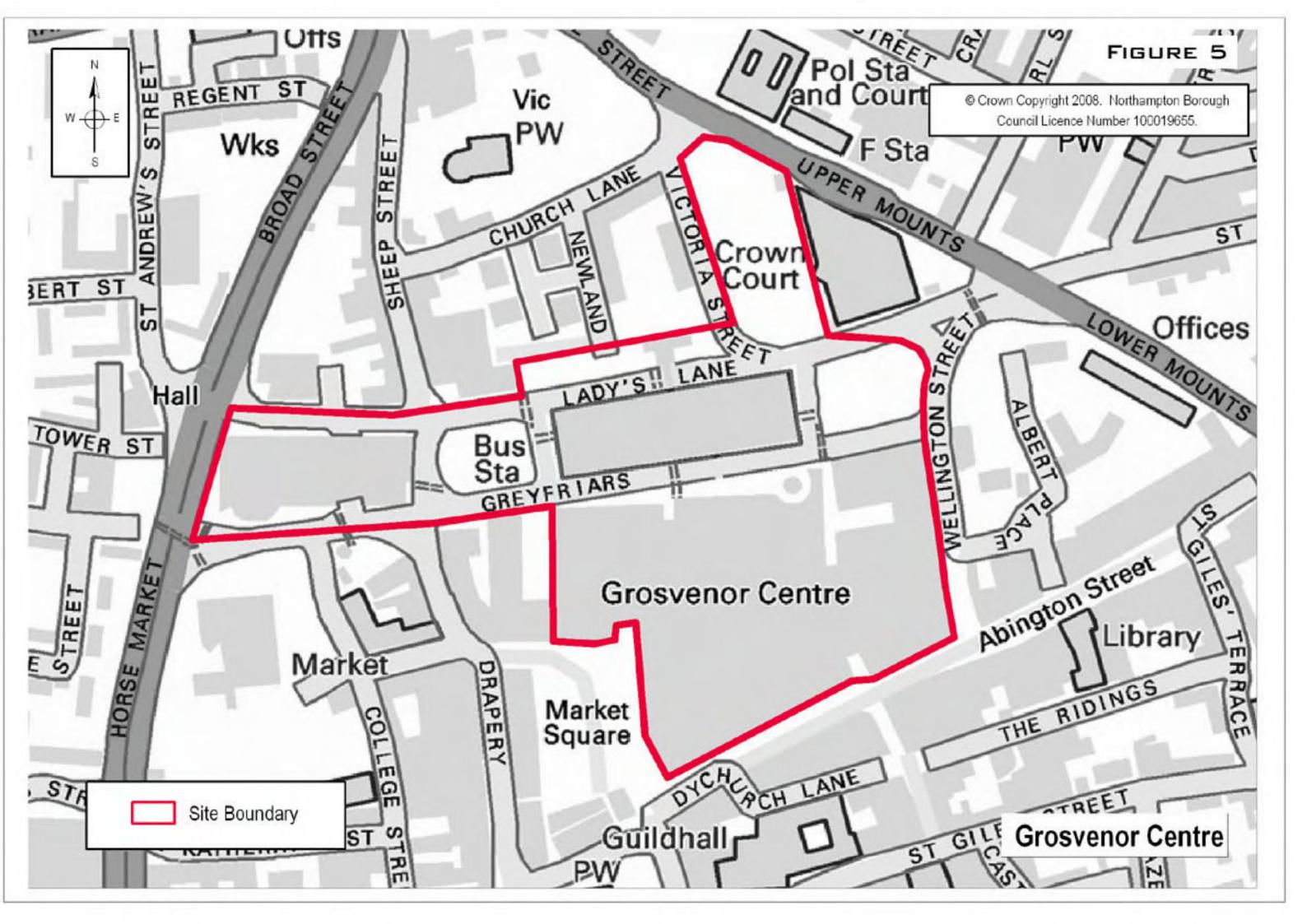
July 2009

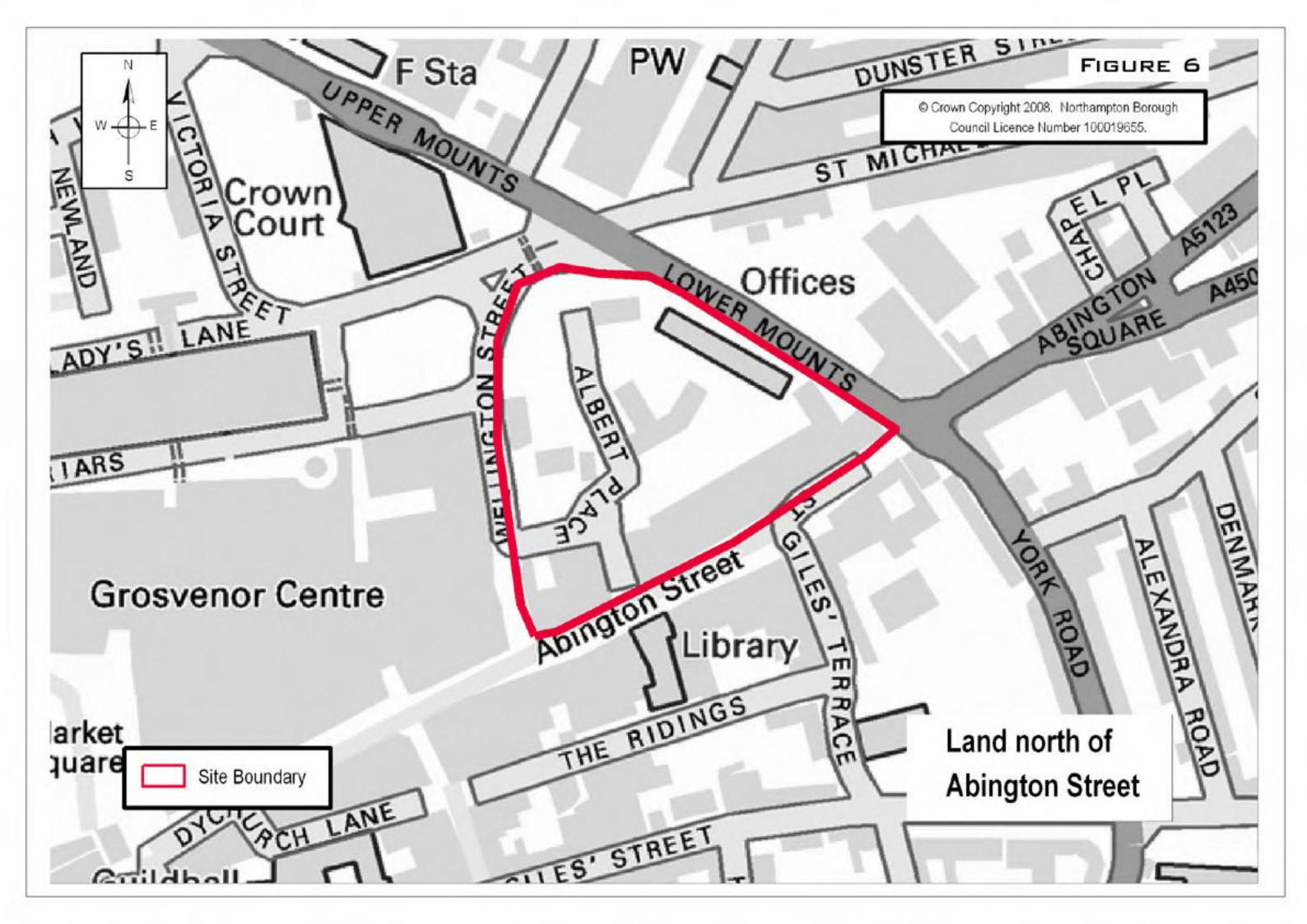


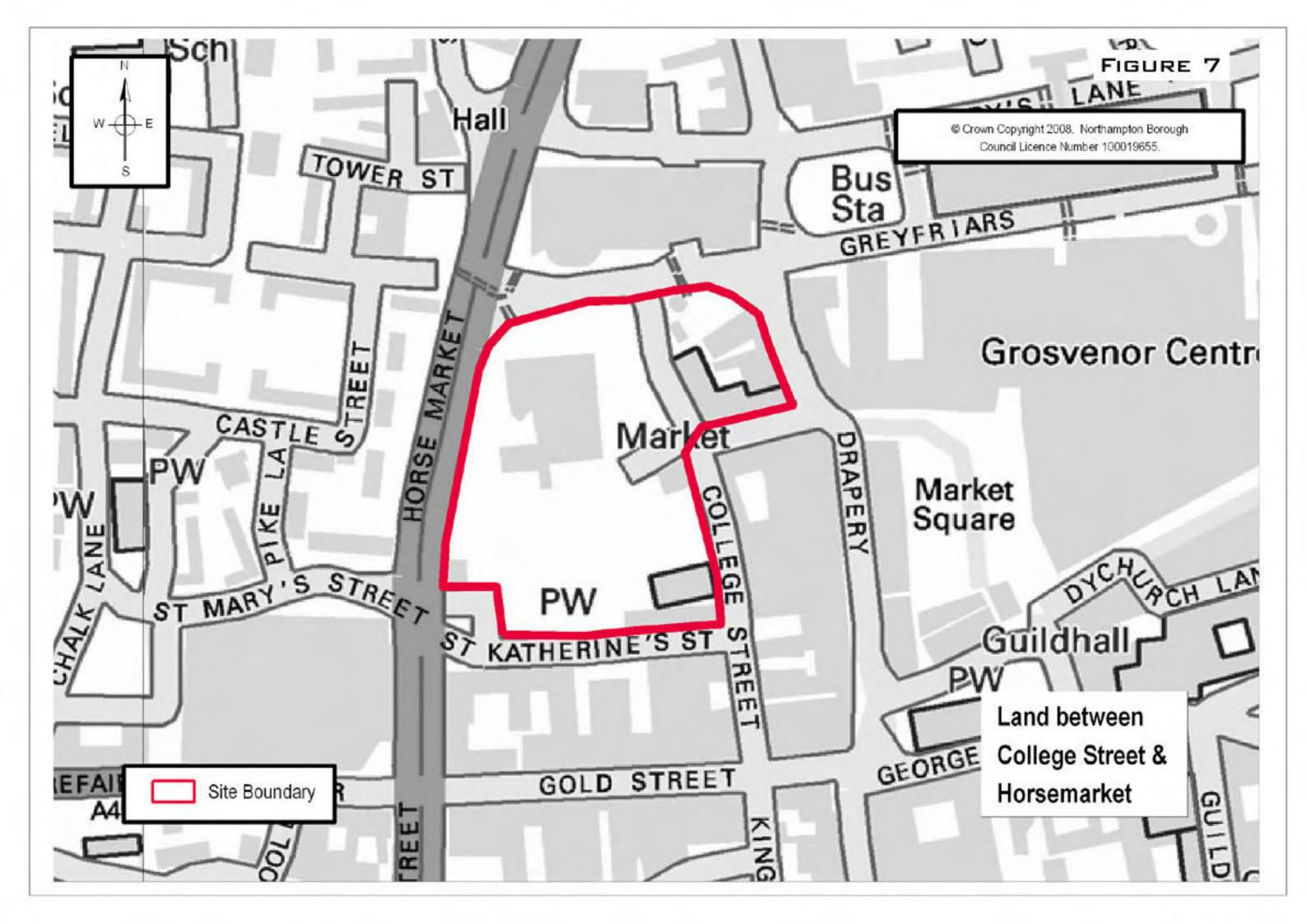


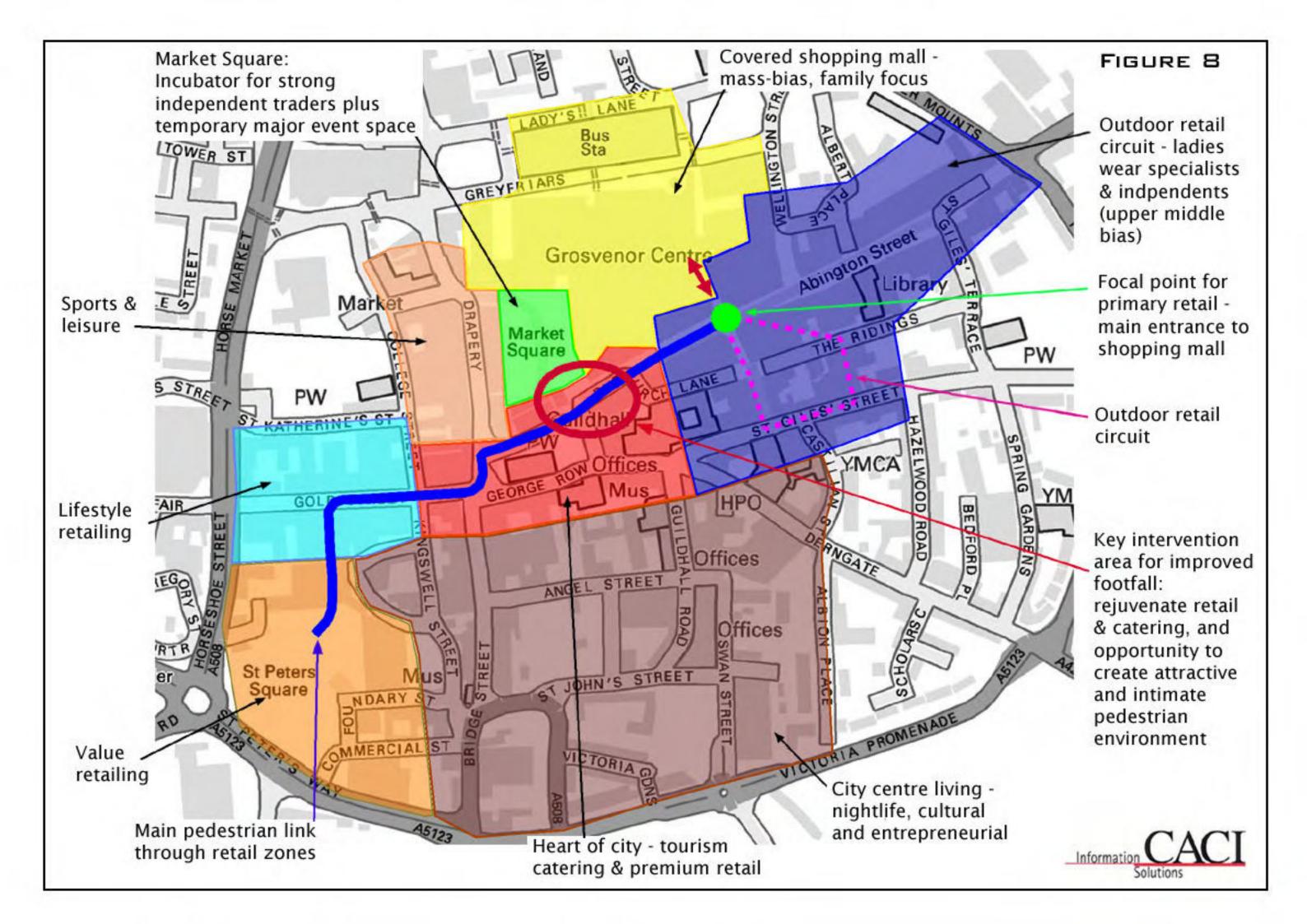


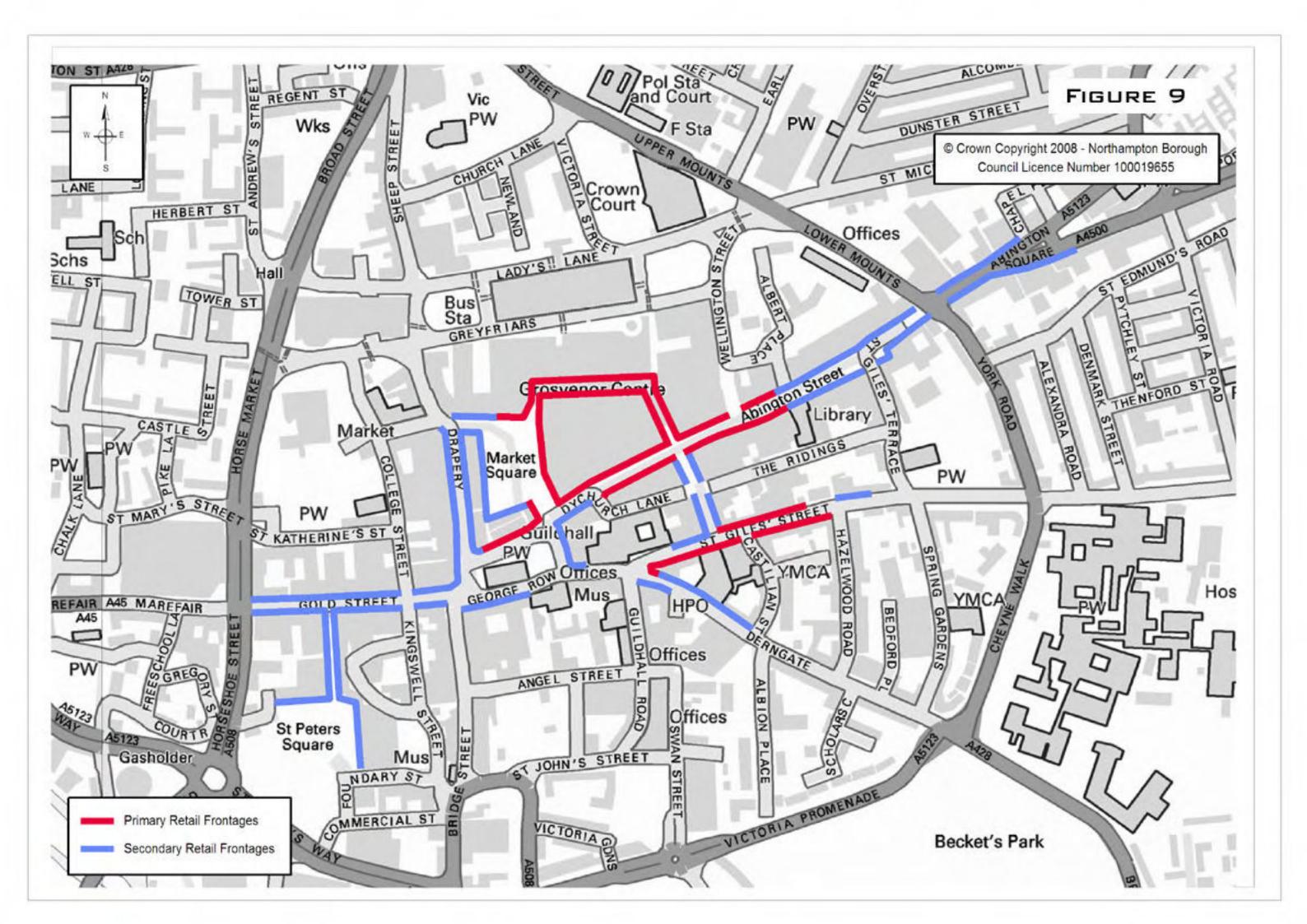


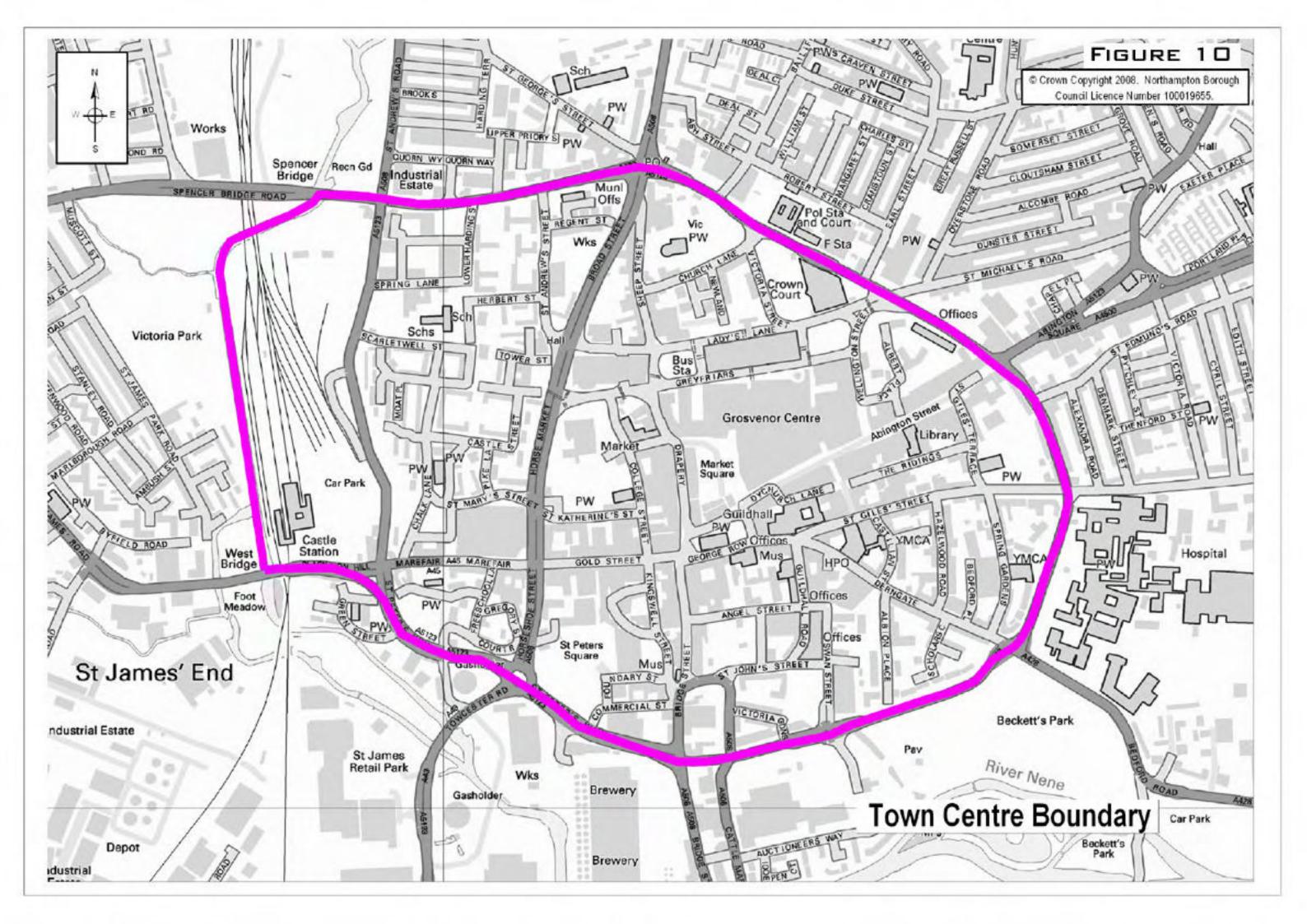


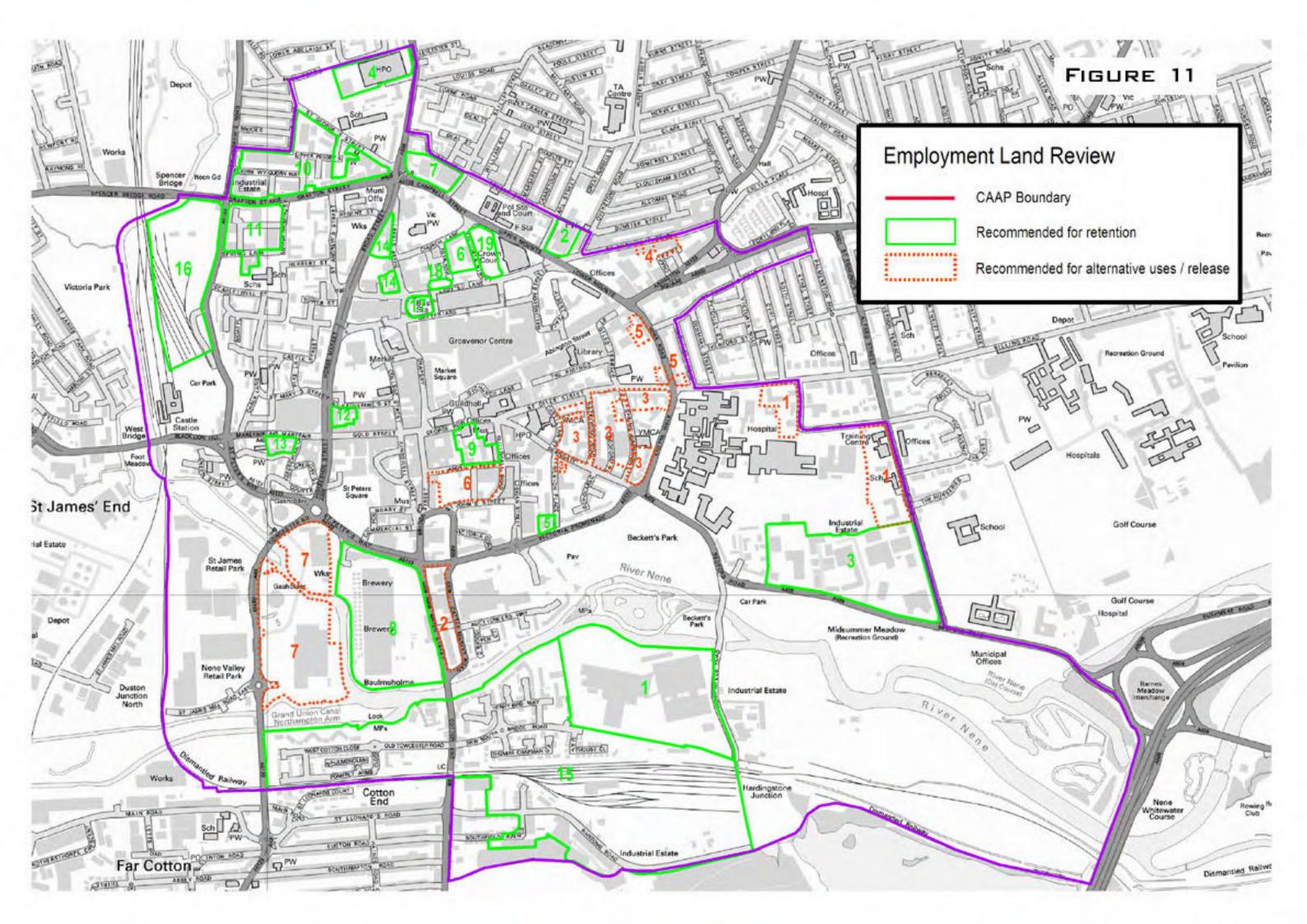


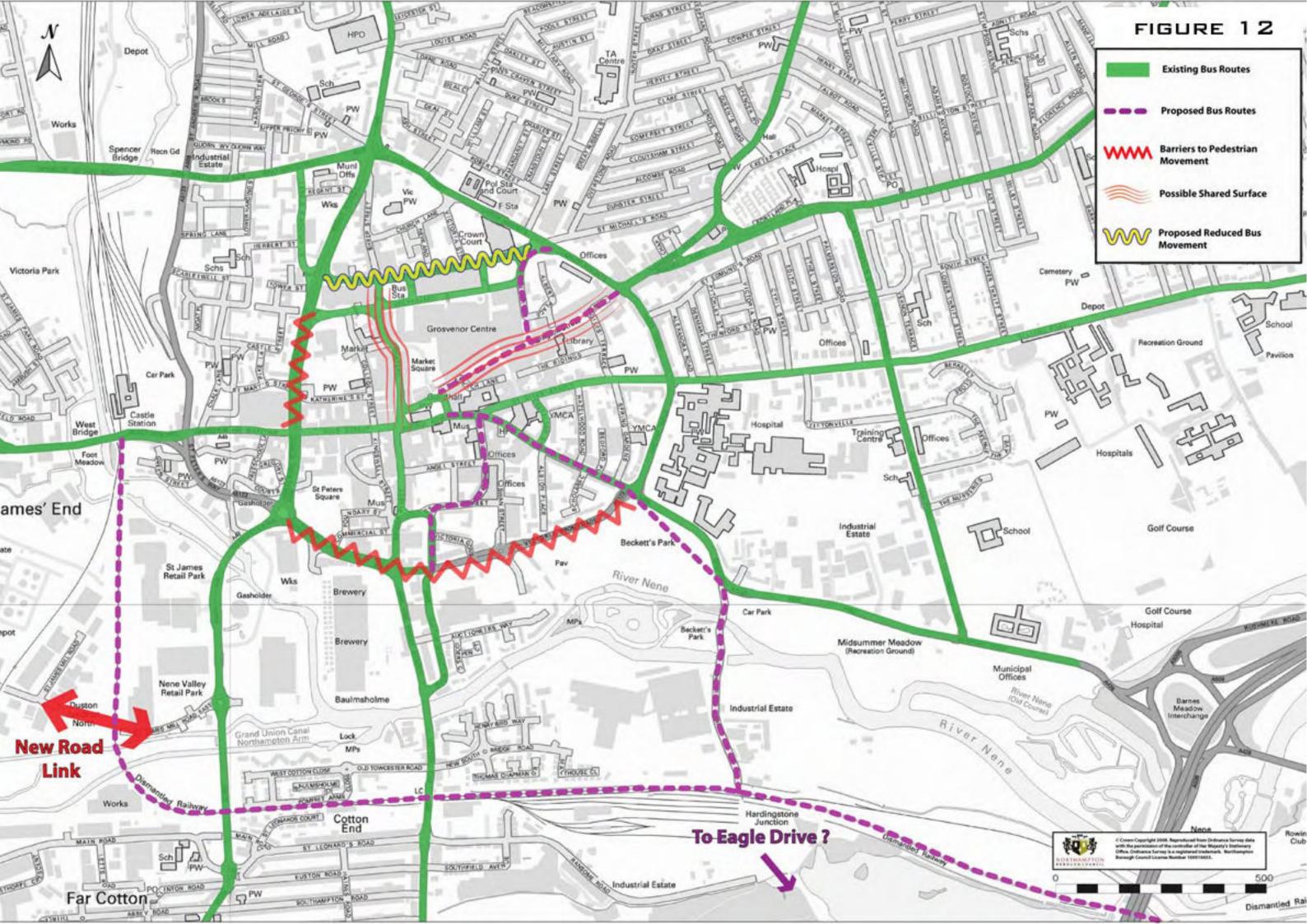


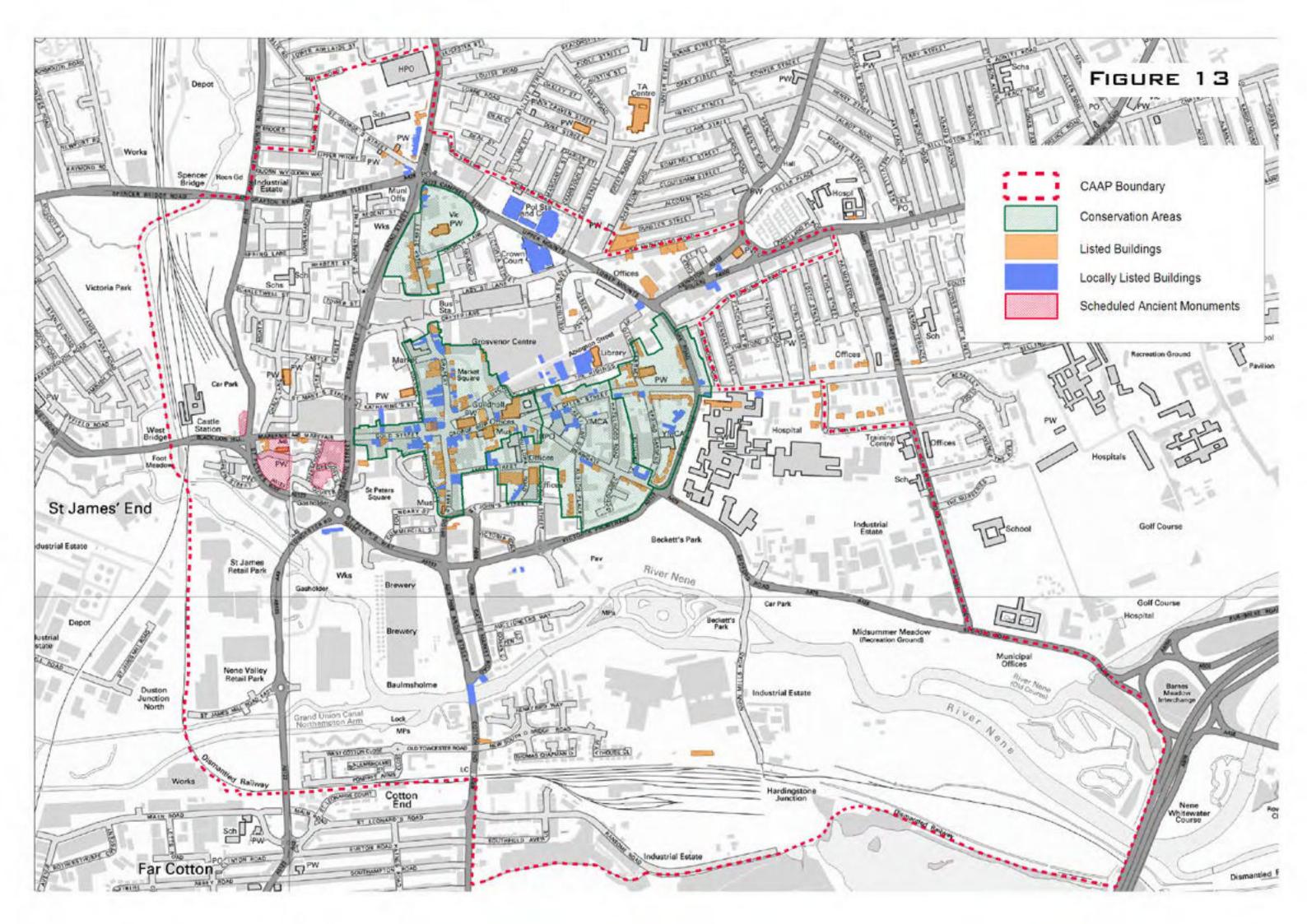


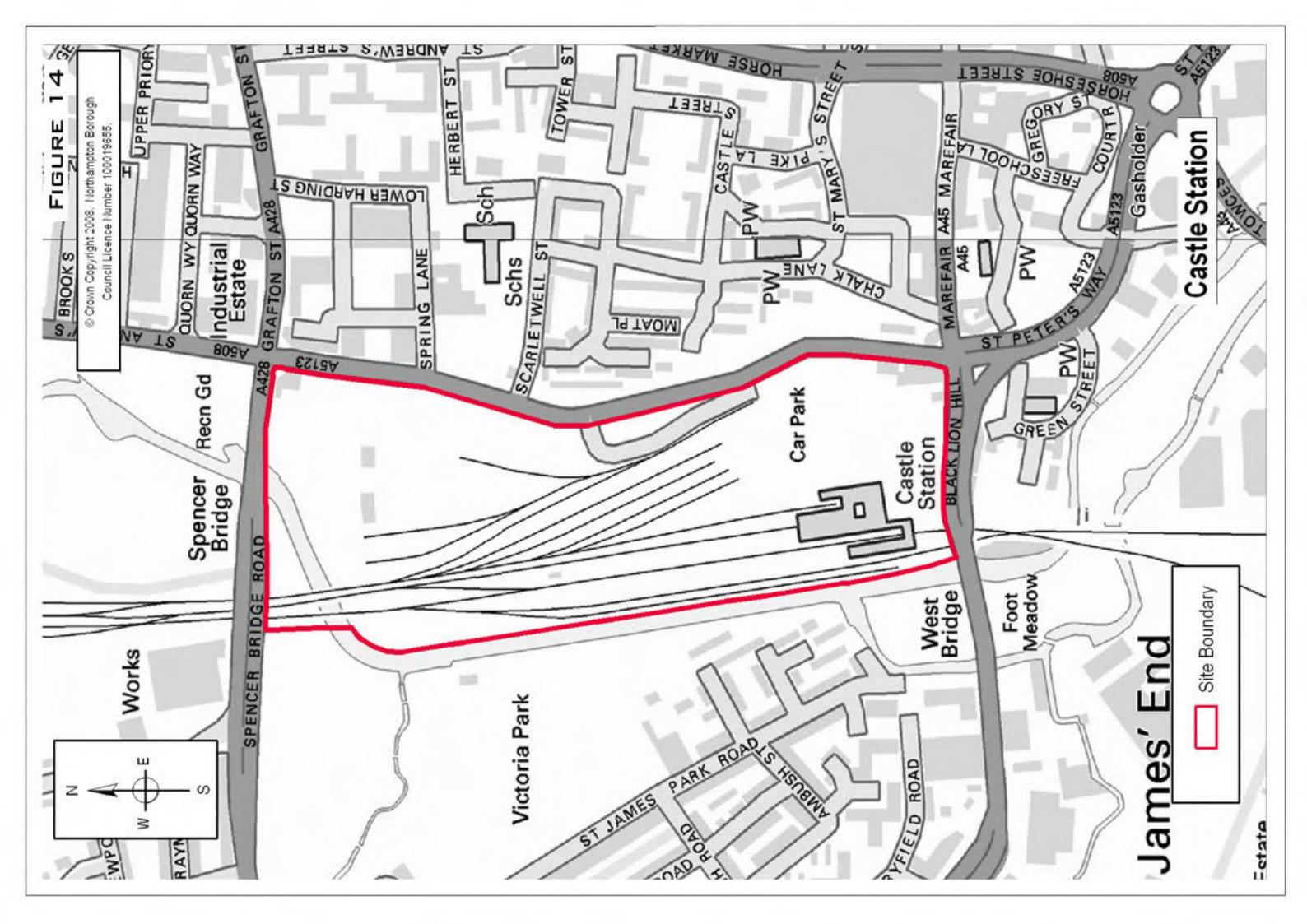


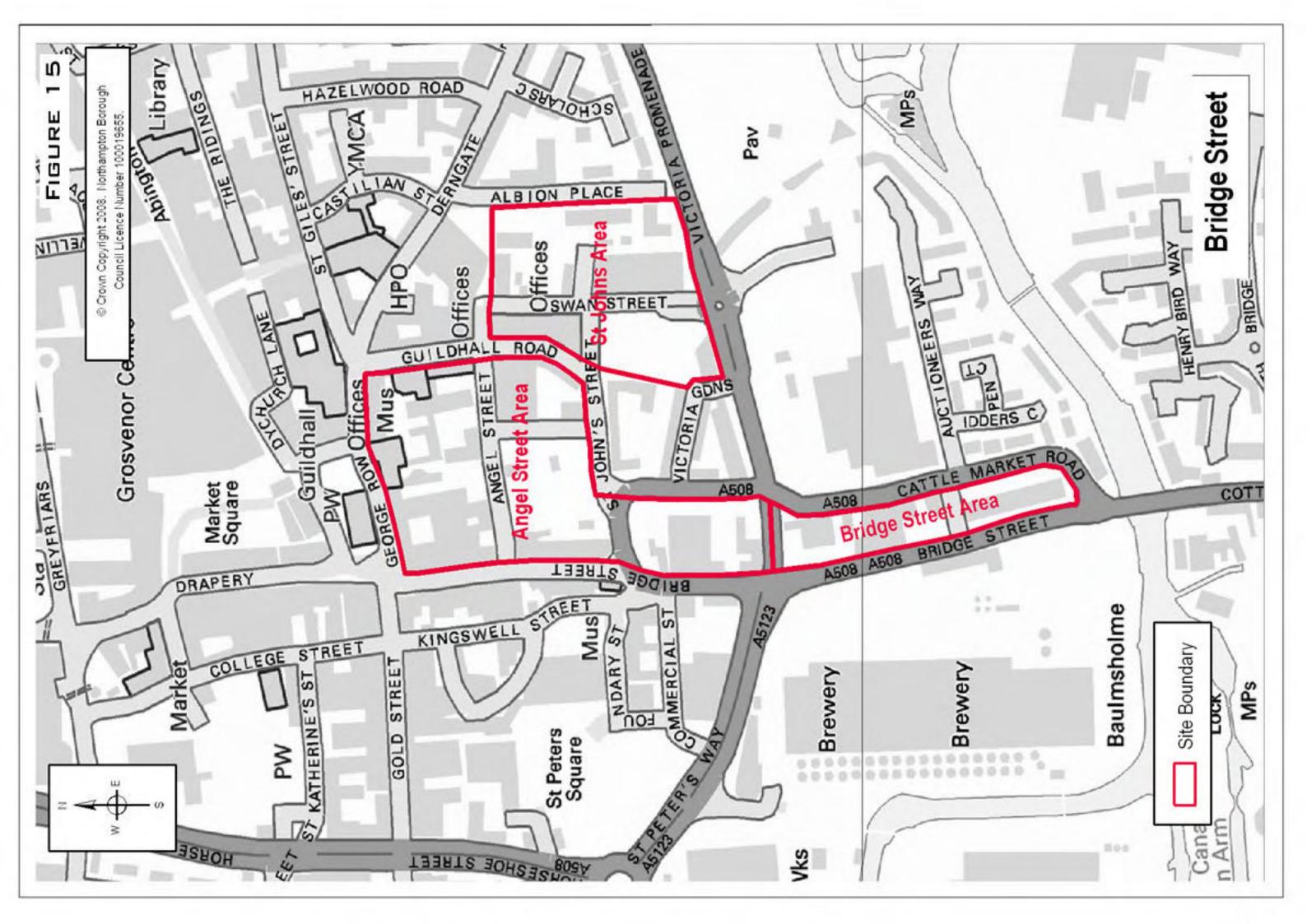


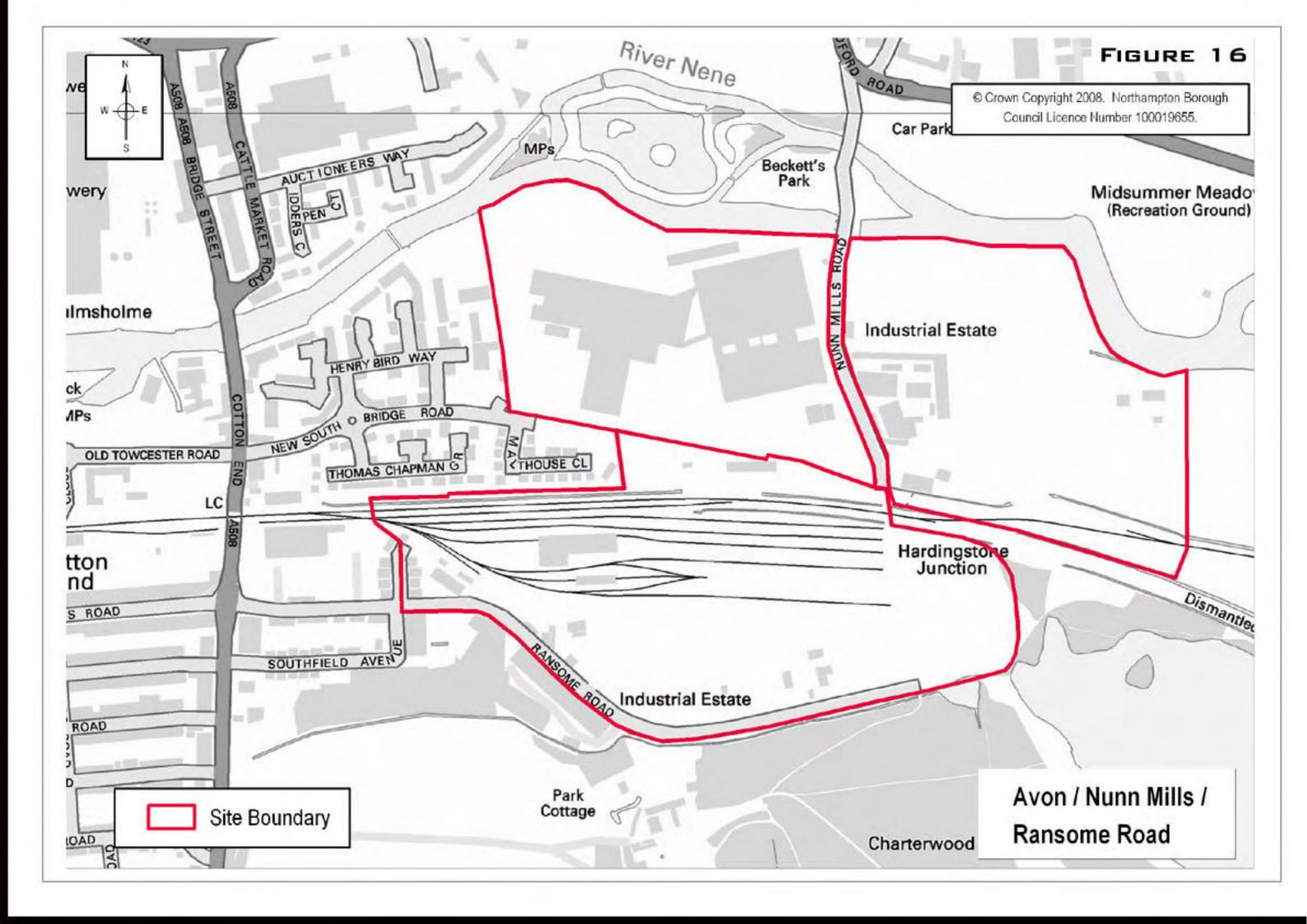


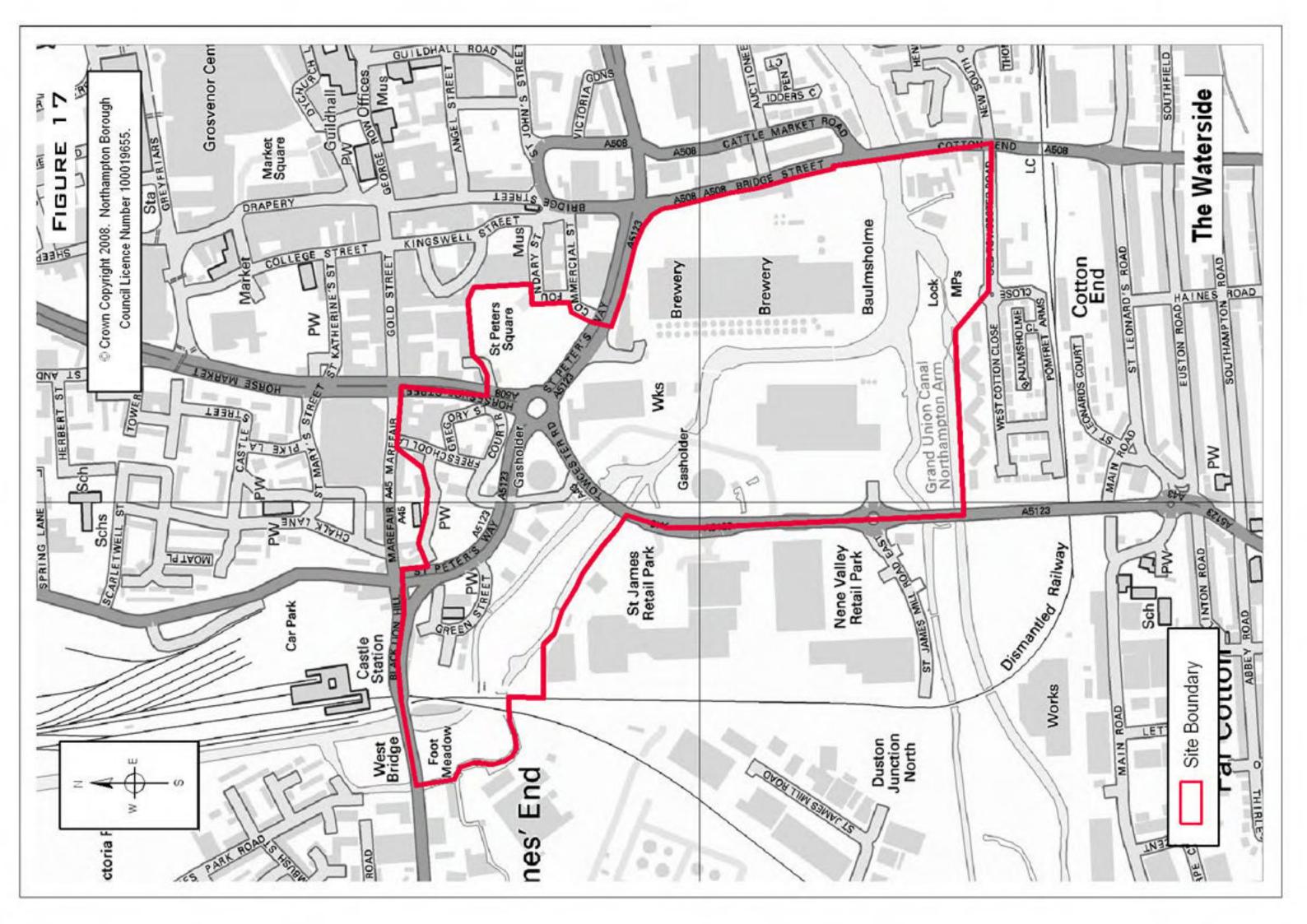


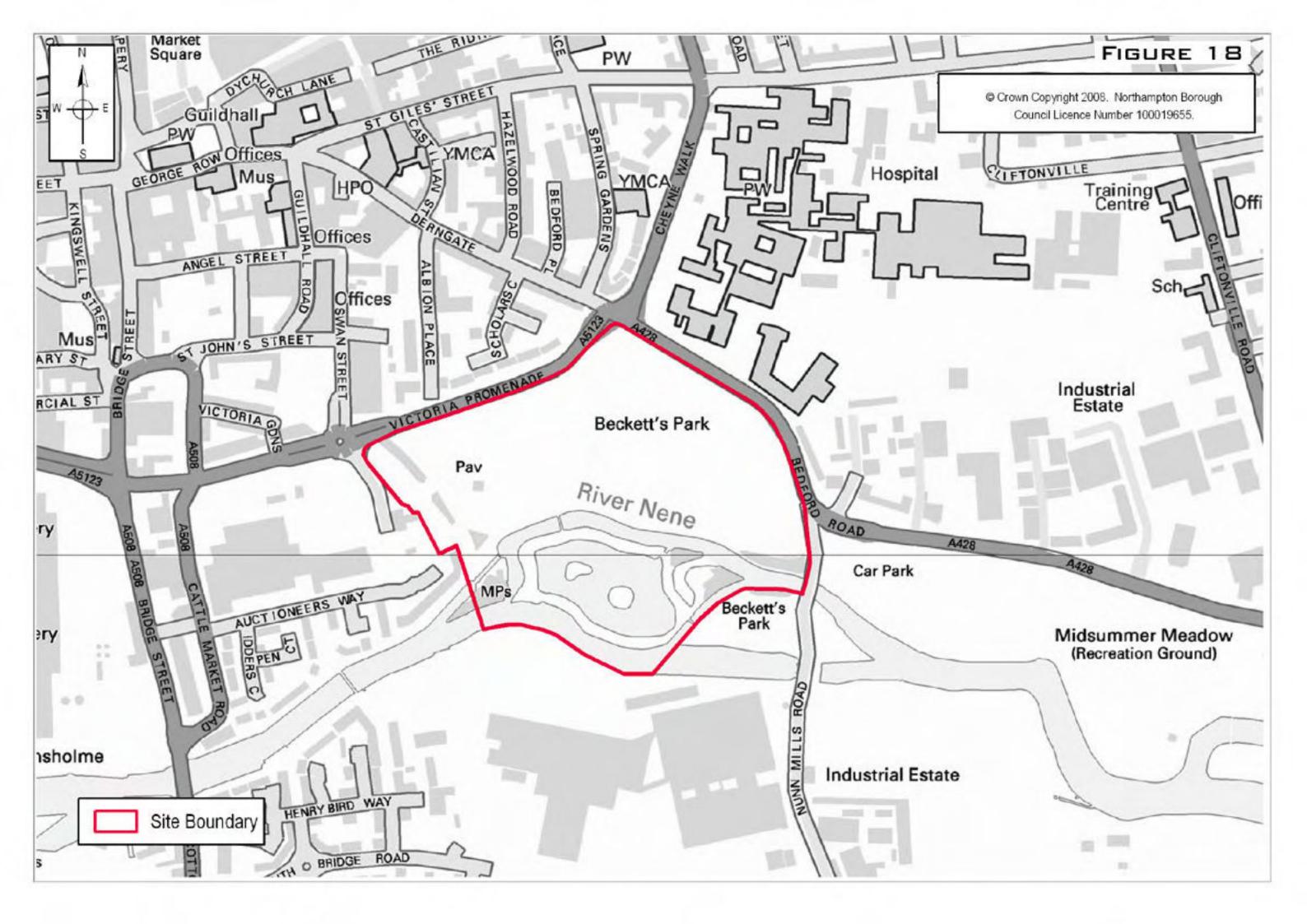


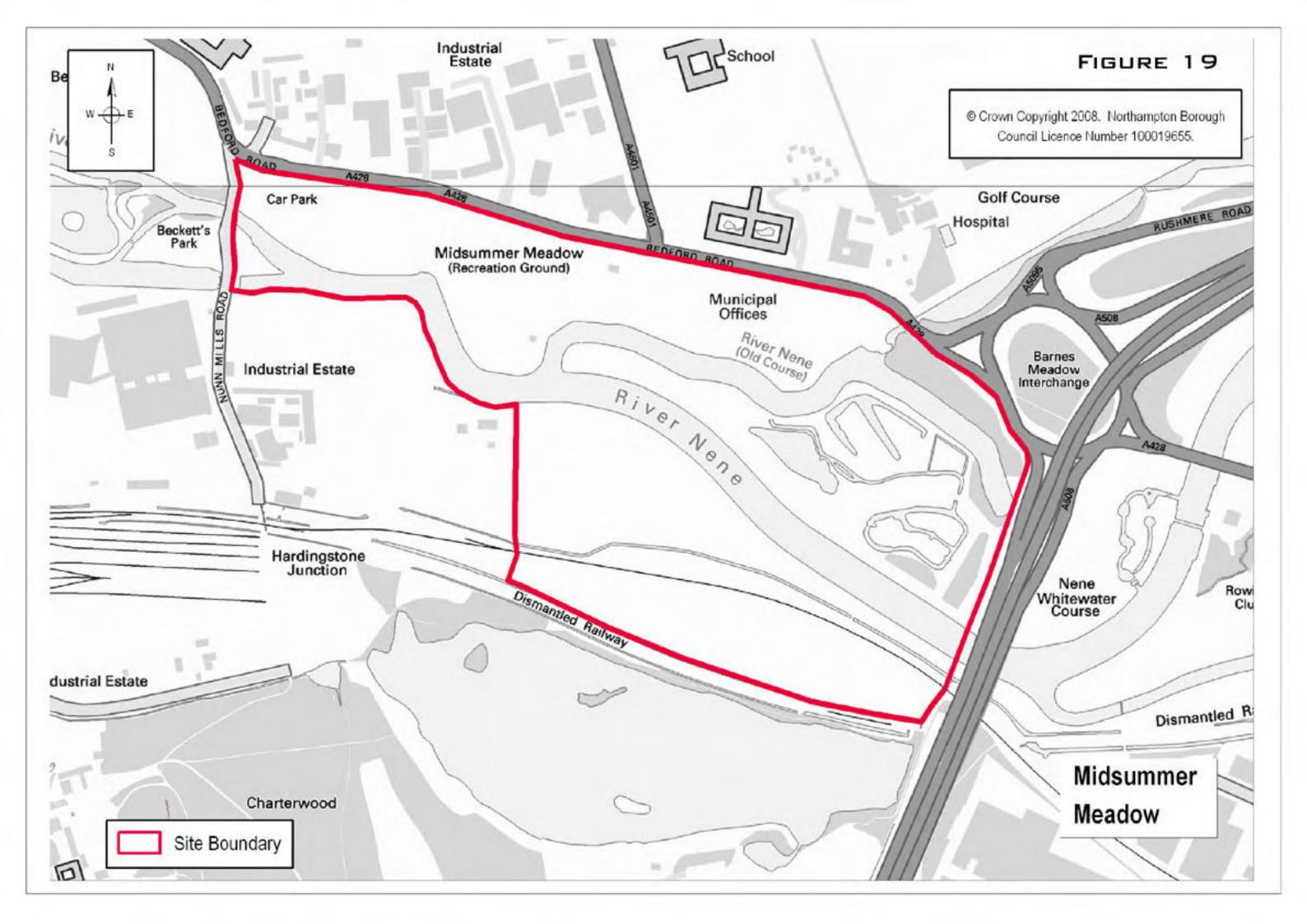


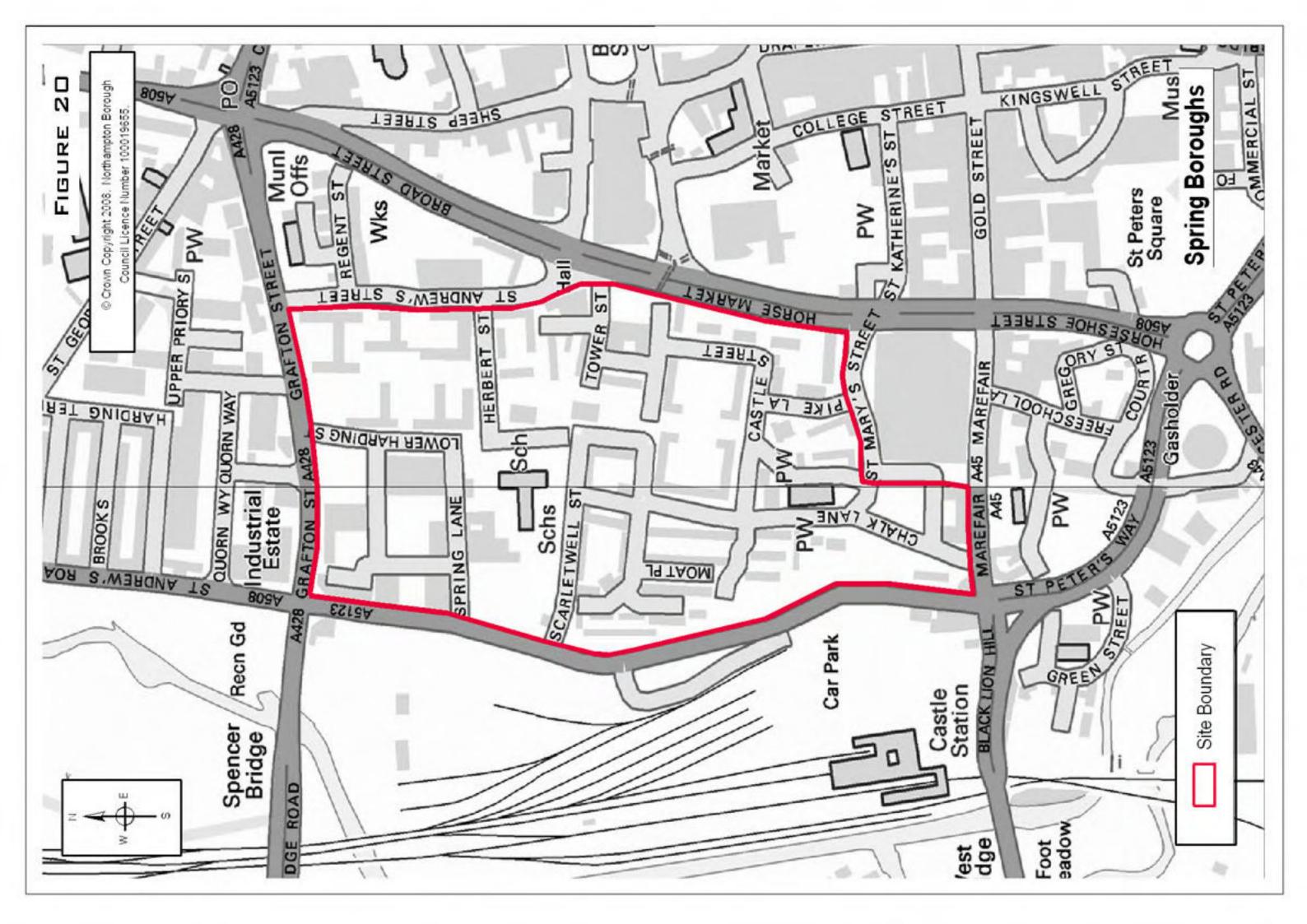












Agenda Item 8

Appendices	



Item No.

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy	

CABINET REPORT

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	15 th July 2009
Key Decision:	No
Listed on Forward Plan:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	Planning and Regeneration

Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Richard Church
Ward(s)	All Wards

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the recent decision of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC) in respect of the Emergent Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for West Northamptonshire. To seek Cabinet approval to the process by which this Council considers the Emergent Joint Core Strategy and agrees its formal response as a consultee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to note the decision of the JSPC on the 6th July and to agree, in principle, to provide a formal Council response through the consultation process.
- 2.2 Cabinet are asked to consider the options for agreeing such a formal response to the Joint Core Strategy and directing the way forward.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) will be the long term strategic plan for the development of West Northamptonshire (WN) (Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire Councils) it deals with the big picture of what will happen in the future. It is a "spatial" policy document, which means it deals with places and the activities that happen within them.
- 3.1.2 Preparation of a JCS is a legal requirement and the partner authorities of Northampton Borough, Daventry District, South Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire County Council have been required by Government to produce a JCS for their collective areas. The partner authorities are working in close co-operation with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) a key body in the delivery of development and infrastructure.
- 3.1.3 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee, through Officer support from the Joint Planning Unit, has been progressing work on the Emergent Joint Core Strategy, which is a fundamental step towards approving a Joint Core Strategy. Members' workshops, Members' briefings, the

Officer Charette and the responses from the Issues and Options and Regulation 25 Consultations have been incorporated into and have influenced the thinking and strategic approach set out in the current document.

- 3.1.4 Informed through previous consultations and the collection of a wide ranging evidence base, the publication of an Emergent Joint Core Strategy is a further stage in the process. It is not a done deal and is not the final strategy. It does outline well developed current thinking towards delivering strategic levels of growth in West Northamptonshire.
- 3.1.5 The Emergent JCS explains how the important choices for WN are being informed; sets out the preferred directions for strategic growth, particularly around Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley; the pivotal importance of retail investment to town centre regeneration; the essential need to deliver necessary infrastructure enabled by the preferred locations for growth and the policy approach to sustaining our rural communities and countryside character.
- 3.1.6 A fundamental principle, both for Members and Consultees, is that if there are specific areas identified for growth that are not favoured, then suitable alternatives, which can equally meet the strategic objectives and vision, and be in general conformity with the East Midlands Plan (RSS 8) must be found. It is not an option to say "no" to the principle of growth as established by the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) and RSS 8.
- 3.1.7 Following the decision of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee to agree to the publication of the Emergent Joint Core Strategy for the purposes of public consultation, a six week formal public consultation will commence in late July and will continue into the first weeks of September. It is unfortunate that this consultation must take place over the summer period, but this is necessary to allow the strict timetable set out in the Government approved Local Development Scheme to be met. There will be further opportunities to make representations at the pre-submission stage.
- 3.1.8 Northampton Borough will want to respond formally to the approach and direction of the Emergent JCS and Cabinet will need to agree the process to enable this to happen.

Options

- 3.1.9 Although the option of not responding to the emergent JCS consultation is available to Cabinet, such inaction may be considered damaging to the Council's reputation and leadership role. The positive option of responding to the consultation is therefore recommended.
- 3.1.10 There are three principal options to consider in respect of the process by which a formal response is agreed by Cabinet/Council.

- a) To receive a detailed report on the Emergent JCS at Cabinet on August 5th (or some later date) by which time Cabinet (and other Members of Council) will have had time to consider the document and be better placed to form a view.
- b) To refer the consultation document to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for immediate scrutiny and to receive a report back to Cabinet in early September to agree a formal response.
- c) To refer the consultation document to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for immediate scrutiny and to receive a report back to Council in early September to agree a formal response.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The JCS being the long term strategic plan for West Northamptonshire can be considered the single most important policy document which will shape the future of Northampton and West Northamptonshire. The Joint Core Strategy will consolidate Northampton as the economic, commercial and cultural heart of the County and re-assert its position as County Town and aspiring City.
- 4.1.2 The JCS will shape our policy approach to key service areas such as Planning, Housing, Regeneration, Environment, Transportation and Climate Change. Its pivotal role and influence should not be underestimated.

4.2 Resources and Risk

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Depending upon the response process selected by Cabinet, there could be staff capacity implications for the Joint Planning Unit and Planning Officers.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The JSPC has the statutory and executive decision role on behalf of the four constituent authorities in respect of plan/policy making through the Local Development Framework process, and will be the democratic body that finally approves the JCS.
- 4.3.2 Northampton Borough as with the other partner authorities are consultees in the process only.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 This report in itself has no impact on Equalities and Diversity. The JCS itself and its consultation process will be the subject of an Equalities Risk Impact Assessment.

4.4.2 The Emergent Joint Core Strategy which will now be amended as required by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee before formal consultation can be viewed at www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org; a copy will be placed in the Members' Room and any Member who would like a hard copy has been invited to contact the JPU who will provide a copy. A substantial technical evidence base has already been proposed which underpins the Emergent Strategy and this can be viewed on the above JPU website.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, Councillors R. Church and T. Wood, Scrutiny Officer and Councillor Simpson.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

The Joint Core Strategy will contribute to and facilitate a broad range of priorities and corporate objectives, and provides a framework for other strategies.

The formation and delivery of the Joint Core Strategy is through a formal partnership with the four constituent Councils.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Emergent Joint Core Strategy for West Northamptonshire. JSPC Report and Minute – 6th July 2009,

David K. Bailey Director of Planning and Regeneration

Ext. 7287

Agenda Item 9

Appendices



Item No.

9

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date: 15 July 2009

Key Decision: YES

Listed on Forward Plan: YES

Within Policy: YES

Policy Document: YES

Directorate: HOUSING

Accountable Cabinet Member: Councillor Sally Beardsworth

Ward(s) All

1. Purpose

1.1 To submit a draft housing asset management strategy for approval as the basis of consultation with tenants and partners.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the attached draft Housing Asset Management Strategy for consultation with tenants and receives a report back on that consultation in due course.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note that a resource plan will be developed for the delivery of the final strategy.
- 2.3 That authority be given to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to set up a programme of small scale procurement of contract packages varying in value from £50,000 to £1.6 million as set out at appendix I of the draft Housing Asset Management Strategy, to commence as soon as is practically achievable.

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At Appendix A is a draft housing asset management strategy. This follows the format of HRA business plans which local housing authorities were required to submit to Government Offices until 2005, but with more detail to provide the basis of consultation with tenants. The draft strategy is a more detailed examination of housing investment options, based on the desktop review presented as part of the Future Housing Investment options set out in a separate report on this agenda.
- 3.1.2 The plan is based on an updated stock condition monitor provided by NBA, who have been commissioned since 2003 to provide robust stock information to the Council.
- 3.1.3 A key objective of a housing asset management strategy is to move away from annual decisions about resource allocation. Annual allocations inevitably lead to capital programme underspends, which have been a feature in Northampton for at least the past five years, and are not efficient as a basis of partnership delivery or in terms of value for money. Following consultation, it will be proposed to bring forward a five-year resource plan to underpin the strategy with a five-year investment and review programme.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 In addition to a major programme of capital spend; there is a need to review future expenditure on a range of problematic stock. Issues range from the high cost of repair for some properties, the unpopularity of certain property types such as bedsit rooms, layouts and block configurations which make some areas unattractive as places to live.
- 3.2.2 Equally important is the Council's ambitions for neighbourhoods and the potential to use housing investment in support of place shaping to promote and maintain vibrant communities. Three main areas present regeneration challenges and opportunities, namely the central area including St James and Castle wards, the Northwest area surrounding the potential new development at Dallington Grange and east Northampton, with the legacy of the former development corporation. All three areas have a significant density of council owned housing and investment plans will need to be worked up in partnership with the tenants, community, partners and other stakeholders. The Housing Asset Management Strategy proposes a programme of reviews commencing with the central area. The repairs service will not be affected whilst these plans are being prepared.
- 3.2.3 Apart from area regeneration initiatives, other housing stock which will need to be reviewed includes sheltered housing, of which there is too much of lower quality than appears to be needed, non-traditional forms of construction and others where, before spending on decent homes works, the medium to long term future of the homes or area will need to be confirmed. The strategy sets out a programme of such reviews and the funding requirements to undertake such reviews at section 10.3.

3.2.4 The key to any asset management strategy is resource availability compared with the investment need. A significant shortfall has already been identified in a separate report on this agenda. It is likely that some of the reviews will conclude therefore that the investment needs are beyond the Council's means and some ways of bringing in additional resources will need to be considered. These are explored in the Housing Investment Options paper also on this agenda.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 The range of choices and options are included in the draft strategy and will be developed through consultation.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

The housing asset management strategy, once adopted by the Council following consultation, will set the pattern of housing expenditure and reviews for the next five years.

4.2 Resources and Risk

A separate report on this agenda (Future Housing Investment Options) illustrates the funding shortfall over the next five years. A programme of reviews will itself require funding, but this is essential work to underpin the asset management strategy. Unless detailed reviews are undertaken, of stock condition, resident's views and the impact of regeneration initiatives, there is a substantial risk that investment could be wasted on property with limited appeal and an equally limited future.

4.3 Legal

None at this stage

4.4 Equality

Equality Impact assessments are being carried out as part of the phase 2 decent homes programme and will be included in any local area review.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

This is a consultation draft, which will be the subject of a detailed communications and consultation programme with residents..

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

This is covered in the draft strategy.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 NBA stock condition monitor
- 5.2 HQN report (included elsewhere on this agenda)

Brian Queen, Interim Housing Advisor, ext 7174



Consultation Draft (3.2)
NORIHAMPTON
BOROUGHCOUNCIL



Contents

1.0	Introduction	Page 4
2.0	Background	Page 4
3.0	Statutory requirements and documents	Page 5
4.0	Supporting Delivery of the Corporate Objectives	Page 5
5.0	Delivery of the Housing Directorate aims and Objectives	Page 6
6.0	Development of the Asset Management Strategy	Page 6
7.0	Tenant Engagement and Consultation	Page 8
8.0	Stock Profile and Stock Condition	Page 9
9.0	Financial Resources	Page 13
10.0	Programmes of investment	Page 13
10.1	Decent Homes	Page 13
10.2	Northampton Decency Standard (Aspiational)	Page 14
10.3	Estate Renewal Programme	Page 15
10.4	Cyclical Maintenance	Page 17
10.5	Maintaining Independent living	Page 18
10.6	Environmental Improvements	Page 18
10.7	Digital Aerials	Page 19
10.8	Garages	Page 19
10.9	Land and Open Spaces	Page 20
11.0	Maintaining the Stock	Page 20
Appendix A	Statutory Requirements and Strategic reference Documents	Page 22
Appendix B	Corporate Priorities	Page 23
Appendix C	Estate Appraisal	Page 25
Appendix D	Estate Appraisal Summary	Page 37
Appendix E	Property Review	Page 40
Appendix F	Five Year Capital Programme	Page 41
Appendix G	Decent Homes Plus – The Northampton Standard	Page 43
Appendix H	Garage Disposal Programme	Page 44

Appendix I	Maintenance and repair work packages suitable for SME's	Page 45
Appendix J	Sustainability Index	Page 47
Appendix K	Action Plan	Page 48

Housing Asset Management Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Northampton Borough Council have a robust Stock data-base which is updated in association with major works programmes and significant day-to-day repairs works to individual addresses, and annually through a process of sample surveys to 10% of the stock.
- 1.2. The Council's stock Condition database is fundamental to making informed decisions about the stock and its investment. The stock database is an essential planning tool in the effective allocation of the Council's resources and investment to achieve good quality homes where people want to live. Combined with the analysis of other areas of housing, it provides robust information on the key challenges for the stock and enables the Council to make effective use of the resource to deliver sustainable housing solutions.
- 1.3. This (Consultation draft) Housing Asset Management Strategy seeks
 - Provide a robust and financially self-sufficient framework for the future of the Council's housing stock, backed by good quality management information.
 - Identify the stock that is safe to invest in for long-term improvement and retention: and
 - Define "at risk stock" i.e. that stock which does not present sustainable housing solutions or requires disproportionate investment.
- 1.4 Provide identification of the stock in which it is safe to invest for longterm improvement and retention; and define at risk stock i.e. that stock which does not present sustainable housing solutions or requires disproportionate investment.
- 1.5. The Housing Asset Management strategy is a live document and needs to be amended on a regular basis to reflect changes in legislation and funding. Subsequently this Asset Management Strategy will be reviewed one year from implementation and annually thereafter.

2. Background

Northampton Borough Council is one of seven Borough and District Council's located in Northamptonshire, located in the southern East Midlands area. There are approximately 90,850¹ dwellings located in the Borough with 12,270 properties in the Council's ownership and management, with a further

2.1.

¹ The Valuation Authority 29 march 2009.

- 700 leasehold flats. The Council provides approximately 14% of the total housing stock located within the borough.
- 2.2. The Council's significance as a housing provider has declined over the years, as other Registered Social Landlords have increased their housing stock within the borough, owner occupation has increased as new properties have been developed, and the Council's own stock has decreased through Right-to-Buy and minor stock transfer programmes. Despite this, the Borough Council remains the largest housing provider in the borough, and has a responsibility to provide well maintained housing meeting the needs of the community that it serves.
- 2.3. The Borough is part of the "Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area", and there are expected to be 40,400² new homes constructed between 2001 and 2026 the majority of which are to be constructed within the Borough. These homes will be constructed to the latest housing standards. This will increase tenant and leaseholder demands for the Council to provide, well-maintained and modern housing stock capable of matching or getting close to the standard of newly built homes.
- 2.4. The Council has 2,171 dwellings classified as sheltered and a review of this accommodation is due to be completed during 2009 to establish whether this type of property meets the current and future needs of mature and elderly people in the twenty first century.
- 2.5. The Council has commissioned an annual rolling programme of sample Stock Condition Surveys to ensure that the information contained on the Asset Management Database is as accurate as possible. This is supplemented by information received through Capital work programmes and major repair works. From this information it is calculated that approximately 37% of the Borough Council was classified as non-decent (not meeting the Decent Homes Standard) at 1 April 2008 (to be updated). Andyyou now have the NBA monitor and should update this) The stock condition survey identifies that this figure increases to 62% by 2010, as the number of dwellings falling into non-decency each year has been greater than the financial resources available annually to the Council to invest and achieve the Decent Homes Standard.
- 2.6. This strategy seeks to detail the actions required to deliver Decent Homes for the Borough's housing stock and provides options for further investigation where this is identified as necessary.

3. Statutory Requirements And Strategic Documents

3.1. There are a large number of statutory requirements and strategic documents that have been considered in the development of this Asset management strategy. The main documents are listed at Appendix A.

4. Supporting the Delivery of Corporate Priorities

² East Midlands Regional Plan.

4.1. Housing strategies, policies and works programmes should support the delivery of the Authority's Corporate Priorities. It is important that both staffing and financial resources are effectively applied to deliver and support the key aims of the community. The tables at Appendix B identify which of the Corporate Priorities will be supported through this strategy and where the opportunities exist to influence each through this strategy.

5. Delivery of Housing Directorate Aims and Objectives

5.1. The emerging draft housing strategy has identified four key priorities to support the corporate priorities. The following tables identify which of these priorities will be supported through the asset management strategy.

Housing Strategy Priority

the future of Northampton

communities

well-designed Deliver high • quality homes, neighbourhoods and services

Improve customer access. • opportunity and choice.

Asset Management Strategy

- Manage supply and growth for Raise the quality of council housing to be closer to the quality of new homes.
- Create resilient and cohesive Improve the layout of the Council's estates and neighbourhoods to support this priority
 - Identify investment opportunity to maximise available resource.
 - Target investment in the existing housing stock to ensure that it meets current social demands and provides good quality housing.
 - Engage tenants, leaseholders, and residents in the improvement of their homes and neighbourhoods.

6. Development of the Asset Management Strategy

6.1. Factors affecting our approach to asset management can be categorised into external and internal influences.

6.2. **External Influences**

- Audit Commission inspection requirements
- Capital resources
- Decent Home Standard
- Building Regulation and Planning legislation.
- Economic trends and the impact of the current economic trends in regional property prices on the demand for social rented housing, number of applications on the housing register and the number of tenancy terminations
- Population, migration and needs
- **Deprivation levels**
- Housing affordability and access
- Right-to-Buy; Right-to-Buy legislation continues to reduce the number and type of properties available. It is acknowledged that a concentration of properties sold under the Right to Buy legislation may have a considerable impact on the remainder of an estate and any plans to remodel and area.

6.3. Internal Influences

- Demand
- Condition of Stock; elemental replacements and investment needs (to meet the Decent Homes Standard)
- Difficult to let property
- Customer feedback and aspirations
- Long term voids
- Aim to achieve a 60:40 split between Planned and Responsive maintenance
- Financial viability; the requirement to produce a robust and fundable Business
 Plan has a major impact on both the use of scarce capital resources and
 revenue consequences.

6.4. Review Programmes

- 6.5. The Council provides 14% of the Borough's Housing stock and it is essential that this housing stock is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the local community. To ensure that the Council's housing stock continues to provide housing that meets the needs of the local community, a number of stock reviews have been initiated.
- 6.6. The Review of Sheltered Housing is challenging the archetype, location, demand, and service provision of the Council's sheltered Housing Stock. The Council currently provides only one "extra Care" facility, which includes more intensive care facilities than sheltered housing and with resident staff.. There are 2,171 Sheltered Homes currently provided by the Borough Council, the timing of any investment in these homes has been phased to enable the suitability and long-term sustainability of each scheme to be determined and an Independent Living Strategy for older people to be completed before they receive any programme of work.
- 6.7. The Single Persons Accommodation Review is similarly challenging the archetype, location, demand, and service provision of the Council's Single Persons Accommodation. There are 328 homes currently provided by the Borough Council in schemes that are designated as Single Persons Accommodation. The timing of any investment in these homes has been phased to enable the long-term sustainability of each unit to be determined before they receive any programme of work. Single persons Accommodation includes mostly bed-sits, which are proving unpopular and difficult to let. The review of this type of accommodation will determine the most suitable option to resolve this problem stock.
- 6.8. A review of garage use has been completed and has identified a number of garages sites potentially suitable for disposal over the next three years. Each site identified for disposal will be reviewed for its development potential to ensure that the Council maximises the return on each site. Some of the sites are located in areas of the district that have been identified for large-scale regeneration programmes and redevelopment of these sites will be considered as part of these programmes.

6.9. The Council has 123 System Built homes in its ownership, including Airey, Gregory, Unity and BISF systems. These properties are generally expensive to repair ranging from £45,000 for a licensed repair to in excess of £70,000 for demolition and rebuild³. These properties will require individual review based on the Council's sustainability index before any long-term investment is made.

7. Tenant Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1. Northampton Borough Council is the largest landlord within the Borough and has clear Corporate and Directorate priorities to engage with its customers. Tenants will be actively engaged in informing the Borough Council in their priorities and shaping the services that they receive. The Council has engaged PEP consultants to assist in developing a new structure for formal tenant involvement in both operational management reviews at local level and the future strategic direction of the housing service at Borough level.
- 7.2. The Council will also utilise its "Tenants Sounding Board" to inform the overall investment strategies, prior to testing the results on the wider tenant population. The Council recognises the costs associated with conducting such consultation and will sample survey a representative group of the tenant community where and when appropriate. This approach is considered to provide accurate consultation results whilst providing "value for money". Other tools used for consultation will be:
 - Workshops to engage tenants and leaseholders in an interactive group to enable tenants to be advised of the background to the consultation and therefore make better informed decisions. The feedback from the workshop will then be used to develop the strategy.
 - Road shows to engage the wider tenant, leaseholder and resident population in consultation events affecting estate specific strategies.
 - Postal consultation to engage with the wider tenant and leaseholder population, to confirm the views identified at workshops and road shows, and to enable non-activist tenants opportunity to contribute to the overall strategy.
 - Telephone surveys to engage with the wider tenant and leaseholder population, to confirm the views identified at workshops and road shows, and to enable non-activist tenants opportunity to contribute to the overall strategy. This type of consultation is seen as a more interactive means of consultation than postal surveys and would be used where some explanation of complex issues are necessary, or where postal survey response is poor.
- 7.3. At operational level tenants are able to view the strategic work programme on the Councils web site, this information is also published in the Council's tenant's newsletter. Tenants affected directly by the works are written to in advance of the work programme to advise them of the work programme, how the Council will approach them in surveying the actual work required, and their opportunities to get involved directly in contract monitoring. Once the work has been tendered the Council's contractor will ensure that all tenants are aware of the work programme and when work is scheduled for

_

³ Based on industry knowledge of the repair systems for 2008

completion at their home and a residents steering group will monitor progress.

8. Stock Profile – Stock Condition

8.1.1. The majority of the Council's housing stock consists of purpose built houses and bungalows constructed from traditional brick cavity with pitched roofs covered with tiles or slates. The total breakdown of the Council's Housing stock is summarised in the following table.

Archetype	Pre 1945	1945	to	1965	to	Post 1975	Total
·		1964		1974			
Houses	1,805		957		871	1,693	
Bungalows				1	,607		
Low rise Flats	297			2	2,082		
Medium Rise					2,835		
Flats 3-6 storey					2,000		
Non traditional			123				
construction			123				
Total stock	2,102	1	,080,	7	7,395	1,693	

- 8.1.2. 17% of the housing stock was constructed pre 1919, with a further 9% being constructed early post war (1945 to 1964). The bulk of the Councils Housing stock was constructed during the late 1960's and early 1970's.
- 8.1.3. The Council's housing stock on the estates in the Northeast part of the Borough, has a large proportion of rationalised traditional construction consisting of masonry cross walls with masonry to external ground floor walls and timber frame infill to the upper floors. The Council also has a number of No-fines properties located in these areas.
- 8.1.4. 42% of the housing dwellings are located in blocks of low to medium-rise flats consisting of two to five storeys. There are 690 low-rise blocks with a range of two to 60 dwellings per block. These are accessed by a combination of deck access and internal communal staircases. The Council's housing stock has lifts serving 12 blocks of flats. These lifts have been the subject of a refurbishment programme, and £620,000 of investment need has been identified over the next 2 years.
- 8.1.5. Structurally the stock condition information indicates that the housing stock is of good design and sound construction, although some of the housing stock is no longer sustainable and is proving difficult to let. Generally, bed-sits are increasingly unpopular and it is likely that this type of accommodation will not be sustainable in the longer term
- 8.1.6. The majority of the housing stock benefits from individual central heating systems. Of these system 39% of the stock has some form of gas warm air system or electric storage heating which is unpopular with tenants because of the cost to run such systems and the inability of these systems to satisfy the full heating demand. There are also a small number of communal heating systems serving 570 properties.

- 8.1.7. The average energy efficiency of the housing stock currently provides a SAP⁴ rating of 69, with the ratings reaching above 70 for the best performing stock, whilst 4% of the stock fails to achieve an acceptable SAP target of 45. This high proportion of inefficient stock has implications for both the environment and increases the opportunity for tenants to suffer fuel poverty. The Council will develop a fuel poverty strategy and seek to identify alternative funding streams to support this strategy wherever possible.
- 8.1.8. In addition to meeting the challenge of achieving the Decent Home Standard, considerable challenges are faced in remodelling the Council's estates to ensure that the estates are sustainable, and designed to reduce opportunity for anti-social behaviour.

8.2. Quality of the Stock Condition data

- 8.2.1. During 2003 Northampton Borough Council Commissioned NBA to provide a stock condition survey to 13% of the total housing stock. The stock survey was based on a random sample of Archetypes and areas to provide a 98% confidence level. Stock data on the un-surveyed properties was cloned by sample stratification.
- 8.2.2. Subsequent surveys have been completed to further properties where data has been cloned: 20% in 2005, 20% in 2006, and 20% in 2007. Subsequently 80% of the entire stock has been surveyed between 2003 and 2009. The cloned data to these properties has been replaced by actual survey data for each of the surveyed properties.
- 8.2.3. The annual major works programmes, void replacements and major repairs are entered onto the stock condition database annually to further update the base line stock condition data. Therefore, the confidence level of the stock condition survey remains high at over 95%.
- 8.2.4. Following the high level of survey work conducted on the Council's Housing stock provides a robust stock database for the Council to plan and deliver improvement, investment and regeneration programmes to the Council's stock. Although the stock survey will not meet the requirements of a stock transfer survey, it provides a good indication of the levels of investment required over the next 30 years. To ensure that the Council has the appropriate survey for any stock option appraisal process it is vitally important that a new survey is completed specifically for this purpose. A revenue budget of approximately £120,000 to £150,000 should be made available for this survey during 2009/10.
- 8.2.5. Consideration must be given to maintaining the confidence levels of this stock data and the Council will continue to update this base data with actual data following major works programmes, void replacements and major repairs. To supplement this data an annual validation survey is proposed on 10% of the Housing stock, this survey in addition to the major works and void surveys will provide an annual update in excess of 20% of the entire housing stock.
- 8.2.6. From the stock condition database, the following levels of Decent Home investment have been identified. The requird financial resources are based on the Council meeting the Decent Home Standard at each property, and

_

⁴ Based on the 2001 SAP assessment model

undertaking essential disrepair work as part of the Councils statutory obligation. The resource table does not include any aspirational work that may be identified as part of the "Northampton Standard" (Decent Homes Plus). The table also excludes garages and commercial/retail property owned by the Council and managed by the corporate asset management team.

	Elemental C Reach Dece March 2009		Elements becoming non-decent 1 April 200 to 31 March 2014	
	Number Of Identified Elements	Identified Cost	Number Of Identified Elements	Identified Cost
Bathroom	679	£523,305	1,330	£1,845,033
Rewire	4,027	£6,831,276	3,074	£5,205,635
Heating	1,557	£3,961602	1,021	£3,452,647
Kitchen	1,425	£3,554,107	712	£2,094,768
Structure	967	£777,945	407	£276,355
Roofs	928	£1,718,755	1,087	£2,727,519
Doors	526	£214,986	515	£167,956
Windows	800	£902,019	42	£77,934
Internal Other	46	£24,835	0	£0
External/Communal	52	£24,952	0	£0
Rainwater Goods	0	£0	0	£0
Non Traditional Properties	123	£6,765,000	0	£0
Environmental works (5% of the elemental works programme)		£1,264,939		£792,392
Contractor's preliminary costs.		£2,125,098		£1,331,219
Contractor's profit and overheads.		£2,295,106		£1,437,716
Capital Management Fee		£2,788,554		£1,746,825
Contingency 3%		£1,013,174		£634,680
Grand Total		£34,785,659		£21,790,679

8.2.7. From the Stock condition database the following profile of properties reaching Non -decency has been identified. It must be noted that the table below reports Decent Home Standard failures only and does not include any aspiational work that may be identified through the Northampton Standard (Decent Homes Plus), and does not include elements of disrepair.

	Total Nr of	Properties	Non-dece	nt or becom	ning Non-de	cent	
Location	Properties					2013/14	2015/16
Location	March '09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	to	to
	IVIAICII 09					2114/15	2019/20

	Total Nr of	Properties	Non-dece	nt or becom	ning Non-de	cent	
Lacation						2013/14	2015/16
Location	Properties March '09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	to 2114/15	to 2019/20
Abington	551	303	65	44	29	9	82
Bellinge	288	270	0.5		2	4	3
Blackthorne	495	429			1	47	15
Briar Hill	492	87	13	4	I	7	355
Camp Hill	213	22	1	7		1	182
Collingtree	213	13	1	,			102
Cottarville	16	14	I				2
Dallington	238	125	30	23		16	41
	260	207	12	3	5		9
Delapre				3		1	
Duston	350	110	10		6	11	91
Eastfield	409	162	58	27	1	33	85
Ecton Brook	415	274	4	2	4		130
Far cotton	257	92	7	1	32	8	75
Goldings	284	226	38	7		1	7
Great Billing	2	2					
Great Houghton	13	9			1	1	2
Hardingstone	133	43			58	12	20
Headlands	76	23	10	2	2		29
Kingsheath	886	304	91	69	31	52	261
Kingsley	335	170	94	12	13	8	29
Kingsthorpe	1,283	781	49	10	34	49	314
Kingsthorpe Hollow	233	110		24	32	13	32
Lakeview	189	64	1	3		10	79
Lings	303	280	2	<u> </u>	3	10	13
Lumbertubs	244	152	7	5	2	13	17
Overstone						10	17
Lodge	117	105	3	6			
Rectory Farm	184	59	2	5		_	112
Ryehill	223	191	19			3	7
Semilong	392	174	6		41	37	96
Southfields	250	121	1	35		6	68
Spencer	441	134	41	8	10	11	176
Little Billings	33	17	5	69	2	2	6
Spring Boroughs	647	451	4		28	25	57
St James	509	194	3	25	26	63	192
Standens Barn	181	125	1	30		22	7
Thorplands	457	256	3			12	132
Town Centre	489	277	48	3		7	153
Weston Favell	201	124	10	1	14	37	14
Woodfield	83	0	1				82
Wooton	49	17	15	1	7	1	8
Other	35	32		1	1	1	
Total	12,277	6,549	655	430	385	523	2,983

8.2.8. In addition to the Decent Home investment required the Council has quantified programmes of work that must be completed to prevent any significant deterioration in the housing stock. These programmes of work include; kitchen and bathroom replacement, heating renewal, prior to paint repairs, cyclical painting programmes, and estate works including footpath maintenance, fencing, and garage maintenance.

	Elemental Cost Of Landlord Obligation At 31 March 2009	Elements Of Future Landlord Obligation 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2014
Internal attribute renewal	£15,241,695	€27,455,463
External attribute renewal	£5,073,933	£12,211,894
Common area renewal	£165,007	£1,415,221
Environmental works renewal	£579,718	€2,994,207
Public realm renewal	£30,425	£58,392
Contractor's preliminary costs.	£1,687,262	£3,530,184
Contractor's profit and overheads.	£3,416,706	£7,149,899
Grand Total	£26,194,746	£54,815,890

8.2.9. The summary of the two investment types is set out in the table below. The figures are for all property currently owned and managed by the Council at 31 march 2009 and include all review properties.

	At 31 March 2009	1 April 2009 to 31 March 2014	All costs
Elemental Cost To Reach Decency	£34,785,659	£21,790,679	£56,576,338
Elemental Cost Of Landlord Obligation	£26,194,746	£54,815,890	£81,010,636
Total cost for period	£60,982,445.00	£60,982,445.00	£137,586,974.00

9. Financial Resources

A resource plan will be developed for the delivery of the final strategy.

10. Programmes of Investment

10.1. Decent Homes

- 10.1.1. Home Health and Safety Rating System The borough has identified 707 properties failing the Decent Home Standard within this criterion. The majority of the failures under this criterion are related to cold risks.
- 10.1.2. Structure and Services The Borough has identified 4,822 properties failing this criterion at 1 April 2009, with a further 1,993 properties failing the standard up to 31 March 2014.

- 10.1.3. Modern Facilities The Borough has identified 98 properties failing this criterion at 1 April 2009, with a further 0 properties failing the standard up to 31 March 2014.
- 10.1.4. Fuel Efficiency The Borough has identified 1,320 properties failing this criterion at 1 April 2009, with a further 0 properties failing the standard up to 31 March 2014.
- 10.1.5. From the Stock Condition survey data, the Council would appear to be able to achieve Decent Homes in its housing stock by 2014. However, the remaining landlords duties and essential maintenance items identified under landlord's obligations would not be delivered. This inability to deliver all of the maintenance requirements within the financial resources available will lead to further deterioration in the housing stock and increase pressure on the responsive repairs service. There are also a number of other factors that are critical to successful delivery of the Decent Home programme:
 - Validation of the stock condition Survey data. This will be achieved through a process of internal verification from the Council's own survey team, and delivery of the Decent Home work programmes, which will inspect every home in the Borough.
 - Validation of the cost assumptions against the actual contract prices.
 - Adequate allowance for inflationary increases over the project period.
 - Continued financial resource to fund the Decent Homes programme and other essential cyclical programmes.
 - Appointment of suitably experienced contractors that are capable of delivering the programme on time and to budget. The Council will seek to appoint contractors with a suitable credit rating to ensure a suitable cash flow through the project and to reduce the risk of any contractor entering liquidation during the project.
- 10.1.6. In 2009 the Council approved a budget of £28 million and a four-year delivery programme for decent homes. Taking this plan into consideration and the available resources, there is approximately £27 million remaining of the £55 million five year resource, and £19 million may be attributed to essential programmes of work supporting renewal and maintaining essential landlords obligation.
- 10.1.7. The Council recognises the need to support Small and Medium Enterprises through such programmes of major investment. The impact on SME's from long-term investment programmes is that the number of projects that they may tender for is significantly reduced; subsequently some of the SME's could have significantly reduced work opportunity.
- 10.1.8. As a responsible employer, the Council will seek to ensure that a number of contracts are suitable packaged to encourage SME's to tender. A list of these programmes of work are presented at Appendix I

10.2. The Northampton Decency Standard

10.2.1. In 2005 Northampton Borough Council consulted tenants on their aspirations in developing a Decent Homes Plus standard or Northampton standard. The outcome of that consultation process was that tenants were keen to achieve a

- Decent Homes standard without failures, showers over baths and improvements to their local environment.
- 10.2.2. The delivery of such a standard is largely dependant upon the Council's available resources, and its ability to deliver decent homes in the short term, however, it is recognised that tenants aspirations are a key component of the Council's asset management strategy and the Council should explore, evaluate and consult on various options available to maintain and improve the housing stock to a standard set by tenants.
- 10.2.3. A tenant consultation workshop was completed again during 2009 to reevaluate their aspirations and ensure that they are delivered through the decent homes programme where possible. The outcomes of this workshop are provided at Appendix G and further consultation with the wider tenant audience is planned prior to final adoption of the Northampton Standard.
- 10.2.4. Costs for these associated works are provided in Appendix G and have not been considered as part of the stock condition financial resource requirements under section 7.
- 10.2.5. When considering the financial resources required to deliver this aspirational standard, it is clear that the Council does not have sufficient funding to accommodate the entire standard. Some of the issues identified will be incorporated into the delivery standard, although the items of major expenditure will need to be considered as part of the Council's stock option appraisal process.

10.3. Estate Renewal Review Programme

- 10.3.1. The Council wants to ensure that all the Homes meet the Decent Home Standard, and also wants to deliver high quality, well-designed, and suitable affordable homes in vibrant communities where people want to live.
- 10.3.2. There is a clear need to review the future of some of the Council's homes and estates because meeting the Decent Home Standard for some areas will not be enough to ensure that these goals are delivered. Some of the homes and estates have significant problems that need to be addressed in addition to meeting the Decent Home Standard.
- 10.3.3. This will include reviews of certain types of property that have been identified as being unpopular and no-longer sustainable. Examples of property that falls within this category of unpopular homes are: bed-sits, estates with poor layout and design supporting the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; property no longer suitable for its original purpose (i.e. Sheltered Housing and single persons accommodation); and, some houses and flats have been constructed from non-traditional and rationalised traditional forms of construction making them difficult or expensive to bring up to modern standards.
- 10.3.4. For these homes and estates, a different approach is necessary to ensure a sustainable housing stock that provides high quality housing, vibrant estates and sustainable communities. In short, quality homes where people want to

- live. This opportunity should also be used to address any wider issues with these homes and estates.
- 10.3.5. The Council has developed a schedule of homes and estates, which needs further consideration and review prior to any Decent Home investment programme work. This schedule is provided at appendix E.
- 10.3.6. These reviews will assist the Council in developing a more accurate understanding of the problems and also the regeneration opportunities for these homes and estates, and the residents that live there. These opportunities will also provide local residents with the opportunity to provide their views, become more involved in the process and help shape the future of their neighbourhood.

10.3.7. Reviewing the Homes and Estates.

- 10.3.8. As part of the Council's investment programme, 6,711 homes have been identified for review before the Council makes any investment decisions. The Council uses a Stock Appraisal Process to identify unsustainable stock before significant investment in properties. Those properties found to be unsustainable will be reviewed to identify the most effective mechanism to remodel, or renew them. A copy of the Sustainability Index is provided at Appendix J.
- 10.3.9. The year in which these reviews will take place has been included in the schedule at Appendix E. This is based on our current understanding of the physical and social issues with the homes on the estates. Some of the Council's estates are in neighbourhoods that form part of wider improvement strategies being developed within the Council and our housing reviews will link in with these wider reviews.
- 10.3.10. It is crucial that residents understand the review process and have opportunity to contribute to it. The Council will therefore develop a detailed consultation strategy, developed from an Equalities Impact Assessment, which is completed before any of the reviews take place.

10.3.11. Managing the review process

- 10.3.12. The reviews will take place over the next three years and will be managed by the newly formed Estate Renewal Team.
- 10.3.13. The team consists of a Team Leader, two project officers and a trainee project officer. The team will work closely with the Council's Housing Asset Management team and the Regeneration team within the Planning and Regeneration Directorate to make sure any proposals that are developed link in closely with other Council priorities and initiatives.
- 10.3.14. If, after an estate review has taken place, it is decided that the best solution is simply to carry out Decent Homes and limited estate improvement works, the homes will be moved into the Decent Homes programme, which is set out in appendix C and D. Residents will then be consulted about the Decent Homes works nearer the time that they are due to be carried out.

- 10.3.15. If a different solution is needed for homes and estates, then the Estate Renewal team will work closely with residents, local partners and other organisations to develop an options appraisal, which will identify ways to bring about significant and lasting improvements to homes and neighbourhoods. In some instances this may entail partnerships with other bodies, local housing companies or other forms of joint venture to bring in additional funding.
- 10.3.16. An environmental budget of approximately £300,000 annually will be maintained to deal with minor improvements

10.4. Cyclical Maintenance

10.4.1. Prior to Paint Repairs and Painting

The maintenance of existing painted attributes to the housing stock remains a key priority for the Council to avoid the deterioration of key building elements and maintain the aesthetic appearance of the housing stock.

The majority of the Councils housing stock have PVCu windows and doors. However, there remains a large number of garage doors, store doors, soffitts and fascias, external fencing, which will continue to require painting.

Additionally, there are a number of internal communal areas to community centres and communal entrances to flats requiring cyclical maintenance of the painted surfaces. Given that the main attributes requiring painting are to maintain aesthetic appearance rather than provide protection; the external elements shall be painted on a 5-year cycle, with internal painted surfaces benefiting from a 3-year inspection cycle.

The external painting programme shall include a survey of the individual elements, to access any remedial repairs required, prior to painting the elements. This cyclical programme shall be adjusted to reflect that major works programmes planned for the street, to ensure that no unnecessary work is undertaken prior to major refurbishment or replacement.

10.4.2. Play equipment

The Borough Council's housing service has responsibility for a number of sites containing play equipment. This play equipment is inspected monthly to ensure that it remains serviceable, and remedial action is completed within priority timescales dependent upon the safety implications of the repair. There are no plans to renew existing sites or develop new ones within the next five years.

10.5. Maintaining independent living

10.5.1. The Borough Council will support tenant's to remain in their own homes by adapting the property to meet their specific needs. This type of adaptation work will only be completed where tenants needs are supported by a suitable care plan, or medical grounds can be justified.

10.5.2. The Council has a procedure for dealing with Care Plans and minor adaptations and further work is underway to allow easy access to replacement heating types where this is supported through medical grounds.

10.6. Environmental Improvements (Footpath maintenance, fencing,)

- 10.6.1. Environmental improvements will be considered as part of the works necessary under the Estate Renewal Review Programme. Many of the areas identified within the Estate Renewal Review Programme, have poorly laid out footpaths, and fencing and in regenerating these areas, works to footpaths and defendable space will be addressed.
- 10.6.2. Fencing to the other parts of the district not covered under the Estate Renewal Review Programme will be addressed on a property specific basis, with particular attention being given to areas where vulnerable tenants may suffer increased Anti-social behaviour, or risk to health (e.g. homes with small children adjacent busy main roads, risk of falling from height, etc).
- 10.6.3. Footpaths, roads and parking spaces outside the Estate Renewal Review Programme, are inspected by the neighbourhood wardens and replaced/renewed as necessary.

10.7. Digital Aerials

- 10.7.1. The Borough Council has replaced and upgraded all of its MATV systems to include a digital satellite dish and free to view services. However, the early upgrade of these systems has not provided the benefits originally planned since many of these system are now experiencing technical difficulty in receiving satellite and freeview signals as the industry commences its upgrade programme ready for digital switchover.
- 10.7.2. It is emerging that the system upgrades completed several years ago are not compatible with the latest industry requirements and subsequently many of the Council's XXX ???systems will require additional upgrades, and none of the current systems are 'Sky plus' compatible.
- 10.7.3. To address this issue the Council will need to develop a Satellite aerial strategy to identify those systems that must be upgraded, those that will be addressed under the Estate Renewal Review Programme, and those that do not require to be communal systems.

10.8. Garages

- 10.8.1. The Council own 3007 garages across the Borough, located on 193 sites.
- 10.8.2. On average the Borough Council has 28% of its garage stock void, with certain parts of the borough being more popular than others.
- 10.8.3. Those garage sites that are popular are easily identified, and these sites may be retained for longer-term use where they do not form part of the Estate Renewal Review Programme.
- 10.8.4. Those sites that are under-utilised and no-longer sustainable are also easily identified and there are 298 garages identified across 10 sites that should be

- disposed of, either for development through an RSL, or Council lead development. These sites are provided at Appendix H, together with a timetable for potential disposal. A full report on the on the garage review concluded in May 2009.
- 10.8.5. The remaining sites demonstrate a steady turnover of demand, and a high level of maintenance expenditure. These sites will be reviewed on an individual basis on a two-year cycle to review the long-term viability of each site, with un-sustainable sites being reported to Cabinet for disposal and development. In each case the impact on local parking opportunities will be taken into account.

10.9. Land and Open Spaces

- 10.9.1. Land and open spaces will be considered as part of the works necessary under the Estate Renewal Review Programme. Many of the areas identified within the Estate Renewal Review Programme, have under-utilised open space or space that has no clear purpose. Subsequently the community has no identity with these spaces and they are neglected and frequently used for fly-tipping or become areas where anti-social behaviour grows. The Housing service is working with the Council's Environmental Protection Unit to address these issues.
- 10.9.2. Many of the under-utilised open spaces will be reviewed on an individual basis to identify a sustainable long term solution, this may include:
 - Sale or transfer to local residents or tenants of small plots of land.
 - Development of the site for further housing by RSL's or Council lead development.
 - Improved layout of the land for improved environmental use by local residents.

11. Maintaining the Stock

11.1. Cyclical Maintenance

- 11.2. Cyclical maintenance is essential to maintaining the current standards within the housing stock in addition to providing regular inspection of each property to identify any significant major problem with individual dwellings
- 11.3. Cyclical maintenance will fall into a number of cyclical programmes requiring a visit to each property on different cycles. The following programme of Cyclical Maintenance has been adopted.
- 11.4. Communal areas to flats, sheltered accommodation common rooms, etc. may require painting at different intervals. These common areas that are subject to reduced traffic or wear and tear will not require decorating at the same frequency as other parts subject to heavier traffic. Therefore whilst the painting and decorating programme may identify the decoration to internal stairs and common rooms, these will be inspected and assessed before any work in undertaken. Where work is not required the area it shall be replanned for a future inspection at a suitable timescale.

- 11.5. Gas servicing is carried out annually, and is completed in tandem with the Smoke detector servicing programme. The combination of these two programmes reduces tenant disturbance, improves access rates for smoke detector servicing, and increases value for money opportunity.
- 11.6. During 2008/9 the Council achieved 100% gas servicing within the year. To ensure that this excellent record is maintained further work is planned to ensure that the service continues to operate within best practice and deliver value for money to tenants and leaseholders.

11.7. A table of cyclical maintenance frequencies is provided below.

Work programme	Frequency/cycle
Gas Servicing	Annually
Smoke detector servicing	Annually
Fire detection equipment	Monthly
Periodic Electrical inspection	10 year programme
External painting	5 year Programme
Internal communal decoration	5 year programme
Legionella testing	Annually
Asbestos Inspection	Annually where identified.
Lightening Conductors	Annually
Radon gas monitoring	Monthly
Sprinklers and Dry Risers	6 Monthly

11.8. The Council's Asbestos register has been fully completed and populated with Type-1 survey details. A Type-2 survey is being undertaken in advance of all works programmes, these will be funded as part of the capital programme because they relate to specific properties. The Asbestos survey is to be supplemented with cloned data from a Type-2 survey and a sum of £80,000 will need to be available within the 2009/10 revenue budget.

11.9. Responsive Repairs

- 11.10. Northampton Borough Council recognises the close relationship that exist between responsive repairs and well-planned maintenance programmes.
- 11.11. The work programmes identified to deliver Decent Homes and address disrepair have been developed to reduce the burden on responsive repairs, although it is understood that with such improvements to tenants homes there is a subsequent increase in tenant expectation.
- 11.12. To ensure that the Council improves its service to tenants and improves value for money, the responsive repairs team will increase the use of batched repairs wherever possible. Additionally, the responsive repairs data will be used to identify patterns of attribute failure to enable the planned maintenance programmes to be developed to address areas of concern, premature failure, and abuse.

Appendix A

Statutory Requirements and Strategic reference Documents

- A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation DCLG June 2006 update.
- Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities DCLG 2007
- Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable DCLG July 2007
- Housing Repairs And Maintenance Audit Commission 2002
- Buy and make a difference How to address Social Issues in Public Procurement – Office of Government Commerce – 2008
- Transforming places changing lives: Taking forward the regeneration framework –CLG – May 2009
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 CLG
- Releasing resources to the front line, Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency - Sir Peter Gershon - 2004
- Best Practice
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- 'Legionnaires' disease; The control of the legionella bacteria in water systems – Health & Safety Executive's – 2001
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Single person accommodation review NBC 2009
- Places of Change NBC 2009
- Garage review NBC May 2009
- Sheltered Accommodation review NBC 2009
- The Housing Strategy 2006-2011 NBC
- The Housing Strategy 2009-2014 NBC

Appendix B

Supporting the Corporate Priorities

CP01 - Safer, Greener and Cleaner Communities

Corporate Priority	Corporate Outcome	Opportunity
CP01.1	Reduced crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	 Value for Money material specification. Environmental Management and Improvement. Delivering sustainable housing.
CP01.3	Reduced carbon footprint	Value for Money material specification.Effective programmed cyclical maintenance
CP01.8	Good quality open spaces and parks	Environmental Management.

CP02 - Housing, Health, and Wellbeing

Corporate Priority	Corporate Outcome	Ор	portunity
CP02.1	Achieving the Decent Homes Standard	•	Production of the Asset Management Strategy
CP02.4	Meeting Housing needs	•	Delivering sustainable housing.
CP02.9	Vibrant neighbourhoods and engaged communities	•	Environmental Management and Improvement. Delivering sustainable housing. Tenant engagement and consultation in programme development.

CP03 - A confident, Ambitious and Successful Northampton

Corporate Priority	Corporate Outcome	Opportunity
CP03.3	Regeneration of key sites	 Environmental Management and Improvement. Delivering sustainable housing.

CP04 – Partnerships and Community Engagement

Corporate Priority	Corporate Outcome	Op	portunity
CP04.1	Improved education and skills attainment	•	Using and developing local labour in the delivery of work programmes.

CP05 - A Well Managed Organisation That Puts Customers At The Heart Of What We Do

Corporate Priority	Corporate Outcome	Opportunity
CP05.1	Excellent customer services	 Value for Money material specification. Delivering sustainable housing. Focus on customer care Effective programmed cyclical maintenance
CP05.2	Improved financial management	Value for Money material specification.Effective project managementCompetitively tendered major projects.
CP05.3	Service with a local focus	Focus on customer care.Delivering sustainable housingTenant engagement and consultation
CP05.5	Equitable services	 Value for Money material specification. Delivering sustainable housing. Focus on customer care Tenant engagement and consultation Diversity and Equality assessment.
CP05.6	Improved customer insight	Delivering sustainable housing.Focus on customer careTenant engagement and consultation
CP05.8	Value for Money services	 Value for Money material specification. Effective project management Competitively tendered major projects. Tenant engagement and consultation
CP05.10	Efficient and effective management	Value for Money material specification.Effective project management

Appendix C

Estate Appraisal

The following stock appraisal has been developed from the Council's stock condition database, which contains some cloned information. The condition of individual homes will be substantiated by pre-contract visits.

Abington - Abington Ward

This estate is located to the Eastern centre of the district and has 551 Council owned dwellings, plus a further five purchased dwellings and seven "Non-HRA miscellaneous" managed dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 80 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and a further 37 dwellings, which will be subject to the "Review of Single Persons Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 303 properties identified as failing the Decent homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 147 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2010/2011 to 2011/12. Resources for this work have been identified.

Bellinge – Billing Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 288 Council owned dwellings.

There is a high level of unfitness within this area with 271 of the 288 properties failing Decent Homes at 31 March 2009. Due to the high proportion of non-decency within this area and significant estate renewal works required; the Council are pursuing a Private Finance Initiative Bid to improve properties located in this area.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 81 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", which have been included as part of the PFI bid process.

Blackthorne – Lumbertubs Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district this area has 495 Council owned dwellings.

There is a high level of unfitness within this area with 429 of the 495 properties failing Decent Homes at 31 March 2009. Due to the high proportion of non-decency within this area and significant estate renewal works required; the Council are pursuing a Private Finance Bid to improve properties located in this area.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 45 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", which have been included as part of the PFI bid process.

Briar Hill - St James Ward

This estate is located to the South-western centre of the district and has 492 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 116 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation."

At March 2009 there are a total of 87 properties identified as failing the Decent Home Standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 24 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2011/2012.

Camp Hill - West Hunsbury Ward

This estate is located to the Southwest side of the district and has 213 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 44 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and a further 66 dwellings, which will be subject to the "Review of Single Persons Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 24 properties identified as failing the Decent Home Standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 24dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years 2011/2012 to 2012/13.

Collingtree – Nene Valley Ward

This estate is located to the South of the district and has 21 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 11 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and 9 dwellings, which are of non-traditional (Airey) construction.

At March 2009 there are a total of 13 properties identified as failing the Decent Home Standard, with this figure increases by a further 1 during 2010/11.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/2014. The nine non-traditional properties shall be subject to a review of this type of accommodation to identify the most appropriate action.

Cottarville – Headlands Ward

This estate is located to the Mid Northeast of the district and has 16 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 14 properties identified as failing the Decent Home Standard, with no further failures identified over the next five years.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2010/2011.

Dallington - Spencer Ward

This estate is located to the Northwest of the city centre and has 238 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 107 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 125 properties identified as failing the Decent Home Standard, with this figure increases by a further 69 during the next five years.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2011/2012.

Delapre – Delapre Ward

This estate is located to the Southeast of the centre of the district and has 260 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 90 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation."

There is a high level of non decency in this area with a total of 207 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard at March 2009, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 21 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2010/2011. Resources for this work have been identified.

<u>Duston – Old Duston Ward</u>

This estate is located to the Eastern centre of the district and has 350 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 96 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and 12 dwellings, which are of non-traditional (BISF bungalow) construction.

At March 2009 there are a total of 110 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 30 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2010/2011. Resources for this work have been identified. The 12 non-traditional properties shall be subject to a review of this type of accommodation to identify the most appropriate action.

Eastfield - Eastfield Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district this area has 409 Council owned dwellings.

At 31 March 2009 the level of unfitness within this area is 162 of the 409 properties with a further 119 properties failing Decent Homes over the next five years. Due to the level of non-decency within this area and significant estate renewal works required; the Council are pursuing a Private Finance Bid to improve properties located in this area.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 33 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", 6 of which have been included as part of the PFI bid process, and 27 have been identified worthy of continued investment.

Ecton Brook – Ecton Brook Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 415 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 97 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 274 of the 415 properties, identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 10 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/2014.

Far cotton - Delapre ward

This estate is located to the South of the city centre of the district and has 257 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 32 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 90 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 48 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2009/2010. Resource for this work has been identified.

Goldings - Lumbertubs/Thorplands Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district and has 284 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 75 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 226 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 46 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13.

Great Billing – Billing Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 2 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 both properties are identified as failing the Decent Homes standard.

It is proposed that the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/2013.

Great Houghton - Nene Valley Ward

This estate is located to the Southeast of the district and has 13 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 9 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with a further dwellings becoming Non-decent during 2013 to 2015.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2010/2011. Resource for this work has been identified.

Hardingstone - Nene Valley Ward

This estate is located to the South of the district and has 133 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 64 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and 45 dwellings, which are of non-traditional (Unity and Gregory) construction.

At March 2009 there are a total of 45 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 68 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area be delivered during 2011/2012. The 45 non-traditional properties shall be subject to a review of this type of accommodation to identify the most appropriate action.

<u>Headlands – Headlands Ward</u>

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district and has 76 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 57 dwellings of non-traditional (Orlit) construction.

At March 2009 there are a total of 23 properties identified as failing the Decent Home standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 14 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2010/2011. Resource for this work has been identified. The 57 non-traditional properties shall be subject to a review of this type of accommodation to identify the most appropriate action.

Kingsheath - Spencer Ward

This estate is located to the Northern centre of the district and has 886 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 56 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and a further 66 dwellings, which will be subject to the "Review of Single Persons Accommodation".

A total of 444 dwellings have been identified for further review under the potential development of housing sites in this area.

At March 2009 there are a total of 304 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 243 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/2014, to accommodate the production of development strategies associated with this area.

Kingsley - Kingsley Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast centre of the district and has 335 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 170 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 127 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2009/2010. Resource for this work has been identified.

Kingsthorpe - Kingsthorpe/St David/Boughton Green Ward

This estate is located to the Northern centre of the district and has 1,283 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 275 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

A total of 548 dwellings have been identified for further review under the potential development of housing sites in this area. This total includes 225 dwellings identified in the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 781 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 142 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2009/10 to 2010/11.

Kingsthorpe Hollow - Kingsley Ward

This estate is located to the Northern centre of the district and has 233 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 60 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

All 233 dwellings have been identified for further review under the potential development of housing sites in this area. This total includes the 60 dwellings identified in the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 110 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 69 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13 to accommodate any findings from the development review.

Lakeview – Headlands/Eastfield Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district and has 189 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 73 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 64 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 14 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2010/11 to 2011/12.

Lings – Lumbertubs Ward

This estate is located to the Northeast of the district and has 303 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 280 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 5 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13.

<u>Little Billing – Billing Ward</u>

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 33 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 17 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 10 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13.

Lumbertubs – Lumbertubs Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 244 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 6 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and a further 66 dwellings, which will be subject to the "Review of Single Persons Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 64 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 14 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/14.

Overstone Lodge – Thorplands Ward

This estate is located to the far Northeast of the district and has 117 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 105 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 9 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13.

Rectory Farm – Ecton Brook Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 184 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 34 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 59 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 7 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2012/13.

Ryehill - Old Duston Ward

This estate is located to the West of the district and has 233 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 191 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 22 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2010/11. Resource for this work has been identified.

Semilong - Castle/Kingsley Ward

This estate is located to the North of the town centre and has 392 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 165 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

The location of this area is within the Central Area Action Plan, with the implications of such a scheme becoming known following the development scheme action plan, which is taking place during 2009/10.

At March 2009 there are a total of 174 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 84 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to the review, detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/14.

<u>Southfields – Thorplands Ward</u>

This estate is located to the far Northeast of the district and has 250 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 121 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 42` dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/14.

Spencer – Spencer Ward

This estate is located to the Northwest of the town centre and has 441 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 62 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 134 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 70 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2011/12.

Spring Boroughs - Castle Ward

This estate is located to the North of the district and has 647 Council owned dwellings.

The location of this area is within the Central Area Action Plan, with the implications of such a scheme becoming known following the development scheme action plan, which is taking place during 2009/10.

At March 2009 there are a total of 451 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 57 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to the review, detailed individual surveys, and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2011/12.

St James - St James/Castle Ward

This estate is located to the West of the town centre and has 509 Council owned dwellings.

The location of this area is within the Central Area Action Plan, with the implications of such a scheme becoming known following the development scheme action plan, which is taking place during 2009/10.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 140 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", and a further 93 dwellings, which will be subject to the "Review of Single Persons Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 194 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 114 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to the review, detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2012/13.

Standens Barn - Billing/Weston Ward

This estate is located to the East of the borough and has 181 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 125 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 53 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/14.

Thorplands – Thorplands Ward

This estate is located to the East of the district and has 457 Council owned dwellings.

There is a high level of unfitness within this area with 125 of the 457 properties failing Decent Homes at 31 March 2009. Due to the regeneration works required within this area and significant estate renewal works required; the Council are pursuing a Private Finance Initiative Bid to improve properties located in this area.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 81 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation", which have been included as part of the PFI bid process.

St Crispin - St Crispin Ward

This estate is located to the East of the town centre and has 489 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 151 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 277 properties identified as failing the Decent homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 58 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2011/12.

Weston Favell - Weston ward

This estate is located to the East of the Borough and has 201 Council owned dwellings.

Within the housing stock located in this area of the Borough, there are 86 dwellings that fall under the "Review of Sheltered Accommodation".

At March 2009 there are a total of 124 properties identified as failing the Decent homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 62 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2013/14.

Woodfield - Lumertubs Ward

This estate is located to the East of the Borough and has 83 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are no properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with only one failure identified over the next five years.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered during 2013/14.

Wooton – Nene Valley Ward

This estate is located to the South of the Borough and has 49 Council owned dwellings.

At March 2009 there are a total of 17 properties identified as failing the Decent Homes standard, with this figure steadily increasing over the next five years by a further 24 dwellings.

It is proposed that, subject to detailed individual surveys and available resources, the Decent Home Work to this area is delivered across two financial years during 2011/12.

Appendix D

Estate Appraisal Summary

Estate	All Prop's	All Central Prop's plan	Sheltered Accom' review	Single persons Accom' review	PRC review	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
ABINGTON	551		80 dwellings	37 dwellings			Abington / Eastfield Abington / Eastfield	Abington / Eastfield		
BELLINGE	288		81 dwellings					Subject to PFI bid		
BLACKTHORN	495		45 dwellings					Subject to PFI bid		
BRIAR HILL	492		116 Dwellings					St James		
CAMP HILL	213		44 dwellings	66 dwellings				West Hunsbury	West Hunsbury	
COLLINGTREE	21		11 dwellings		9 dwellings					Nene Valley
COTTARVILLE	16						Headlands			
DALLINGTON	238		107 dwellings					Spencer		
DELAPRE	260		90 dwellings				Delapare			
DUSTON	350		96 dwellings		12 dwellings		New Duston / Old Duston			
EASTFIELD	409		33 dwellings					Subject to PFI bid		
ECTON BROOK	415		97 dwellings							Ecton Brook
FAR COTTON	257		32 dwellings			Delapare				
GOLDINGS	284		75 dwellings						Lumbertubs / Thorplands	
GREAT BILLING	2								Great Billing	

Page 37 of 49 Northampton Borough Council – Housing Services – Asset Management Strategy 2009/10 – 2013/14 Consultation Draft (3.2) 19/06/09

Estate	All Prop's	Central area Action plan	Sheltered Accom' review	Single persons Accom'	PRC review	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
GREAT	13						Nene Valley			
HARDINGSTONE	133		64 dwellings		45 dwellings			Nene Valley		
HEADLANDS	92				57 dwellings		Headlands			
KINGSHEATH	894		56 dwellings	66 dwellings						Spencer
KINGSLEY	335					Kingsley/ Parklands				
KINGSTHORPE	1293		275 dwellings			St David's / Boughton Green / Kingsthorpe	St David's / Boughton Green / Kingsthorpe			
KINGSTHORPE HOLLOW	233		60 dwellings			Subjec	Subject to Development Review	eview	Kingsley	
LAKEVIEW	189		73 dwellings				Headlands / Eastfield	Headlands / Eastfield		
LINGS	303								Lumbertubs	
LITTLE BILLING	33								Billing	
LUMBERTUBS	244		6 dwellings	66 dwellings						Lumbertubs
OVERSTONE LODGE	117								Thorplands	
RECTORY FARM	184		34 dwellings						Ecton Brook	
RYEHILL	223						Old Duston			
SEMILONG	392	392 dwellings	165 dwellings							Castle / Kingsley
SOUTHFIELDS	250									Thorplands
SPENCER	144		62 dwellings					Spencer		
SPRING BOROUGHS	647	647 dwellings							Boughton Green	

Page 38 of 49 Northampton Borough Council – Housing Services – Asset Management Strategy 2009/10 – 2013/14 Consultation Draft (3.2) 19/06/09

All Prop's		Sheltered Accom'	Single persons Accom	PRC review	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
₫	plan	review	review						
טַ	509		93					St James / Castle	St James / Castle St James / Castle
dwe	Sila dwellings	dwellings	dwellings						
									Billing
							Subject to PFI bid		
		151					St Crispin		
		dwellings							
		86							
		dwellings							Weston
									Woodfield
							Nene Valley		

Appendix E

Properties to be reviewed before any Decent Home Investment is undertaken

Estate or property type	Number of homes	Proposed year of review
Single Persons Accommodation (review already underway)	2165	To be completed in 2009/10
All sheltered stock	328	2009/10
Spring Burroughs	577	2010/11
Misc stock – Collingtree (9) Duston (11) Hardingstone (45) Headlands (57)	122	2009/10
Kingsheath flats	432	2010/11
Kingsthorpe flats	323	2009/10
Northampton East estates (not including the 4 PFI estates)	2124	2010/11
Hollow	173	2011/12
Semilong	227	2011/12
St James	240	2011/12
Total	6711	

Appendix F

5 Year Capital Programme (Subject to resource confirmation)

Programme	2009 – 10	2010 – 11	2011 – 12	2012 – 13	2013 – 14
lbs Open Housing	84,872	0	0	0	0
Decent Home Programme	5,320,000	9,397,511	9,320,000	9,320,000	9,320,000
Decent Homes Voids Programme	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,000,000	800,000	000'009
Structural Repairs	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Planned Heating	300,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Drop Down Heating Programme	700,000	300,000	300,000	350,000	350,000
Drop Down Kitchen And Bathroom Programme	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Communal Heating Upgrade (Cooper Street Internal Comfort Works)	000'009	0	0	0	0
CHP At Cooper Street	250,000	0	0	0	0
Lifts	519,570	100,000	0	0	0
Door Entry	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Digital Aerial Upgrades	400,000	100,000	100,000	0	0
Care Plans And Major Disabled Adaptations	300,000	350,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Minor Disabled Adaptations	130,000	130,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
Adhoc Doors And Windows	80,000	20,000	30,000	20,000	50,000

Programme	2009 – 10	2010 – 11	2011 – 12	2012 – 13	2013 – 14
Asbestos	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	0
Garages	100,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	50,000
Fencing And Security	100,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Environmental Improvements (Tenancy Management)	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Estate Regeneration Programme	180,000	180,000	780,000	180,000	180,000
Total Programme	11,964,442	13,777,511	13,670,000	12,840,000	12,540,000

Appendix G

Decent Homes Plus – The Northampton Standard

		5			
Standard	dard	Cost	Standard	ırd	Cost
•	To eliminate/reduce risk of major harm to vulnerable residents (under criterion 1 – include all category 2 risks for elderly and young) Improve energy efficiency of the housing stock. Increase loft insulation and wall insulation where practical.	£9,000,000 (based on 6,000 flat units @ £1500 each)	•	Install remote water lockdown valves to mains water supplies where works are being undertaken.	£1,000,000 (based on 10,000 units @ £100 each
•	Replace worktops where kitchens are identified as a partial failure (under criterion 2 – replacement of worktops may be an option to update/facelift existing kitchens).	£1,000,000 (based on 2,000 units @ £500 each)	•	Electrical rewiring – rewire for modern appliance numbers to prevent overloading potential of existing circuits, and replace all old distribution boards with modern RCD boards	Included
•	Provide fencing for the vulnerable to improve security and safety.	Un-quantified	•	Improve access footpaths and around the perimeter of homes.	Un-quantified
•	Improve security of homes by replacing poorly designed/specified windows and doors.	Un-quantified	•	Provide parking spaces and improve parking space demarcation where parking already exists.	Un-quantified
•	Level access shower option to be provided fin sheltered accommodation.	£4,000,000 (Extra over cost)	•	Modernise kitchens and Bathrooms together (under criterion three failures, improve all individual failures for kitchen and bathrooms).	£1,000,000 (already included in DH figures)
•	Replace all warm air/ storage radiators where practicable	£7,000,000 (2,000 units @ £3,500. Mainly in PFI area)	•	Relocate utility meters where necessary to improve internal layouts.	Un-quantified @ approx £1,000 per meter.

Appendix H

Garage Disposal Programme

Address of site	Area	Number of Garages	Proposed timetable for disposal
Woodside Way	Kingsheath	45	2009/10
Pleydell Road	Delapre	31	2009/10
Limehurst Road	Duston	26	2009/10
Northwood Road	Abington	22	2009/10
Ambush Street	St James	14	2009/10
Bath Street	Spring Boroughs	43	2009/10
Glebeland Road	Dallington	26	2010/11
Swale Drive	Kings Heath	30	2010/11
Witham Way	Kings Heath	21	2010/11
West Oval	Kings Heath	40	2010/11
	Total	298	

Appendix I

Work programme	Type/nature of work	Approximate contract value	Delivery Year	Funding stream
Decent Home Infill / Small Villages	Kitchen, Bathroom,		2009/10	Capital
	Heating, Re-wiring,		2010/11	Capital
	Windows, Doors.		2011/12	Capital
Decent Home Voids	Kitchen, Bathroom,		2009/10	Capital
	Heating, Re-wiring,		2010/11	Capital
	Windows, Doors.		2011/12	Capital
Structural repairs	Building		2009/10	Capital
			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital
Planned heating	Heating		2009/10	Capital
			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital
Drop down heating programme	Heating		2009/10	Capital
			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital

Work programme	Type/nature of work	Approximate contract value	Delivery Year	Funding stream
Fencing and Security	Building		2009/10	Capital
			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital
Prior to Paint Repairs	Joinery		2009/10	Capital
			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital
Painting	Painting and decorating		2009/10	Revenue
			2010/11	Revenue
			2011/12	Revenue
Drop Down Kitchen and Bathroom	Kitchens and Bathrooms		2009/10	Capital
Programme			2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital
Disabled Adaptations (DFG's)	Building		2009/10	Capital
	Bathrooms		2010/11	Capital
			2011/12	Capital

Appendix J

Sustainability index

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Criterion					Score matrix	natrix				
Is there need/demand for the property type?	Yes	1			Some	3			DTL	2
Does the property offer dedicated specialist facilities?	Yes	_			N _o	က				
Is the property in an unsustainable area?	No	_			Yes	က				
Is the property in an identified development area?	No	_			Yes	က				
Are there suitable alternative properties in the location provided by other landlords, that is easily accessed and available?	o N	-	Yes	2			_			
Is the property in an area of depravation?	Low	1			Medium	3			High	2
Is the property in an area of anti-social behaviour?	Low	_			Medium	က			High	2
How much above the financial benchmark (£10,000) is the projected investment requirement to bring the property into lettable condition?	£1 – 3,000	1	£3,001 _ 6,000	2	£6,001 - 8,000	3	£8,001 _ 10,000	4	£10,001 Plus	5
Name of assessor	Signed	pə							Total	

Indicators

Properties with a score of 13 to 16 are suitable for retention subject to a management action plan. Properties with a score of 8 to 12 are suitable for retention without further referral.

Properties with a score of 17 plus should be the subject of a more specific option appraisal process and potential disposal.

Appendix K

Housi	Housing Asset Management Strategy - Action Pl	r - Action Plan			
Ref	<u>Action</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Stakeholders</u>	Target date
	Review Material Specification	Undertake material specification review to ensure that materials installed provide value for money, and are fit for purpose.	Housing Asset Manager	Tenants Res. Rep.	
10.2.2	Undertake wider consultation on the NBC DHS Standard	Consult with tenants on those parts of the aspirational standard that are non-negotiable and to feed these into the building cost models, to inform the future stock option appraisal.	Resident liaison officer	Tenants. Asset Management. Customer Iiaison.	July 2008
10.1.5	Analysis of the stock Condition data.	Finalise analyse the stock condition data. Including validation of data, cost assumptions, and area analysis		Asset management	July 2009
8.6	Develop fuel poverty strategy.	Undertake a review of the energy efficiency of the Housing stock to identify improvements in the energy efficiency of the structural fabric, and heating systems to reduce the incidence of fuel poverty.	Housing Asset Manager	Tenants and leaseholders	November 2009
11.6	Review gas servicing procedures	Undertake a review of gas servicing procedures to identify areas of efficiency and best practice that may be included with the current gas-servicing programme.	Technical Service Team leader	Asset management	December 2009
9.9	Review of sheltered housing property	Undertake a review of sheltered housing to ensure that the properties meet housing demand and are fit for purpose.		Asset Management. Supported Housing	

Ref	Action	Description	Owner	Stakeholders	Target date
10.8	Garage review	Undertake a review of garages and garage site to ensure maximum revenue generation from these sites and avoid unnecessary maintenance costs, on a two year cycle.	Estate Regeneration Team Leader	Asset management. Lettings.	June 2009
6.7	Single persons accommodation review	Examine the recommended actions following the completion of the "Single Persons Accommodation Review"			
10.7	Review of Communal Aerials for Digital Compliance	Undertake a review of the digital aerials to ensure digital compliance following the digital switch. Identify tenant aspirations and consider future proofing within the review.	Technical Service Team Leader	Asset Management. Leaseholder services officer.	November 2009
1.5	Review the Asset Management Strategy	Review the Asset Management Strategy to accommodate any changes in the stock profile, financial resource availability, regulatory changes.	Housing Asset Manager	The Council	August 2010

Agenda Item 10

Appendices

1



Item No.

10

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	FUTURE HOUSING INVESTMENT OPTIONS

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date: 15th July 2009

Key Decision: Yes

Listed on Forward Plan: Yes

Within Policy: No

Policy Document: No

Directorate: Housing

Accountable Cabinet Member: Cllr Sally Beardsworth

Ward(s)

1. Purpose

1.1 To outline the work to date from the Advisory Panel set up by Cabinet in November 2008, considering possible options for the Housing Stock, and agree the further work required and which options should be progressed.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the work to date, and decides which areas further work are required, and which options should be progressed. Progress reports will be presented to Cabinet during the year.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet delegates to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Advisory Panel the power to appoint legal, financial, communications and independent tenant advisors.
- 2.3 That Cabinet reconsiders the membership of the Advisory Panel when the results of the consultation of the new tenant participation structure are known.

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The report has been developed following the meetings of the Cabinet Advisory Panel, which was established by Cabinet on 30th October 2008.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The objective is to achieve good quality homes in neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- 3.2.2 The authority will not achieve decency by 2010 and has a significant investment gap to meet. This is key to the delivery of the Housing service and of achieving two stars.
- 3.2.3 The condition of the Council's Housing stock will have an impact on the Boroughs LAA progress and Northamptonshire CAA.

3.3 Choices (Options)

These are outlined in appx A – Housing Investment Options, A Discussion Paper. They are summarised as follows.

3.3.1 Full Retention

As the discussion paper makes clear, there is a capital funding gap of between £54 million and £73 million (depending on the scale and quality of works carried out) over the next five years. There will also be a need to make annual revenue savings to avoid the Housing revenue account going into deficit within 8 years. Although the low level Decent Homes standard might be achieved (subject to surveys, tenders and available resources), full retention cannot deliver the quality homes in good neighbourhoods where people want to live. Area regeneration is not achievable with full retention.

3.3.2 Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)

ALMO funding is not currently available

3.3.3 Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

This can fund area regeneration and transformational change, well above the Decent Homes standard. The PFI expression of Interest for four estates in Northampton East was submitted in October 2008 but the result is not yet known. Further rounds will not be available until 2012 at the earliest, if at all. If the expression of Interest is successful, this will be subject to a full report to a future Cabinet meeting. PFI does not close the immediate capital funding gap and would accelerate the need to make annual revenue savings.

3.3.4 Local Housing Companies/Selective or Partial transfer

Local housing Companies are a joint venture variation of selective or partial transfer, where housing is transferred to another landlord, in which the Council could have a stake, in return for transformational change. The impact on the Housing revenue account (HRA) would need to be assessed on a case by case basis and any significant transfers would accelerate the need to make savings on the annual revenue spend within the HRA.

3.3.5 Large Scale Voluntary transfer

Whilst this could achieve the Decent Homes Standard, it is not clear whether it could achieve area regeneration or transformational change. There are currently too many uncertainties about future funding and policy to recommend this as an option at this time.

3.3.6 A Mixed Economy

The (consultation draft) Housing Asset Management Strategy, elsewhere on this agenda, puts more detail into the investment options. It proposes that the Council continues to invest in a decent homes programme of investment in homes where there is no doubt that this is the correct approach. For about half the stock, it proposes a programme of reviews, to consider the investment required, the need for area regeneration, the effect of other regeneration programmes and the resources available. This will inevitably lead to questions about how the investment needs of an area might be met.

3.3.7 HRA Subsidy System

The government have recently announced a review of the HRA/Subsidy system, consultation for which is due to begin in the summer. This is also an option that the council would wish to explore.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

This is a fundamental policy for the delivery of decent Homes to all 12,250 homes owned by the Council.

4.2 Resources and Risk

These are to be confirmed depending on the decisions made as a result of this report and will be the subject of a further report top cabinet on the way forward.

4.3 Legal

The Legal implications are outlined in the discussion paper (appendix B).

4.4 Equality

There are none within the scope of this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

The Cabinet Advisory Panel has been consulted.

Full consultation and communication with tenants, residents, staff and partners will be undertaken as work progresses.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

The report relates directly to the Housing service Plan and to the following specific elements of the Corporate Plan

CORPORATE PRIORITY	PRIORITY OUTCOMES				
Safer, greener and	Reduced fear of crime				
cleaner communities	Reduced anti-social behaviour				
	Reduced Council 'carbon footprint'				
	Improved air quality				
	Cleaner neighbourhoods				
	Good quality open spaces and parks				
Housing, health and	Achieving the Decent Homes standard				
wellbeing	Increased affordable homes				
	Reduced homelessness				
	Meeting housing needs				
	Healthier living for young people				
	Improved health for local people				
	Vibrant neighbourhoods and engaged communities				
	Sustainable growth in jobs and housing				
	Regeneration of key sites				
	Enhanced reputation and regional influence Improved education and skills attainment Strong community leadership				
Partnerships and					
community engagement					
	Effective working with voluntary and community sectors				
	Increased customer consultation				
A well managed	Accessible services				
organisation that puts	Improved financial management				
customers at the heart of	Services with a local focus				
what we do	Achieve a positive Comprehensive Area Assessment rating				
	Equitable services				
	Improved customer insight				
	Effective governance arrangements				
	Value for money				
	An employer of choice				
	Efficient and effective management				

4.7 Other Implications N/a

5. Background Papers

5.1 Appx 1 – Housing Investment Options, A Discussion Paper

Lesley Wearing, Director of Housing, ext 7554

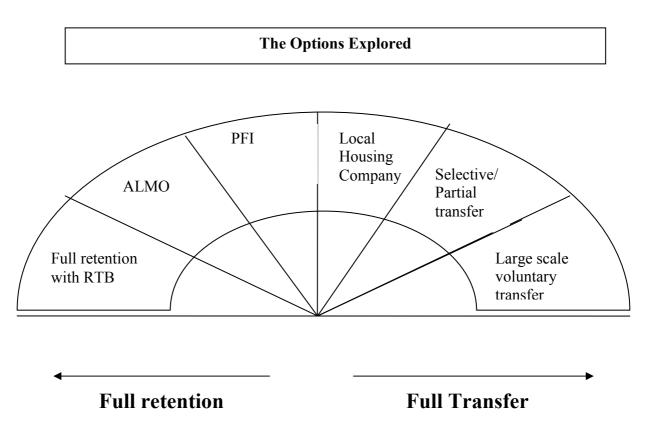
Housing Investment Options

A Discussion Paper

Brian Queen Interim Housing Advisor July 2009

Executive Summary

- The basic question to be addressed in any housing investment options appraisal is how to meet the need for quality homes, in good neighbourhoods where people want to live. In Northampton, much of the Council's retained housing falls well below that standard, for a variety of reasons. Whilst services can and will be improved, the fundamental question is the amount of funding needed to meet that higher standard and how that funding can be secured.
- The following chart can illustrate the range of options available.



- With the exception of full retention and direct management, all of the other options involve a reduction in control or ownership, in return for additional resources in the form of Government grants (e.g. Almo Decent Homes funding, PFI credits) or private funding (e.g. Local housing Companies, partial transfer or complete transfer).
- A financial review of investment needs and funding available, carried out for the Council by HQN, has identified a funding shortfall of between £54 million and £73 million (depending on the works carried out) over the five years starting April 2009/10.

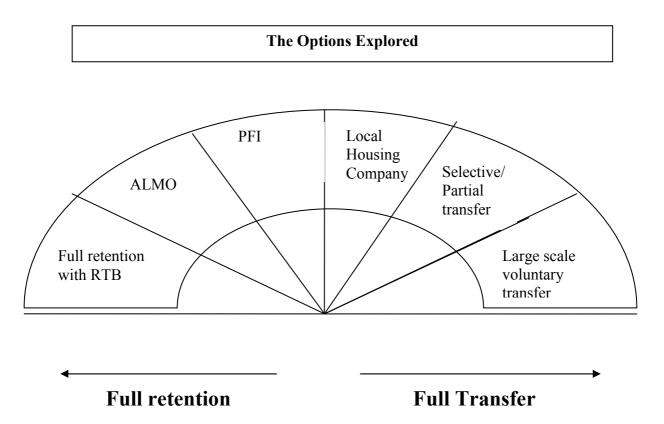
- Following a desktop review, the only option at this stage which appears to deliver sufficient funds to meet the investment needs of the stock and the needs of all tenants for a Decent Home to a locally agreed standard is complete transfer (otherwise known as Large Scale Voluntary Transfer). This option might also deliver a receipt to the Council, which could be used for regeneration purposes. It is not clear, however, whether the impact of the transfer on the Council and the Council taxpayer would be beneficial. If the Council were minded to develop the full transfer option it would need to review the potential corporate impact of such an option.
- Any prospective receipt from transfer would be subject to a full stock condition survey and other factors which could reduce the amount considerably. Prospective receipts should therefore be considered with caution. It should also be noted that that the transfer valuation is based on catch-up repairs and achieving Decent Homes only and does not necessarily achieve area regeneration, environmental improvement or transformational change.
- At this stage only a desktop review has been undertaken. Apart from the Corporate Impact Assessment, extensive consultation with tenants should take place before the Council could be recommended to pursue the transfer option. This would include development of a modern "Northampton Standard" which sets out the aspirations for the stock of tenants and the Council, which can be costed and included in the developing options appraisal.
- The PFI scheme for four estates and about 1440 homes would be the first major injection of Government supplementary funding for council housing in Northampton for many years. Much of the PFi investment proposed is considerably in excess of the Decent Homes standard and can help to achieve area regeneration. Whilst PFI does not close the investment gap in the early years, a combination of retention of a major part of the stock, coupled with continuing to seek external funding either through government grant or joint funding, could in the long run prove sufficient to meet the funding gap. It is, however, difficult to model the financial effects of a "mixed economy" without detailed proposals for partnership, disposals or bidding for additional external funds on a case by case basis.
- Given uncertainties around the HRA review and possible "Freedoms and Flexibilities", which could include a change to the current "negative subsidy", position or the chance to opt out of the HRA system altogether, there is a persuasive case for awaiting the outcome of that review, before deciding the strategic direction.
- Partly as a result of the recession in the building industry and following consultation about implementing parts of the housing and regeneration Act 2008, Councils are being invited to bid for funds for a limited amount of new build council housing. It was previously thought that such opportunities would be restricted to authorities rated as "good" (two stars) by the Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate, but this opportunity is now likely to be available to Northampton Council. It is unlikely to result in more than 20 new build properties in Northampton and won't make a material difference to meeting local housing needs or to the options appraisal, but schemes for infill development are currently being progressed for submission by 31 July 2009.

- Whilst uncertainties about the HRA review and other freedoms and flexibilities continue, in the meantime the Council could adopt a policy of "Invest and Review", confirming the decision to commit significant local resources to a Decent Homes programme, whilst carrying out local investment reviews and options to meet the investment needs of the stock. This includes about one third of the stock where for considerations of unpopularity, condition or wider area regeneration proposals simply proceeding with a Decent Homes programme would not represent a sound investment. This is the basis of the (consultation draft) Housing Asset Management Strategy, which will be presented to Cabinet in July 2009.
- It should be noted that this is a discussion paper. It has been developed with the Advisory Panel to Cabinet, which was set up by Cabinet on 30 October 2009 and has been able to consider these issues in depth.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council last reviewed its options at a full Council meeting on 27 June 2005 and the motion it carried is set out at appendix A. In summary the decision was to retain the stock and carry out further work to establish how a better standard of improvements than the basic Decent Homes Standard could be achieved. For a variety of reasons that work was not carried out and in the meantime the investment gap has widened, between what is needed to provide quality homes in good neighbourhoods where people want to live and what funding is currently available.. On 30 October 2008 the Cabinet decided to set up an "Advisory Panel to Cabinet" to review the options in the light of changes to law and options available and an update of the financial position. That decision is repeated in full at appendix A.
- 1.2 The Advisory Panel to Cabinet has met six times since that meeting and considered presentations on; a financial update on the advice given to Council in 2005; on changes to the law, in particular the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008; on how PFI works: and, on the options now available or potentially available to Councils. This report summarises the issues discussed.
- 1.3 The options appraisal reported to Council in 2005 was the culmination of 18 months of work, with Tribal Consultants being appointed as financial advisors in September 2003 following a procurement exercise. It was part of a national programme requiring all Councils to complete an options appraisal according to Government Guidelines.
- 1.4 Clearly the Advisory Panel to Cabinet could not replicate that exercise over a six-month period. What the panel could do, however, was to review; the evolving housing asset management strategy; the financial report on options; the impact of the PFI bid if successful; and, changes to the options available in legal terms and their relative attractiveness. The recommendations in this report follow their review of presentations and reports to them on the options appraisal by financial advisors Housing Quality Network (HQN), legal advisors Trowers and Hamlins and by council officers. Reports on the emerging Housing Asset Management Strategy and on the options review will be presented to Cabinet on 15th July 2009.

2. The options



2.1 Full retention

- 2.1.1 Retention entails the Council retaining the bulk of the existing housing stock and investing within its means or attracting additional resources to close the investment gap. Apart from the projected capital shortfall, the Council is projected to go into deficit on the HRA within 8 years unless major savings on revenue expenditure are implemented. This projection will be affected by the HRA review about to be announced by Government. Within this option, some disposals and transfers will be inevitable for housing stock with investment needs beyond the Council's means. Under this option the Council may be capable of reaching the Decent Homes target by 2015/16, but this would be to the lowest standard and would not include environmental works. As previously stated it remains questionable whether the best treatment of some council housing is demolition and replacement, rather than decent homes works, but this would be beyond the Council's means.
- 2.1.2 In the event of transfer of some stock, this will bring forward the need to make annual revenue savings within the HRA of between £1.4 million (300 disposals) or £2.9 million (500 disposals) (see appendix c, paragraph 3.11). Whilst some of those costs will reduce as stock no longer needs to be managed, there is a large fixed overhead which would need to be managed down.

2.2 Arms Length management Organisation (ALMO)

2.2.1 This is a variation of the retention option whereby the Council sponsors a new company set up to manage and maintain the housing stock under contract to the Council. Tenants remain tenants of the Council. The government initially encouraged these by offering funds to assist in meeting the Decent Homes target by 2010, but no additional funds are currently available. A key qualifying criteria for the extra funds was to have achieved a "good" (two star) rating from the Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate, which is Northampton's aim for 2010. This the option is not currently available, Northampton does not currently qualify and we will not know until after the next Comprehensive Spending Review is complete next year, whether further rounds of ALMO funding will be available

2.3 Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

2.3.1 This again is a variation on the retention option and tenants remain tenants of the Council. Management and maintenance is provided by a private consortium under contract to the Council. The Government has encouraged bids for PFI funding, which covers the capital costs of initial woks and their lifetime replacements over a thirty year period. As the Government's PFI credits are paid in cash to the Council, there is in effect no capital borrowing required, but the revenue consequences would need to be managed carefully. Critics have been concerned with the high cost of PFI, but these costs are borne mainly by Government. In essence, PFI credits work in just the same way as its predecessors like the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or Estate Action, in that the Government provides a fund against which Councils can bid to improve their housing stock.

2.4 Local housing Company

2.4.1 This option is moving into partial transfer territory. Whilst there are a range of models, the Barking and Dagenham example being quoted widely involves the Council decanting and vacating a large estate, transferring the cleared land to a joint venture owned by the Council and a private developer. Its principal attraction is that the Council retains equity in the joint venture company and therefore gets a return on the land invested. Tenants of the joint venture are not council tenants.

2.5 Selective or Partial transfer

2.5.1 This option can take many forms. It has been used by many councils to set up new arrangements for sheltered housing, for example, in order to fund the modernisation of older people's homes. Particular estates with major investment needs might also be considered and the arrangements made could be a key driver to the transformation of an area. What might be best for the particular estate or type of property can have implications for the rest of the stock. Any partial or selective transfer, including a local housing company, will reduce the critical mass of the retained stock and could accelerate the need for revenue savings by more expenditure cuts. Each such proposition would therefore need to be considered from both perspectives, but the overriding

consideration for all of the options is what is in the best interests of the tenants.

2.6 Large Scale Voluntary Transfer

- 2.6.1 Under this option Northampton Council ceases to be a housing landlord. The stock is transferred to an independent body which would be a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). Tenants would cease to be tenants of the Council and would become tenants of the RSL. Northampton would remain a Strategic housing Authority and retain its duties towards homeless people and people in housing needs, but it would not house them directly.
- 2.6.2 Since the first transfers took place in late 1987, a total of more than 1.6 million council homes have transferred ownership from Councils to Registered Social Landlords, to attract additional funding. 92 local housing authorities have ceased to be landlords through large scale voluntary transfer.

3. Issues

- 3.1 Appendix B is a report from Trowers and Hamlins on legal aspects of the options. A report from Housing Quality Network (HQN) on financial aspects is at Appendix C.
- 3.2 In summary the legal position regarding a full stock transfer has not changed significantly. A ballot of all tenants is required and the Council would need to show that a majority of tenants voting in that ballot supported it. Usually it involves setting up a "shadow" board to oversee the development of a full scale transfer option and it is their job to promote transfer if they consider it is in the best interests of tenants and residents. It is the Council's role to negotiate the potential terms of such a transfer and to conduct a ballot of tenants' opinion. The costs of working a transfer proposal up to the point where tenants clearly understand the options can exceed £250,000 and the process could take up to 18 months or more.
- 3.3 Any project involving a partial transfer, for example of a particular estate or type of property, would have a similar development period, depending on the variety of options pursued. A ballot is not required if the properties are transferred with vacant possession, although Northampton chose to ballot the residents of Beaumont and Claire Courts in Spring Boroughs before the transfer to Leicester Housing Association in 2003.
- 3.4 Financially, the valuation of a whole stock transfer of Northampton's council housing has changed significantly. In 2005, Tribal estimated the net value of a whole stock transfer at between £9.2m (base) and £nil (if all properties were improved to the "Northampton Standard"). HQN estimated the value at £15.8m. rising to £18.8m. if the PFI bid was successful. The HQN calculations used a proxy for the "Northampton Standard" since there has not been an opportunity to consult tenants on what that standard might look like in 2009. Such a consultation would clearly need to happen if the Council were minded to consult tenants on a whole stock transfer. The two calculations are shown below:

	TRIBAL				
TABLE 5.3 CAL	CULATION OF NET C	APITAL RECEIPT ¹			
	Base Indicative Valuation (£m)	Northampton Standard Indicative Valuation (£m)			
Total Receipt	24.4 7.2				
Setting up Costs	(2.2)				
ODPM Levy	(2.3)	Nil			
HRA Debt	(10.7)	(10.7)			
Net Receipt	9.2	Nil			

HQN Calculation (see paragraph 6.5 appendix C)

	Whole Stock	Stock less PFI
Total valuation	£13.4m	£17.1m
Outstanding debt as per CLG inc. premiums	£15.5m	£13.7m
Net receipt	-£2.1m	£3.4m
Set up costs	£3.5m	£3.5m
Net Receipt	-£5.6m	-£0.1m
CLG Levy at 20%	£0m	£0m
Difference between actual debt and as per CLG	£21.4m	£18.9m
Actual Receipt	£15.8m	£18.8m
Possible VAT Shelter	£25.0m	£22.0m

(NB-the difference between actual debt and CLG assumptions is the subject of paragraph 6.6 appendix C)

3.5 The HQN calculation has the additional feature of a "VAT shelter" not mentioned in the Tribal report, which provides an additional value of £25m if the PFI does not proceed, reducing to £22m if the PFI went ahead. The "VAT shelter" relates to the Council's ability to claim back VAT on improvements, which it would covenant to deliver as part of the stock transfer. The potential benefit to the Council could therefore be in excess of £40 million, whether the PFI project proceeded or not. All figures have to be treated with caution, as they are desktop analyses not based, for example, on an up to date full stock survey. The Tribal and the HQN figures are, however, comparable.

Housing Options Discussion Paper 0709

¹ Tribal report March 2005 table 5.3

3.6 Two elements are not included in the tables above. They are; a potential pensions deficit, which would have to made good in the event of transfer; and, any available balances or reserves at the time of transfer.

Staff Pensions

3.6 It is usual at the time of transfer for all existing staff transferring to move to an organisation, which is, or could become, an admitted body into the county pension scheme. This protects the rights of transferring staff, but a precondition to becoming an admitted body is the requirement to make good any deficit on the scheme in respect of those staff. In the case of a small "Large Scale Voluntary Transfer" of all of a council's housing stock that deficit amounted to over £3 million. For Northampton, this would have to be assessed, but on a pro rata basis could be as much as £10 million and could in effect wipe out any prospective net receipt.

Reserves and balances

- 3.7 Reserves and balances at the time of transfer, depending on decisions to use those funds in the intervening period, could add up to a substantial amount in excess of £10 million, if not committed in the meantime to improving the quality of tenants' homes and neighbourhoods. Some of that investment would work through to an improved transfer valuation.
- 3.8 Both of the pensions and the reserves and balances calculations would have to be properly assessed in a "corporate Impact assessment" which should be undertaken before any decision is made to pursue transfer.
- 3.10 The Council has previously been advised of a significant investment gap if the decision was to retain all of the stock and carry out necessary Decent Homes works, from £65m over the next five years to nearly £340m over the next 30 years (see Appendix C). PFI does not reduce the short-term deficit, but reduces the 10-year deficit by £29m and the 30-year gap by £58m. This is shown in the table below.

	Year 1 - 5	Yrs 1 - 10	Yrs 1 - 20	Yrs 1- 30
	2013.14	2018.19	2028.29	2038.39
Resources	51,337	94,619	200,226	337,487
Investment	119,218	216,585	421,416	759,649
PFI Set Up Costs	8,056	8,056	8,056	8,056
Surplus / (Deficit)	-75,937	-130,022	-229,246	-430,218

- 3.11 In summary, retention without some forms of additional external funding is not a viable long-term option. Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) officials have advised that further rounds of PFI are uncertain because of changes to accounting regulations. Other options within an overall retention strategy involve some form of transfer of ownership.
- 3.12 It appears at this stage that only Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) has the funding potential to deliver all of the required works which meet tenants'

and the council's aspirations for their homes and neighbourhoods, but there are new developments and uncertainties which need to be considered. It is also not clear that LSVT can deliver area regeneration or transformational change.

- 3.13 The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 held out two potentially attractive developments, which would be relevant to Northampton. Firstly, the potential to move out of the existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system. Under the present system the Council has no control over rent levels and makes a "negative subsidy" payment to the Government, which in net terms (after offsetting Major Repairs Allowances) will exceed £9m next year (2009/10) and is likely to rise each year. As the HQN report at Appendix C shows however, it is by no means certain at this stage that buying out will be beneficial to Northampton. It all depends on the cost of buying-out. This is not likely to be clear until mid 2010 at the earliest. The second element is the prospect of "Freedoms and Flexibilities" which might allow the Council to use its land assets in joint ventures to create additional affordable homes. Both the HRA buy-out and "Freedoms and Flexibilities" originally appeared to be restricted to well performing authorities with at least two stars, which Northampton Housing Services aims to achieve by 2010. It now seems possible that funding a small amount of new council house building is a possibility for any authority that can prove their scheme is value for money and officers are preparing a bid for Northampton to become involved in the first round. It should be noted that new Council housing provided in this way would be inside the HRA but outside of the HRA subsidy system. This means that the Council would not receive a management or maintenance allowance, or the Major Repairs Allowance, but it would be able to keep all of the rent income to fund such purposes.
- 3.14 The key questions which the Council will need to consider are
- How can the Council achieve quality homes in neighbourhoods where people want to live, for all of its tenants?
- Is the option of voluntary transfer of the whole stock worth further development?
- If the Expression of Interest in PFI for Northampton East is successful, is that worth further development?
- What is the impact of each option on the Council as a whole?
- What is the capacity of housing to deliver two stars by 2010, and the PFI project and whole stock transfer, all over the same time period?

3.15 The problems are that:

- Housing PFI is a long drawn out process, is quite time consuming and expensive to develop and has a number of approval hurdles to cross even if the initial "Expression of Interest" is successful:
- The implications of the 2008 Act won't be clear until later in 2009 at the earliest;
- The review of the Housing Review Account may not take effect for up to two years and may or may not be beneficial to Northampton,
- Two stars for the Housing service is by no means certain 2010.
- A successful ballot for transfer, whether partial or large scale, is a major challenge.

The sequencing of these issues is summarised in a timeline chart at appendix D

4. Choices (Options)

- 4.1 These matters have been debated at length within the Advisory Panel, which has had cross party representation. In considering the options, the questions must be by what criteria should they be judged? What may be in the best interests of tenants may not be in the best interests of the Council, its staff or other services, but the options appraisal must return to the first principle; which is how can quality homes in neighbourhoods where people want to live be provided. At this stage only a "desktop" analysis has been undertaken. All of the options would be subject to additional surveys to confirm stock condition information, consultation on the "Northampton Standard" and additional consultation before any preferred option could be put to the Council for adoption and development. This would take until early 2010.
- 4.2 The options set out below (and more fully described at Appendix B) are assessed against the following criteria:
 - The quality of services to tenants
 - Timing-how quickly will each option deliver benefits to tenants?
 - The ability to transform or regenerate areas
 - Financial implications
 - The corporate impact
 - The corporate capacity to deliver

Option	Description	Criteria
Full retention	Retain all of the housing stock using known resources and maintain a balanced Housing	Service quality Timing
	Revenue Account	Regeneration
	Work towards becoming a "good" (2 star) or	Finance
	"excellent" (3 star) housing organisation	Corporate impact
	able to exploit the freedoms and flexibilities from the Housing and Regeneration act 2008	Capacity
	 Review "problematic stock" to consider options for investment 	
Part retention (the "mixed" option)	1) Keep a strategic housing stock of between 6,000- 8,000 that the Council	Service quality
	can afford to manage	Timing

	Criteria	
and maintain but seek other solutions for the remainder	Regeneration Finance	
 Set up a number of surveys and reviews of stock that is expensive to maintain or needs to be renewed, beyond the funds available to the Council. 	Corporate impact Capacity	
3) Review the options for investment to include selective transfer, local housing companies, transfers to RSLs, and joint ventures with the Council retaining a degree of ownership		
Transfer all of the existing housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord, to either: - A fully independent new body, or As part of an group structure		
 Retain most of the stock Review problematic stock Wait until the HRA review is complete Clarity about "Freedoms and flexibilities" 	Service quality Timing Regeneration Finance Corporate impact	
	other solutions for the remainder 2) Set up a number of surveys and reviews of stock that is expensive to maintain or needs to be renewed, beyond the funds available to the Council. 3) Review the options for investment to include selective transfer, local housing companies, transfers to RSLs, and joint ventures with the Council retaining a degree of ownership 1) Transfer all of the existing housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord, to either: - a) A fully independent new body, or b) As part of an group structure 1) Retain most of the stock 2) Review problematic stock 3) Wait until the HRA review is complete 4) Clarity about "Freedoms	

4.3 The additional option is to delay any decision at this point. As appendix D shows, a decision on the PFI Expression of interest will be given by HCA in July 2009. It will, however, be late 2010 before the full implications of HRA

reform and the freedoms and flexibilities of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 become clear. A question that those opposed to transfer will pose is "Why transfer now with so many uncertainties about the future, which should be resolved within the period that transfer could be delivered. Why not wait?" This is a powerful argument. Many housing authorities, having carried out the baseline review, have resolved to re-visit their options appraisal every two years or when any significant changes of circumstances arise. There is the further consideration that the present economic climate makes funding for large transfers at least uncertain and potentially also likely to have onerous conditions attached.

4.4 A proposal therefore would be to extend the work of the advisory panel to consider these matters in more depth. The panel would carry out a Corporate Impact Assessment, to clarify the pensions and reserves points, to keep the matter under review as it becomes clearer whether the council is successful with its PFI bid, and to await the outcome and detail of the HRA review and development of freedoms and flexibilities. The panel would also oversee a new stock condition survey and a full consultation strategy with residents and other stakeholders. In the intervening period the housing directorate will concentrate on completing the re-structure, delivering the improvement plan and finalising the Housing Asset Management Strategy and revised housing strategy for the Borough. The membership of the panel could be extended to include advisors for legal, finance, communications, and an independent tenant advisor and review its membership and terms of reference when the results of the consultation on the new tenant participation structure are known.

Brian Queen Interim Housing Advisor July 2009

Appendices

А	Council decision 27 June 2005
В	Stock options-the Legal Perspective (Trowers and Hamlins)
С	Desktop Strategic Financial Options review (Housing Quality Network-HQN)
D	Timeline 2009-14

Council decision of 27 June 2005

"Northampton Borough Council re-affirms its commitment to the democratic process and a policy in which the final decision on the future of the landlord service of the Council's Housing Stock will reside with the council tenants and that the Council will continue to develop a housing asset management structure to deliver high quality improvements to the current council housing stock.

In pursuing the policy of seeking to meet the future needs of the people of Northampton and in reaching a decision on the future of the Housing Landlord service, Northampton Borough Council has taken the following into account.

- (i) All aspects of the Northampton Borough Council Housing Options Appraisal as required by Government policy
- (ii) Northampton Borough Council Stock Condition Survey 2003
- (iii) Northampton Borough Council's current position as a "recovering council"
- (iv) Northampton Borough Council's projected financial position 2006-2010
- (v) ODPM determination that there is no "fourth option" for Council Housing
- (vi) A meeting with the Town's MP's and Minister on 9 June 2005

That the Chief Executive inform the Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM) that having taken all of the factors into consideration the decision of the Council is for Stock Retention whilst further work is conducted, with full involvement of tenant representatives, into how improvements above that of the basic Decent Homes Standard can be achieved in future and into options that encourage and provide greater tenant involvement in the management of the Council's housing stock.

The amendment was then voted upon and carried to be become the substantive Motion."²

Cabinet decision of 30 October 2008

- (1) That it be agreed to carry out a review of the Housing Investment Options Appraisal originally completed in 2005 to be updated in the light of the investment options now likely to be available and revised stock and financial information.
- (2) That an advisory panel to Cabinet be established to review the Options Appraisal and its implications and to report back to Cabinet by the end of January 2009. The Panel to be cross party with a 4 to 1 composition and that the three Party Leaders/Group Whips to give the names of their representatives for the Panel to the Chief Executive by the end of the following week."³

² Minutes of the Full Council meeting 27 June 2005

³ Minutes of the Cabinet meeting 30 October 2008 item 6

Stock Options - the legal perspective

1 Background

- 1.1 Northampton Borough Council (the Council) is currently investigating housing investment options. The Housing Asset Management Strategy Cabinet Report refers back to the housing investment options appraisal that was carried out in 2004/5. This appraisal identified three available options:
 - (a) Stock transfer in full or in part;
 - (b) Private Finance Initiative (PFI); and
 - (c) Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).

The Council has not pursued (c) but has applied for PFI Round 6 and is looking at transfer options.

1.2 It is possible for the Council to mix and match these options, so long as regard is had to the key legal issues. Fundamentally, the Council is always a housing authority and this brings certain obligations. The Council's obligations in relation to homelessness and wider housing strategies remain. The Council has a statutory obligation to balance the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). So long as the housing stock remains in Council ownership, the Council will have a legal obligation to maintain it. If these, or other arrangements, are to be changed, then tenants have an extensive set of rights and must be consulted on these possible changes. In addition to these housing related obligations, the Council will also have obligations to its staff, and changes to the structure in which the housing stock is maintained will raise pension issues for staff.

This paper will explore options (a) and (b) above.

2 HRA PFI

- This option does not involve a transfer of ownership from the Council, and so tenants will remain Council tenants. The Council remains the landlord with direct legal responsibilities to the tenant, but lets a long term contract to a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for properties to be refurbished and then managed and maintained over what is usually a 30 year period. The SPV raises private finance to enable the refurbishment to be carried out, and possibly new build too, and the Council pays a fee to the SPV over 30 years. The fee is sufficient to meet the borrowing costs as well as ongoing management and maintenance. The PFI credits provided by CLG to successful bidders support the additional costs.
- As members can see from the diagram in the slides the above is a very simplistic description of housing PFI. In practice the long term management and maintenance is often carried out by a subcontractor, which might be an RSL, and the refurbishment by another contractor. The SPV itself may be owned by these contractors or by others. The banks who lend to the SPV are lending not on the security of property, but on the income from the fees the Council pays and therefore will want a direct relationship with the Council. The Council will want the ability to terminate contracts and bring in better

contractors if the service to its tenants is not satisfactory, and the banks need involvement in that process to ensure the ability to repay is not damaged.

- 2.3 In strictly legal terms the Council needs consent under s.27 Housing Act 1985 to delegate the housing management functions that are delegated in a PFI scheme. In order to secure proper services for its tenants it is vital that the service to be provided is adequately defined and that the scope for variations, and the potential cost of variations, is clearly understood.
- Over time, stock numbers will be reduced as tenants exercise their right to buy. Funding for the scheme is largely based on the rental flow and there have to be mechanisms to adjust the fee as stock numbers fall, since costs may not reduce in line with numbers.
- 2.5 Before entering into an HRA PFI contract, tenants must be consulted. The main consultation requirement is at s.27 Housing Act 1985 as amended by a statutory instrument (SI 2003/940) to enable a local authority to let a PFI contract and for the agreement to be subcontracted and for the subcontractor to change, if necessary. However, unlike transfer, there is no requirement to ballot tenants.
- The legal documentation is largely concerned with balancing the risk between the parties, with inevitably the public and private sectors each trying to minimise their risk. There is standard PFI documentation accepted by the Treasury but each PFI scheme usually involves significant amounts of negotiation.

3 Transfers

3.1 Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)

This option involves the Council transferring its whole (or virtually the whole) housing stock to another body. LSVTs have so far always involved freehold transfers and so once the stock is transferred it can never come back to the Council. However, leasehold transfer is now being talked of as a possibility (see below).

Under current rules, a council wanting to transfer more than 499 dwellings in 5 years needs a place on the disposals programme. However, this position will change under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. There is provision in this to remove the statutory need for a disposals programme and replace it with a more general statement about the ability to take account of the potential cost to the Exchequer (see Schedule 14). In the 2008 Act this provision will only apply if more than 499 dwellings are disposed of to the same organisation, or to connected organisations, rather than over a 5 year period.

There is a statutory requirement to consult and ballot secure and introductory tenants.

3.2 Estate transfers

This option is a partial transfer of the Council's housing stock. As with the LSVT option, tenants must be consulted and balloted pre-transfer. So long as there are less than 499 properties transferring, a disposals programme place is not required. However, as with the LSVT option, since it is a transfer of the Council's freehold title there is no going back once the properties have been transferred. Once again though, there is the possibility of a leasehold transfer.

There is sometimes confusion in relation to estate transfers. Estate renewal projects (where estates are decanted and empty buildings or land are transferred, often in phases, and new homes built by an RSL, with council tenants moving into new RSL stock built on the estate are not tenanted estate transfers. Tenants do not have to be balloted. It is only when homes are transferred with tenants in them that the transfer process applies.

3.3 Transfer to what?

Under current government policy transfer can only take place to a registered social landlord (**RSL**), which now is a landlord registered with the Tenant Services Authority (**TSA**).

3.3.1 Stand alone new RSL

Where there is an LSVT, it is still most common to transfer to a new stand alone RSL that has been set up for the transfer.

The new RSL would most likely be charitable. This offers more comfort to tenants since it is not a commercial vehicle and being charitable also has significant tax advantages. The RSL could either be an industrial and provident society or a company limited by guarantee. Either way, it will need to meet TSA registration criteria.

It is common to have a board of 12 or 15, with the Council, tenants and independents each making up a third of the board. Shareholders/company members would be made up in the same ratio, with each group holding a third of the votes at a general meeting.

A further option is a community gateway model, which involves more tenants and fewer council nominees on the board with only residents being allowed to be shareholders.

3.3.2 A partner RSL, with the new RSL as part of a group

This has become a little more common over recent years. The partner RSL is usually chosen through tenant consultation, and often after a competitive bidding process.

As compared with a new standalone RSL, it may offer additional resources from the RSL group, with the possibility of staff helping with tenant consultation and other pre transfer activities. Central costs post transfer such as HR, IT and finance can be shared, which may increase the price that the new RSL can pay to the Council for the stock if the central costs are reasonable. There may also be the possibility of sharing any abortive costs if the transfer does not go ahead. It may also mean the transfer has access to group loan finance.

Unless a new group is created for the transfer this option will mean that the RSL will have to fit into an existing group, although some new groups have been especially created in order to accommodate a new transfer RSL.

3.3.3 To an existing RSL

In the case of LSVTs, it is unusual to transfer to an existing RSL. It is more common to use this option in the case of estate transfers. As with the partner RSL route, it is usual for there to be extensive tenant consultation and competition for the choice of the RSL.

With no new RSL to be set up pre transfer costs should be less, and the whole process may well be quicker, both pre and post ballot. The existing RSL may offer some form of area or estate board to give local tenants and members a voice in the future of the estate, but this is normally less formal then setting up a new board for an RSL

3.4 The Transfer Process – pre-ballot

Tenants must be fully consulted. The process is exactly the same whether it is an LSVT or an estate transfer.

Informally, tenants can be consulted in any way that the Council and the tenants find useful. Often newsletters tenant meetings, and direct visits are used.

The statutory formal two stage process is set out in section 106A and Schedule 3A Housing Act 1985, as amended by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. There is also extensive CLG guidance that needs to be followed.

All secure and introductory tenants must receive an offer document setting out the full details of promises that are being made, the identity of the new landlord, and the effect the transfer will have on their tenancies. Tenants must then be given at least four weeks to consider this document and make comments to the Council. These comments must be considered, and in light of these, the Council considers whether changes should be made to the offer document. The second stage is to inform tenants of any changes that were made to the offer document as a result of their comments. A ballot must then be held. The 2008 Act made the requirement for a ballot statutory. Tenants have the right to make written objections to the Secretary of State.

Guidance states that leaseholders should also be consulted; however the statutory position is not the same, and the statutory right to be consulted does not cover them.

3.5 Tenants' rights

On transfer, secure tenancies by statute will become assured tenancies. The differences between these types of tenancies should be explained to tenants in the offer document. All tenants need to be offered a new tenancy agreement, and this new tenancy should maintain their key rights of succession and security of tenure and limited grounds of possession.

It is usual to promise that rents and service charges should be the same as under the Council's tenancy, with the same rent restructuring. Rent guarantees are sometimes offered for a set period.

By statute, tenants keep their right to buy, and the tenant's right to buy and discount are kept if they then transfer properties within the transfer landlord.

The tenants may also have a right to a role on the board and to be shareholders/members of the transfer RSL depending on the type of transfer RSL being set up.

3.6 Transfer process – post-ballot

It is always the Council's decision whether or not to transfer, even if there is a vote in favour of transfer.

If transfer is to go ahead, the RSL will need to be registered with the TSA. The exact properties that are to transfer will need to be agreed between the parties, and finance will need to be put in place.

It is usually only after the tenant ballot has been held that the transfer agreement is negotiated in detail between the parties.

The lenders will be closely involved in agreeing the terms of the transfer agreement, and will be looking to see that the transfer RSL has a robust business plan and that its income and costs are as secure as possible.

CLG will want to see that the RSL is independent from the Council.

The Council will want to be assured that promises to tenants will be delivered and that they have adequate rights in the transfer agreement to monitor delivery of promises and enforce the promises if they are not being delivered.

Before the properties are transferred Secretary of State consent must be obtained, and the Secretary of State must be satisfied that the majority of secure and introductory tenants (not leaseholders) are not opposed.

3.7 TUPE and pensions

Whether the PFI or transfer option is chosen, staff will have rights to transfer under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations, normally referred to as TUPE. TUPE preserves the employees' terms and conditions of employment, and all continuity of service is recognised.

Staff and trade unions have the right to be consulted and it is normal to agree a protocol for the staff transfer.

Staff roles will need to be assessed and those who are "assigned to the undertaking" will transfer, however it is normally determined by agreement that it is those who spend more than 50% of their time on housing that will transfer. Related support staff may also transfer.

There is a Code of Practice on staff transfers in the public sector. Whether or not the staff are strictly transferring under TUPE or not, all staff are to be treated as though they are transferring under TUPE with all the protections that flow from that assumption. The Two Tier Workforce Guidance will apply to the PFI option, but not to an LSVT.

With regard to pensions, the new employer should gain admission to the County scheme. On transfers, CLG guidance is that the housing authority should pick up any pension deficit as at the transfer date. In practice that is now often paid by the transferee and deducted from the price.

4 New ideas

4.1 Leasehold transfers

This option provides the possibility of tenanted stock returning to the Council after 30 years. It is public knowledge that Bolton is discussing leasehold transfer with CLG. While no decision has yet been made, it is likely that CLG would only see tenanted leasehold transfer as acceptable if it is part of a package providing significant area regeneration. Simply doing a "normal" LSVT or estate transfer but with a leasehold rather than a freehold transfer is probably not an option.

Note that leases must be more than 21 years long to take housing out of the HRA.

The consultation arrangements would be the same, as would the choice of new landlord.

4.2 Local Housing Companies/asset backed vehicles

The Green Paper encouraged councils to look at new forms of delivery vehicle. Local Housing Companies (**LHC**) are one form of possible delivery vehicle. A number are being set up around the country. Most of these are delivery vehicles for new build.

The Council with one or more partners sets up a company (or possibly a limited liability partnership). The Council provides the land/assets for the scheme, and the partners may provide equity or borrowing capacity. The Council, through its interest in the LHC, has a long term interest in the scheme.

A key issue for LHCs is whether they should be controlled by the Council or not. If they are controlled by the Council (and control is assessed using accounting rather than legal tests) then borrowing by the LHC may affect the Council's ability to use its prudential borrowing powers for other projects, because in assessing capacity for prudential borrowing the Council has to look at borrowings of entities whose accounts are consolidated with it.

But since the major changes to the law regarding transactions by local authority controlled companies in 2003, it is no longer true that all transactions of a company controlled by a local authority count as local authority transactions.

Many councils however prefer that the LHC is off balance sheet and its accounts are not consolidated with the local authority. Councils who want off balance sheet LHCs are usually looking to have maximum involvement without actually having control.

Whether on or off balance sheet if an LHC builds new housing it will not be within the HRA, so the rents are not caught up in the HRA subsidy system and can support new borrowing. Tenants will not be secure tenants of the Council, they will not have the right to buy and they will be entitled to local housing allowance rather than housing benefit.

If an LHC is getting grant funding for social rented housing from the Homes and Communities Agency, and it is not controlled by the local authority and it wishes to retain ownership of the social rented housing, once s.31 of the 2008 Act is in force it will have to register with the TSA.

If land is being transferred it must be at best consideration or, if not, with consent. If it is HRA land it will need consent under s.32 Housing Act 1985, although there are some general consents where HRA land is being transferred vacant and at full value.

4.3 Community Land Trusts

The Green paper also gave encouragement to the development of community land trusts (**CLTs**) as a delivery vehicle for new housing.

A CLT is an entity set up to ensure that land is kept for community benefit and provides permanent low cost home ownership, and also sometimes rented housing. CLTs have been recognised by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, s.79, with a statutory definition. They need to serve a defined geographical area with individuals who live or work in the area entitled to be members and with the members controlling the CLT.

Profits must benefit the local community and the CLT must be established with the express purpose "of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of a local community by acquiring and managing land and other assets in order:

- (a) to provide a benefit to the local community; and
- (b) to ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust's members think benefits the local community"

Most CLTs being set up to date have been small and rural, but some larger and more urban ones have been considered though not so far set up.

Trowers & Hamlins

January 2009

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL DESKTOP STRATEGIC FINANCIAL OPTIONS REVIEW UPDATED 29 JUNE 2009

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 HQN was asked to prepare an illustrative analysis of the possible financial implications of the various high level strategic options potentially available for Northampton Council housing stock.
- 1.2 This analysis is an updated report from the report produced in January of this year. It is based on updated stock condition survey information. Although the prices on the survey have been updated, as well as being adjusted for 2008/09 expenditure and additional sample surveys, it needs to be noted that the survey dates back to 2003/04. Any outputs from this report therefore need to be treated with caution and are subject to any possible update, review or new stock condition survey data. The outputs summarised below serve to set out the financial relationship between the various alternative financial futures and offer some pointers as to the next actions to shape the debate on future options.
- 1.3 At a high level, the prognosis is as follows:
 - With no change to national financial policy, the future of the HRA within the subsidy system is for long term revenue deficits and significant short and long term capital shortfalls as measured against the updated stock condition survey.
 - For a self financing HRA (outside the subsidy system) to be viable and to deliver significantly higher levels of investment than staying in the system, would require a substantial increase in housing debt at the point of settlement. However, under a best case scenario this could be affordable.
 - The overall valuation for a whole stock transfer (and indeed a stock transfer less the East Northampton PFI scheme) based on the core assumptions in a prospective Housing Association business plan is positive and would allow a high level of investment in the stock to be made.

2.0 Methodology

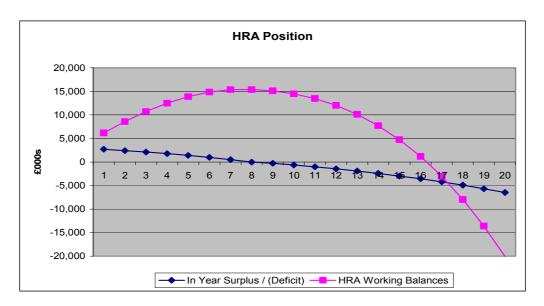
- 2.1 A consideration of the strategic options for stock ownership and management provides for three main alternative financial futures, as follows:
 - Council housing through HRA in the subsidy system, however reformed
 - Council housing through a self financing HRA
 - Stock transfer.
- 2.2 The analysis has been undertaken on the basis of whole stock options and where relevant taking into account the possible PFI scheme currently being bid for.
- 2.3 This note identifies the key financial factors associated with the future of the stock on a 'desk top' basis making general assumptions about future behaviour in line with accepted practice and experience of the Northampton financial position; it

should be noted that these assumptions and outputs are for illustrative purposes only and a key

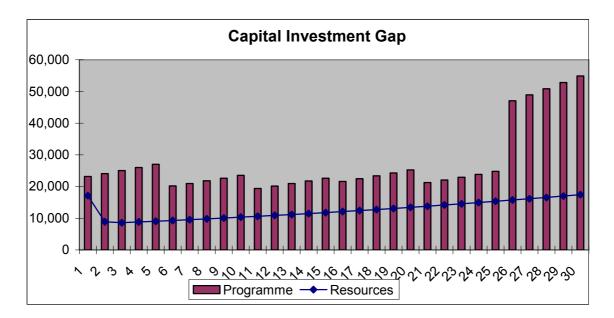
part of any future debate would be to consult upon, test and reach a consensus about the assumptions, particularly service and investment levels.

3.0 HRA in-subsidy: the 'no change' whole stock position

- 3.1 This section sets out the findings if the HRA stays within the current subsidy system. The assumptions made as below:
 - Actual rents converge with target rents in 2016/17
 - Actual management and maintenance costs have been increased by real inflation factors.
 - Repairs costs have been reduced in line with property numbers on a prorata basis.
 - Within the subsidy system, revenue and capital are separately forecast revenue surpluses are not automatically committed to capital and capital shortfalls do not automatically draw on revenue for finance either directly or through prudential borrowing.
 - There are revenue contributions to the capital programme committed in line with the capital programme for 2009/10.
 - The useable 25% element of RTB receipts is committed to the HRA capital programme.
 - The projected stock investment level is based upon an updated version of the original 2003/04 stock condition survey. It has been updated for work undertaken in the interim period. In addition additional surveys have been undertaken to increase the original sample size. For this analysis the current prices actually being achieved have been used for the key decent homes elements of bathrooms, kitchens, rewires and heating. The remaining elemental rates have been increased by 4%.
- 3.2 We developed a summary forecast HRA for 30 years and a comparison of capital expenditure needs against likely capital resources over the same period. The HRA is forecast to move into in-year deficit within 8 years and into overall deficit in 17 years.



- 3.3 Within the above, £10.9m of negative subsidy in 2009/10 is forecast to reach negative subsidy of £46.2m by year 30, or around 42% of rent income.
- 3.4 Projected capital resources have been compared to the updated stock condition survey outputs. The outputs are contained in the chart and table below.



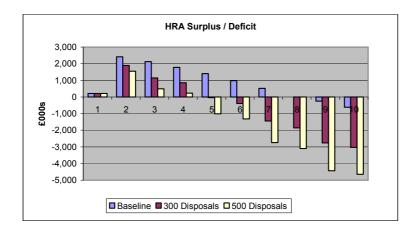
3.5 The chart illustrates that there is an investment shortfall for each of the 30 years.

	Year 1 - 5	Yrs 1 - 10	Yrs 1 - 20	Yrs 1- 30
	2013.14	2018.19	2028.29	2038.39
Resources	52,373	101,280	220,706	376,091
Investment	125,328	234,435	456,249	825,635
Surplus / (Deficit)	-72,955	-133,155	-235,543	-449,544

- 3.6 The capital shortfall against the SCS over 10 years is £133m, over 30 years £450m. This highlights significant challenges ahead not only in meeting liabilities and the aspirations of tenants towards the future of the stock and their neighbourhoods but also in maintaining a decent homes standard profile over the long term.
- 3.7 This increase in investment gap from the previous report is almost entirely due to the marked reduction in right to buy sales over the last 2 years. This has the effect of substantially reducing resources but also means that more properties remain to require investment. If sales were to increase to 100 per year from 2010/11 the 10 year investment gap would reduce to £113m the same figure as in the previous report.
- 3.8 There is the possibility of not investing in some of the improvement above decent homes shown as non priority improvements in the stock condition information. From below it can be seen that this does reduce the investment gap but does not eliminate it.

	Year 1 - 5 2013.14	Yrs 1 - 10 2018.19	Yrs 1 - 20 2028.29	Yrs 1- 30 2038.39
Resources	52,373	101,280	220,706	376,091
Investment	107,075	194,066	415,880	785,266
Surplus / (Deficit)	-54,702	-92,786	-195,174	-409,175

- 3.9 A maximum of £14.5m contribution could be made by the HRA from in year surpluses and reserves but again serves only to reduce the gap but not eliminate it. In addition this brings forward the need to make revenue savings of around £0.5m per annum to 2016/17.
- 3.10 To reduce the investment gap the council could consider the disposal of properties with above average investment need on an ongoing basis, for example 300 or 500 properties every 2 years. It is not possible to estimate the effect of this on the capital investment profile until actual properties could be identified but the effect on the HRA can be estimated with the chart and table below identifying the in year surpluses / deficits for each option.



	2,009.10	2,010.11	2,011.12	2,012.13	2,013.14	2,014.15	2,015.16	2,016.17	2,017.18	2,018.19
Baseline	213	2,411	2,119	1,779	1,401	977	509	-3	-258	-619
300 Disposals	213	1,889	1,140	850	-44	-398	-1,442	-1,862	-2,765	-3,037
500 Disposals	213	1,542	487	230	-1,008	-1,315	-2,743	-3,103	-4,435	-4,648

In year surplus / deficits

3.11 HRA revenue savings will be required at early date as shown in the table above. By 2015/16 the council will require £1.4m savings with 300 disposals and £2.7m with 500 disposals. At this scale the majority of costs would not be variable with reduction in overall management and council overheads required. In conclusion it would be difficult to manage out costs on a continuous drip feed of stock loss.

4.0 HRA in-subsidy with Northampton East PFI Scheme

4.1 If the Northampton East PFI scheme should happen there will be a consequence for the rest of the stock. In this report we assume that any revenue costs will be offset by matching revenue savings within the HRA. This report considers the effect on the investment gap for the remaining stock. If the stock in the PFI area was to have an above average investment

requirement as shown in the stock condition survey then the overall investment gap should be reduced for the remaining stock.

	Year 1 - 5	Yrs 1 - 10	Yrs 1 - 20	Yrs 1- 30
	2013.14	2018.19	2028.29	2038.39
Resources	51,337	94,619	200,226	337,487
Investment	119,218	216,585	421,416	759,649
PFI Set Up Costs	8,056	8,056	8,056	8,056
Surplus / (Deficit)	-75,937	-130,022	-229,246	-430,218
Surplus / (Deficit)	-72,955	-133,155	-235,543	-449,544

- 4.2 If allowance is made from capital for the additional PFI set up costs the effect on the overall investment gap in the medium term is minimal. However it should be remembered that the PFI stock will be having a total investment far in excess of the stock condition survey.
- 4.3 This shows that the PFI scheme only has a minimal positive effect on the 30 year investment gap for the remainder of the stock if that stock should remain within the current subsidy system.

5.0 Self financing HRA

Introduction

- 5.1 We have calculated a possible self financing settlement for Northampton's HRA based on the assumptions utilised in the recently completed national self financing project as follows:
 - 1. The debt settlement based on future negative subsidy rising over 30 years.
 - 2. The debt settlement based on freezing subsidy at 2011/12.
- 5.2 The original principle for self financing in the pilot project is to commute future subsidy into one single debt-settlement. In forecasting subsidy payments over 30 years, the extent of the under funding and future surpluses inherent in the system quickly became clear within the project. The impact on a self financing settlement was to make the debt-settlement very high as the HRA would be paying over a commuted sum based on the Net Present Value (NPV⁴) of assumed increases in negative subsidy, therefore effectively unsustainable in the short to medium term. This linkage means that in order to make self financing viable, the subsidy system is required to be made viable, a fact which effectively triggered the review of the subsidy system.
- 5.3 The six pilot authorities within the project therefore argued that, in parallel with a better funded system, the debt-settlement should be based on a freezing of the current subsidy position; or at least from 2011/12. The importance of this date is that it is both the original target date for rent restructuring and, critically, the first year of the next Government Spending Review period. The National Review is not considering any changes to funding in the current period (2008-

⁴ NPV: a technique whereby annual future income and expenditure flows are discounted to represent the 'time value of money' – NPV represents the net value of future income less future expenditure taken over 30 years and brought back to 'today's' money by discounting at 6% which is an assumed gross investment rate for money over the long term

2011) on the basis that these spending totals are already factored into the national expenditure plans.

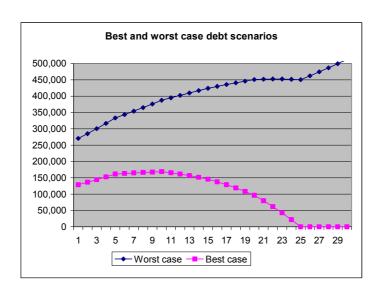
Illustrative debt settlements

- 5.4 In both cases, Northampton's HRA is a significant net *payer* of negative subsidy in NPV terms over 30 years.
- 5.5 A commutation of the future negative subsidy amount into a Net Present Value would mean an increase in debt of £270m. This represents the value *in one go* of the net of all future negative subsidy should nothing change with the system. This represents the value of negative subsidy rising from £10m to £46m over 30 years.
- 5.6 The debt adjustment if the subsidy position was frozen at 2011/12 and future subsidy was adjusted in one go, would result in a debt increase of £129m. This represents the commuted value of negative subsidy rising to £11m by 2011/12 and then staying at the same amount over the next 27 years.
- 5.7 These two potential alternative approaches could therefore be said to represent the technically *best* and *worst* case scenarios for self financing and the 'opening debt' for each of these approaches is set out below.
- 5.8 When added to the current HRA debt for Northampton of -£7m, the *worst* case self financing scenario would involve a debt settlement and float-free from the system at a level of £263m debt. The theoretical *best* case would involve an opening debt of £122m.

Modelling increased investment

- 5.9 The principle advantages of a self financing HRA compared to staying in the subsidy system is the availability of all future rent income locally to provide headroom for increased expenditure, mainly towards the stock. As rents increase, increased headroom over a long period could be used to finance borrowing or to supplement the amount of expenditure on the stock from the HRA.
- 5.10 We have therefore modelled in a self financing context the delivery of the Northampton Stock Survey profile. The approach is shown as a debt profile which highlights the long term viability or otherwise of a self financing plan and this is compared to what self financing would look like if the same level of capital resources were available as forecast within the current subsidy system (MRA and RTB receipts). Rising debt over 30 years highlights that the plan is unaffordable. Debt that is reducing highlights that a plan would be viable.

The chart overleaf shows these two profiles.



- 5.11 If the opening debt was £255m, spending at the SCS profile would cause rising debt over 30 years as borrowing costs incurred further borrowing to attempt to fund the required expenditure. This is clearly unviable.
- 5.12 At an opening debt of £122m, the theoretically *best* case self financing scenario, investment at the SCS profile would lead to an increase of debt in the early years to finance the programme (to £169m) which would be repaid within 25 years. This highlights that the SCS profile could be financed with a considerable degree of headroom, providing that the opening debt can be controlled to this level.
- 5.13 Therefore, the viability of a self financing plan in the Northampton context would be entirely dependent on the securing of a settlement which approached the £122m in the 'best case' scenario above. In fact, opening debt at £145m could still allow the SCS profile to be financed with a closing debt after 30 years of around zero. Above this level of opening debt, the plan begins to become more sensitive to changes in inflation and interest rates and therefore less viable.
- 5.14 It should be noted that the basis for the self financing scenarios above rest upon a roll forward of current service revenue costs with 1% real increases in the cost base. The above conclusions about the viability of a self financing plan are therefore dependent upon the controlling of increases in management and repairs costs to this level of inflation. Though challenging, in a self financing context, this might prove more achievable than staying within a volatile and unpredictable subsidy system.
- 5.15 Under a theoretically best case self financing scenario, the opening debt for a Northampton self financing HRA could be expected to be £122m. This would allow all future rent increases to be retained locally and provide for additional headroom to increase investment to the SCS profile level and beyond providing revenue costs were controlled to inflation. This headroom would also enable the council to consider new build using the flexibility of keeping rental income within the HRA. It is far from clear that the National Review would result in such a positive outcome, however a series of alternatives relating to the redistribution of current debt between authorities are also being analysed.

- 5.16 The option of a self financing HRA for Northampton might therefore be more viable than staying in the HRA subsidy system. However, there are many dependencies in achieving the kind of review outcomes and therefore series of factors which could put the HRA in such a position.
- 5.17 An individual approach to self financing at Northampton could be dependent upon the achievement of performance criteria. In the short to medium term, therefore, it is difficult to see self financing for Northampton in anything other than the context of a 'national settlement' with greater flexibility for all HRAs. The review outcomes will be known in March.

6.0 Stock transfer

- 6.1 We have calculated an indicative valuation for the housing stock for a possible whole stock transfer based on assumptions from the business plan. We have also undertaken a separate valuation with the PFI stock excluded. It must be noted that this provides a guide to inform thinking on the debate on future options and does not represent what an actual valuation would be.
- 6.2 The valuation is a cashflow valuation based on a single commutation into one value of future net rental flows over 30 years and is therefore a similar calculation as for self financing but with assumptions which provide for the private finance nature of a transfer.
- 6.3 The relevant general assumptions (and how these differ to the HRA futures) are summarised below.
 - The valuation is of the stock 'on day one' and therefore there is no assumption of property changes.
 - There is no inflation on the cashflows this provides some comfort to the funders that there is some leeway in the HA business plan to manage risk.
 - Rents are assumed to increase on the same path as under the HRA.
 - VAT is applied to a proportion of repairs and all capital works.
 - The capital spending need has been increased for fees and VAT in the valuation. In addition the base data has been increased by 15% to allow for the development of a "Northampton Standard and allowing for the possibility that any transfer funders would require a certain standard of investment. This addition is lower than the previous report as the costs used for the key elements are now based on actual costs currently being incurred.
- 6.4 The Transfer Valuation or Net Present Valuation is based on the 30 year value of cash flows and represents the value for the stock. The indicative valuation on this basis is £13.4m. A similar valuation has been undertaken with PFI stock excluded. The overall valuation is shown overleaf

	Whole Stock	Stock less PFI
Total valuation	£13.4m	£17.1m
Outstanding debt as per CLG inc. premiums	£15.5m	£13.7m
Net receipt	-£2.1m	£3.4m
Set up costs	£3.5m	£3.5m
Net Receipt	-£5.6m	-£0.1m
CLG Levy at 20%	£0m	£0m
Difference between actual debt and as per CLG	£21.4m	£18.9m
Actual Receipt	£15.8m	£18.8m
Possible VAT Shelter	£25.0m	£22.0m

- 6.6 From the gross receipt CLG expect any debt outstanding on the HRA to be repaid. According to CLG's measure of debt for Northampton the figure stands at £15.5m at 2011/12. This leaves a net negative receipt to the council of £2.1m. Set up costs of any new housing association (including ballot costs) could amount to £3.5m. This would leave a net negative receipt to the council of -£5.6m.
- 6.6 Although CLG's measure of debt for Northampton is £15.8m the actual level of debt is negative £7m (i.e. "capital receipts in the bank"). The CLG guidance therefore allows Northampton to borrow £21.4m bringing the debt level up to £15.5m (their measure of the debt). This debt is then paid off from the receipt leaving the council with the £21.4m cash before any debt premiums are taken into account. The net effect of this is that the council gets to keep the original receipt and cash in the £7m receipts in the bank. Or put another way the council borrows £21.4m and the government pay off the debt from the gross transfer receipt leaving the council with the original amount borrowed.
- 6.7 A similar calculation applies to the stock less PFI properties except that debt is pro rata'd to the stock transferred. A HRA would still be kept for the PFI stock.
- 6.8 Any balances on the HRA would revert to general fund at the point of transfer. If transfer was to happen on 31/03/12, working balances and reserves of £10.7m are projected to be available if not used in the interim (This excludes any TUPE costs).
- 6.9 If the transfer landlord was to seek charitable status, a VAT shelter could be negotiated representing recovered VAT on up to 10 years of capital investment post-transfer: This could be in the region of £25m spread over 10 years for a whole stock transfer and would represent additional resources available for investment in the community by the council and/or the housing association. The use of the VAT shelter is determined as part of the process of agreeing the Transfer Agreement and the overall council's VAT status.

- 6.10 Right to Buy receipts post-transfer (Preserved RTB receipts) are usually split between the council and housing association. Receipts are no longer subject to pooling from government.
- 6.11 Currently up to £7m is charged to the HRA from the general fund. If the stock was to be transferred as a whole or along side a HRA PFI scheme there would no longer be any scope for these charges. The council would need to identify how much of this cost would remain post transfer and therefore the financial hit to be taken by the general fund.
- 6.12 At the point of transfer there would likely be a deficit on the pension fund. No new landlord would take this deficit so the council would need to fund this pension gap at the point of transfer. In addition the valuation may need to be adjusted to allow for any additional costs to be incurred by the new landlord in future pension contribution costs.

Agenda Item 11

Appendices



Item No.

11

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Proposed bid to the Homes and Communities Agency
	for funding for Council house building

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date: 15 July 2009

Key Decision: YES

Listed on Forward Plan: YES

Within Policy: YES

Policy Document: YES

Directorate: HOUSING

Accountable Cabinet Member: Councillor Sally Beardsworth

Ward(s) Eastfields

1. Purpose

1.1 To consider a prospective bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for funding to build new council housing on council owned land.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to confirm the terms of a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding and the appointment of a partner RSL.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 On 28 April the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) wrote to local authorities inviting them to bid for a challenge fund. A copy of that letter is attached at Appendix A.

- 3.1.2 The Council has a number of sites which might be suitable for a bid to build council housing, but has no in-house expertise to develop such a bid. Therefore any bid would need to involve the development section of an existing RSL, who would also undertake to supervise the construction process. In addition to an RSL, the Council recently procured the services of technical advisors to assist in development appraisals and to understand and advise on the affordable homes components of major private housing development schemes.
- 3.1.3 Informal advice has been to try and make the first deadline of 31 July 2009 and then to consider also bidding for the second deadline as indicated in the bidding guidance, of 31 October 2009. There is a lot of work to carry out to make a bid by the first deadline, but it is expected that an RSL can be identified sufficiently early to both assist and advise on the bidding process and to take forward any successful bid.

3.2 Choices (Options)

3.2.1 The Council could decide not to bid, but this is another opportunity to bring more funding into the borough and to enhance the Council's reputation with the HCA.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

None

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The costs of working up this scheme, approximately £15,000, can be borne from existing budgets. Land which could otherwise be described as surplus to requirements and sold would now be held back and developed.
- 4.2.2 New Council house building in this way would be within the Housing Revenue account but outside the HRA subsidy system. This means that the rent can be used to finance prudential borrowing. It is currently unclear why the HCA is offering prudential borrowing facilities, but this may become clearer through dialogue with HCA officials.
- 4.2.3 The importance of development appraisal advice is to ensure that the grant request from HCA is sufficient to make the new house building proposed self-financing from rent revenue plus grant.

4.3 Legal

None at this stage

4.4 Equality

None

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

Residents around any proposed site will be briefed generally before the bid goes in and will be involved in working up detailed proposals.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

If successful the new homes will contribute to the housing, health and wellbeing of the Borough.

4.7 Other Implications

N/a

5. Background Papers

5.1 HCA letter and bidding guidance

Brian Queen, Interim Housing Advisor, ext 7174



23rd April 2009

Dear Colleague,

Budget Announcements - Housing

I am sure that you will have seen the key points of the Chancellor's budget announcement and the additional resources that are to be provided to kickstart development and help underpin housing growth and employment over the next few months.

We have been working, with colleagues in Communities and Local Government, in developing this package of measures and I am pleased to say that the Homes and Communities will be leading on delivery.

There are a number of elements to the proposed package:

- a set of proposals to kickstart housing development (£400m). The aim of this package is to support development on sites where activity has stalled as a result of financial and market conditions. We will have a package of measures available including support for delivery of affordable housing, Homebuy Direct to support sales, and equity, infrastructure or gap finance. We will be looking to fund good quality schemes that can move ahead quickly. We expect that there will be strong interest from partners in this package and we intend to open an Expressions of Interest stage in early May;
- a Challenge Fund for local authorities (£50m capital, £50m borrowing) who wish to develop new build properties. We know that there is a significant appetite amongst local authorities to develop homes for social rent on local authority

Sir Bob Kerslake Chief Executive Homes and Communities Agency 110 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SA

homesandcommunities.co.uk



- owned land. Again, we will publish details of the competition in early May;
- additional funding for retrofitting existing stock (£85m) to improve environmental standards and for funding low-carbon community heating schemes (£21m).

The intention behind the Government's announcements is to take action swiftly in these key areas we will now move quickly to launch programmes which allow you to access the funding to take schemes forward. If you have an interest in accessing new funds, I suggest that in the first instance you make contact with HCA Regional Directors in the areas in which you will make proposals.

Yours sincerely

Sir Bob Kerslake

El kerre