

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 20 January 2020

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2020 AT 6:30 PM WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Council held on 4 November 2019.

3. APOLOGIES.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Beardsworth to make a statement on "Democracy in this day and age"

9. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

(Copy herewith)

10. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - 2020/21

(Copy herewith)

11. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020 2021

(Copy herewith)

12. PAY POLICY 2018/19

(Copy herewith)

13. CLIMATE EMERGENCY CARBON FOOTPRINT

(Copy herewith)

14. CORPORATE PLAN

(Copy herewith)

15. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

(Copy herewith)

16. NOTICES OF MOTION

1) Councillor Roberts to propose and Councillor Russell to second:

“This Council notes:

- That analysis of the 2019 Local Election results by the Fawcett Society found that only 35% of councillors in England are women, up 1% since 2018. Of the seats that were up for election in 2019, 35% went to women, up just 3 percentage points on 2015 when these seats were last contested;
- Following the 2019 local elections, 45% of Labour councillors are female, 30% of Conservative councillors are female and 34% of Liberal Democrat councillors are female;
- As of October 2019, 36 councils have passed a Parental Leave policy.
- In 2019, the LGA co-produced the 21st Century Councils Equalities Toolkit with MHCLG. The toolkit recommends that councils adopt a parental leave policy, and that they link to the LGA Labour’s Parental Leave policy as a model to adopt;
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background, and that introducing a parental leave policy is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to

remain as councillors;

- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.

This Council resolves:

To adopt a parental leave policy to give all councillors an entitlement to parental leave after giving birth or adopting;

To ensure that councillors with children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate; “

2) To be proposed by Councillor Stone and seconded by Councillor Duffy:

“We note that all the party manifestos promised new money for youth.

This council recognises that well-resourced youth work in Northampton will deliver many benefits.

It will:-

provide meaningful and enriching activities for young people

provide jobs and career pathways for youth workers

deflect young people from gangs and criminal activity

enable young people to develop a voice and contribute to the regeneration of the town.

To this end we agree to support the local campaign for a Youth Centre for

Northampton.

The centre will be multifaceted and provide a focus for developing our understanding of what young people in the town need, for developing youth work, and developing a youth voice for the town.

A youth centre, particularly in the town centre, will bring new energy and commitment to the town.”

3) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Meredith to second:

“In addition to expected elections to choose members of the new West Northants Unitary Authority, May 2020 will see elections for a new Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire and also, elsewhere, for a new Mayor of London.

Both the Commissioner and Mayoral posts will be elected via the Supplementary Vote system but Councillors for the West Northamptonshire authority will be elected to three-member divisions/wards under the First Past The Post (FPTP) system. On the basis of previous election results in the county, it is likely that many of those elected will not secure an absolute majority of votes cast.

This Council believes that:

- the adoption of proportional representation for some English elections, as well as elections elsewhere in the UK, recognises the weakness of the first past the post system;
- elections to a new authority which replaces Northamptonshire County and

Northampton Borough are based on outdated electoral boundaries, most of which were single-member divisions, and these do not best represent voters.

- a supplementary vote system would ensure that councillors representing Northampton are more representative of the views of those who elect them.

This Council resolves to make representations to national government to consider the introduction of the Single Transferable Voting system for future elections to the West Northants. Unitary Authority.”

4) Councillor King to propose and Councillor Nunn to second:

“We encourage the celebration of religious, cultural, and historical occasions, of which fireworks can be an integral part, but we discourage public nuisance. Unsocial hours, and prolonging periods over which fireworks are used, can cause anxiety to many people and to their pets. We believe in keeping our town and its residents safe, for them to be able to enjoy a peaceful life, whilst ensuring that their health and wellbeing is maintained.

Well promoted and supervised, public firework events are one way in which fireworks can be enjoyed safely and responsibly, such as the council’s bonfire night which 10,000 attended and enjoyed last year.

This Council resolves:

- to request all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- Well-meaning celebration can become public nuisance”

17. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

George Candler – Chief Executive
The Guildhall
Northampton

Public Participation

1. Comments and Petitions

- 1.1 A member of the public (or an accredited representative of a business ratepayer of the Borough) may make a comment or present a petition on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. A comment or presentation of a petition shall be for no more than three minutes. No notice of the nature of the comment to be made or of the petition is required except for the need to register to speak by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

(Public comments and petitions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or other civic or ceremonial meetings.)

NOTES

- i. *Comments may be on one or more subjects but each person has no longer than three minutes to have their say.*
- ii. *The same person may make a comment and present a petition on different subjects. In such instances that person will have three minutes to make their comment and a separate three minutes to present a petition.*

2. Member and Public Questions

- 2.1 A member of the public (or business ratepayer of the Borough) may ask a maximum of two written questions at each meeting, each limited to a maximum of 50 words, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. Each question shall:

- be submitted in writing and delivered, e-mailed to Democratic Services no later than 10.00am seven calendar days before the day of the meeting; and
- include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the Cabinet member/Committee Chair to whom the question is put.

- 2.2 At the meeting, copies of all questions and the responses to them from the public and Members will be made available to the public and press. The Mayor may allow one supplementary question, without notice, that arises directly from the original question or response.

(Questions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or at civic or ceremonial meetings or meetings called to deal with specific items of business.)

NOTES

In respect of paragraph 2.1 above, questions may be rejected on certain grounds that are set out on page 4-12 of the Council's Constitution and which may be viewed at www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1919 or by seeking advice using the contact details below.

3. Motions

- 3.1 A member of the public may register to speak to a motion under the 'Notices of Motion' item on the agenda. Registration to speak must be made to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day to the meeting. Speaking to a motion is restricted to three minutes per person.

(The 'Notices of Motion' item will not be taken at the Annual Council meeting or meetings called for civic or ceremonial purposes.)

4. General

A member of the public may make a comment, present a petition, ask a question or speak to a motion at the same meeting subject to the restrictions set out above.

5. Contacts

Democratic Services: e-mail democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

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MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 4 November 2019 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Choudary (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone, Walker and Roberts

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ashraf declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest as a board member of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2019 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Markham, Flavell and Graystone. It was explained that Councillors Golby and Hallam would be arriving late.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced to Council the sad passing of Roger Rumsey, who previously chaired the Northampton Pensioner's Forum, and offered his condolences to Mr Rumsey's family.

The Mayor reported that his Gala Dinner, held over the weekend, was a success, and approximately £2,500 had been raised for The Lowdown. He thanked Members for attending. Weather permitting, the Mayor would be taking skydiving tomorrow and asked Members to donate if they had not already. He reminded Members of the upcoming Remembrance Day event on Sunday 10th November and asked them to reserve seats at All Saints Church through the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor welcomed 25 students from Northampton University who had come to observe the meeting.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

None.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that one question had been received and that the answer had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers were given as tabled and there were no supplementary questions.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as the Leader of the Council and congratulated the Mayor on his Gala Dinner. He updated Members on work being carried out with regards to Unitary Status including the Structural Changes Order and the integration of Health and Social Care. The Town Centre Masterplan had been adopted as a Council document but presently did not contain any detail; this would be developed around upcoming consultations; it was anticipated that the Market Square would be looked at first. Councillor Nunn explained that timelines had been extended; a submission to MHCLG was now required by 31st January 2020, with a full business case to be submitted by the end of April and an announcement expected in the summer of 2020. Councillor Nunn further explained that the private sector were responding positively, noting a recent apartment development on Wellingborough Road and stated that this showed there was increasing demand for professional living accommodation in the town centre. He further noted the recent CityFibre's £40m investment in the town and hoped that Members took the time to speak with them before the meeting. Councillor Nunn also noted discussions that had taken place regarding the Guildhall road block and Sol Central whose owners had secured a new occupier.

In response to questions, Councillor Nunn confirmed that he would work with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to have the Community Governance Review minutes published on the Council's website and circulated amongst Members. He explained that the Joint Committee would have more work to do following changes to the Structural Changes Order. He further explained that where Members sat as both unitary and borough/district/county councillors for a final year, they would be given a choice as to which allowance they would take. Responding to further questions, Councillor Nunn stated that Unitary Status would be a matter for the government to decide after the General Election. With regard to the design workshops, Councillor Nunn stated that cross party consultation would continue as it worked well and was unique to NBC. Councillor Nunn further stated that the town relied upon the vital contribution that the voluntary sector gave and that the strong links between NBC and the voluntary sector would continue.

At this juncture the Mayor invited Councillor Kilbride to congratulate residents and volunteers in his and Councillor Malpas' ward for their hard work and awards won in both Northampton and East Midlands in Bloom.

Councillor Larratt presented his report as Deputy Leader and highlighted several events that would be taking place over the Christmas period, including the light switch-on and Frost Fair.

In response to questions, the Deputy Leader confirmed that there was a desire to include Northampton in the East/West Rail scheme; as a concept, it was not originally

envisaged to serve Northampton. With regard to the Oxford corridor, the Deputy Leader advised that talks had taken place around services between Northampton, Swindon and Bristol.

In response to a question around the ongoing Community Governance Review consultation exercise, the Deputy Leader stated that he was not previously aware of any issues surrounding the length of the consultation period and would look into any issues with urgency. He further stated that he understood issues around letter-drops in Far Cotton and Delapre to be resolved. He noted that the upcoming General Election and local government reorganisation had no impact on the creation of parish councils.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his report as the Cabinet Member for Housing and highlighted key areas of work, including further development with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper's Strategy. He reminded Members that the Council would be carrying out its rough-sleepers count and asked them to volunteer, if able. He noted that the Telecare Services Association had assessed the Call Care team as "outstanding" and an example of best practice in a number of areas, following a 2 day audit.

In response to a question, Councillor Hibbert confirmed that following the Rough Sleepers Count, a position statement would be published confirming the number of people believed to be sleeping rough on any one night, ensuring that the number of rough sleepers will be set in context. He further confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Hope Centre to extend its opening hours during SWEP.

Responding to a question regarding enforcement, Councillor Hibbert advised that the Enforcement team had been making surprise house calls through the use of court warrants

Responding to a question around HMO licences, Councillor Hibbert confirmed that a property with an existing licence would automatically be renewed on 1st February 2020, subject to no enforcement action. Any unlicensed properties from 1st February would be subject to enforcement action.

Councillor Hill submitted his Cabinet Member report as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning. He explained that in October Cabinet approved, for public consultation, the Council's proposal to introduce a Borough wide Article 4 Direction for houses in multiple occupation (HMO). He further announced that planning permission had been granted to redevelop the former Angel Hotel on Bridge Street and thanked officers for their work on bringing the project forward.

In response to questions, Councillor Hill confirmed that there were sufficient officers to deal with unauthorised building works. In respect of Belgrave House, Councillor Hill advised that NPH were dealing with issues, however this fell under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise. Councillor Hill advised that recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel would be considered as part of reserved matters applications in respect of the university.

Councillor Hill confirmed that the 319 inspections carried out by Building Control had been undertaken since April 2019.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet member report as the Cabinet Member for Environment and stated that the enforcement officers issued a total of 455 Fixed Penalty Notices during September and October. He gave his thanks to all of the community groups and volunteers that took part in Bloom. Councillor Hallam advised that a new CCTV camera was now in operation in the town centre and would be instrumental in providing evidence for prosecutions relating to fly-tipping and noted that additional areas were being considered for more CCTV coverage.

In response to questions, Councillor Hallam confirmed that there was generally an 8 day turnaround for bulky waste collections and noted that bookings had increased by 50% compared to the same time last year. He further confirmed that the next Climate Change Forum would be taking place on 12th November.

Councillor Hadland advised that parking in council-owned, town centre car parks would be free in the run-up to Christmas, on Saturdays commencing 23rd November and evenings commencing 19th December.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Haque made a statement on “Regeneration” and expressed his enthusiasm for the Northampton Forward document, and his reservations that the current administration would make it a reality. He questioned how his experience as a politician and a business man, as well as coming from a BAME community, could contribute towards the regeneration of the town and inform debates. He stated the need for creating well paid jobs for local people, green businesses, renewable energy, future-proofed buildings that are more energy efficient and an integrated transport system to help minimise the use of cars. Councillor Haque stated that the Council was not doing enough to support small-to-medium enterprises; many that he had spoken to struggled with parking, business rates and more. He suggested the creation of an SME Forum where issues could be debated and solutions identified. Councillor Haque further suggested that BAME communities, which make up 15% of Northampton’s population, had skills and talents that were currently underutilised. He noted that Northampton’s demographic was an ageing one, however the town’s BAME community tended to represent a younger demographic. He asked why a Multicultural centre had not been included in the Town Centre Masterplan, stating that it would benefit the entire town. BAME communities brought other benefits, including extended families providing child and adult social care within families, taking pressure off the state.

In response Councillor Hadland acknowledged the important part that SMEs played in the local economy and explained that they were supported through schemes such as the business incentive scheme. The Vulcan Works development will support approximately 60 new businesses. He noted that an exhaustive consultation had been undertaken in relation to the Town Centre Masterplan and had hoped that Councillor Haque would have fed into it, to make sure that the broadest facilities were available for all communities. Councillor Hadland commented that as the town grew in confidence, it would encourage inward investment, with developers and investors

feeling like Northampton was a place worth investing in, and worth bringing high-quality jobs to.

Councillor Haque stated that “actions speak louder than words” and highlighted several unfinished projects, including 4 Waterside, Greyfriars and the incomplete east stand at Northampton Town Football Club. He further pointed out that Horizon House had been empty for a number of years and that the new bus station was polluting the town centre. He stated that with Northampton Forward, the Council had the best opportunity to finance the project and make a real difference in the town.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded:

“7 in 10 young people have experienced cyberbullying. 26% of young people who have been cyberbullied report feeling suicidal.

Whether you are in the public eye or not, you cannot get away from social media and it is ruining a lot of people’s lives.

Building on the excellent BBC’s documentary ‘Odd One Out’, featuring Little Mix star Jesy Nelson, this Council believes that there is a real need to talk more about cyberbullying, how this is making us feel and how to tackle it.

NBC is proud to say that we held a primary school event on 16th October and has two more planned for this academic year 2019-20: 11th February and 5th June 2020, all focussing on various community safety messages, including online safety.

Based on the feedback from the young people, the Council has this year also added the topic of cyberbullying and 540 year six’s will have attended the events and received this informal education.

This Council further commits to launching its secondary school programme covering cyberbullying, with the first one taking place on 24th November at Weston Favell secondary and this being rolled out to Northampton International Academy and other secondary schools before the end of the academic year.

We live in a social media obsessed world and people say things without realising the devastating effect on young lives and families. This Council is fully committed to leading the way in showing that bullying is not ok.

Lowdown offer free counselling and advice to young people aged 12-25yrs across Northampton. The following link provides information and guidance for young people facing these issues <http://thelowdown.info/issues/cyberbullying/>“

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Bottwood, Caswell,

Davenport, G Eales, Eldred, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, B Markham, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There voted against the motion: Councillor Duffy

There abstained: Councillors Choudary, Ashraf, Birch, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, Marriott, McCutcheon, Russell, Roberts and Stone.

The motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Marriott proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“This council notes with dismay the recent 1% increase in interest for loans from the Public Works Loan Board. This comes at a time when all councils, including NBC, were looking to increase their building of social housing in order to address the housing crisis.

The 1% increases the risks attached to regeneration and development and creates the need for revision of existing plans and business cases. We note this has led to, for example, a delay in borrowing for the Berkley house rebuild.

We therefore call on the council to join with the LGA to make representation to the government to have this decision reversed.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iii) Councillor Joyce accepted an alteration to the original motion as published on the agenda. The altered motion was seconded by Councillor Ashraf.

Council agreed to the altered motion below:

“This council congratulates Norwich Council for winning the Stirling Architecture Prize for its recently developed housing estate, Goldsmith Street, comprised of almost 100 ‘ultra-low-energy homes’

This is the first time in the 23-year history of the Stirling prize that it has been awarded to social housing.

“A modest masterpiece” is how the RIBA Stirling prize judges described the project, designed by London firm Mikhail Riches with Cathy Hawley, representing “high-quality architecture in its purest most environmentally and socially conscious form”. The 105 creamy-brick homes are designed to stringent Passivhaus environmental standards, meaning energy costs are around 70% cheaper than average. The walls are highly insulated, and the roofs are cleverly angled at 15 degrees, to ensure each terrace doesn’t block sunlight from the homes behind, while letterboxes are built into external porches, rather than the front doors, to reduce any possibility of draughts.

Immense thought has gone into every detail – from the perforated brick balconies to the cleverly interlocking staircases in the three-storey flats at the end of each terrace – to ensure that every home has its own front door on the street. The back gardens look on to a planted alley, dotted with communal tables and benches, while parking has been pushed to the edge of the site, freeing up the streets for people, not cars.

This year's choice sends a clear message that, despite government cuts, it is eminently possible for brave councils to take the initiative and build environmentally sustainable social housing.

We call on NBC to be brave and develop an ambitious long-term sustainable housing plan.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“The administration is in the process of preparing a draft budget for 2020/21 which it will consider at the cabinet meeting on the 11th December 2019. This comes at a time when local government finances are being squeezed and this council is facing a deficit of £750,000+ in the current year.

In November 2014 the cabinet approved the purchase of Albion House for a sum up to £0.5M. The building has not been brought into productive use and this council believes the benefit of maintaining ownership of this under-utilised asset needs to be reconsidered.

The council requests that as part of the budget preparation, process, the Administration considers the disposal of Albion House to provide vital finance to protect vital public services.

If the administration decides not to dispose of this under-utilised asset, because it has a firm plans for the building then they should declare those plans and report back to the Council meeting on the 9th. December.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

10. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

None.

The meeting concluded at 8:40 pm

Agenda Item 7

Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January 2020

Since my last report to Council I have continued to work with the Cabinet, Members, the Chief Executive and Officers across all areas of the Council. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

Unitary Status

Work on Future Northants (the new collective name for the Unitary activity) continues and the Leaders Oversight Board has met again in November, with a further meeting scheduled on a monthly basis from January 2020 onwards. I have also been involved in three Discovery & Design workshops. These are sessions that are led by the Senior Responsible Officer and Programme Manager, to test thinking and ideas on certain elements of the wider Future Northants programme. The Design & Discovery workshops have focussed on Corporate Services areas, including LGSS, Customer Services and IT.

As we approach the last full calendar year before the go live date in April 2021, activity for myself and fellow Leaders will intensify and we have already scheduled in Leaders workshops every week in January and February, to progress matters. Most recently there has been another meeting of the West Northants Joint Committee, and as you will have seen, the agenda items focussed on an update on Programme activity as well as a paper on the finances and two papers on the recruitment process of the interim Statutory Officers and the permanent Statutory Officers. These meetings of the West Northants Joint Committee will continue with one a month in February and March.

As I write this report, I am due to meet with the Leaders from South Northants and Daventry District Council with the new Children's Commissioner Andrew Christie. Andrew was Director of Children's Services for the tri-Borough partnership of Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster and brings a wealth of experience to this important role. It will be interesting to hear his vision and development of Children's Services through the Children's Trust when we meet.

Work continues on the development of a new Town Council for Northampton and this will be covered elsewhere through the Deputy Leader's report, who chairs the Working Group. The council paper on the agenda is an outcome of those meetings and the recent consultation undertaken.

The Cross-party Unitary Working Group has continued to meet on a regular basis, whereby myself and the Chief Executive provide detailed updates on Programme activity as well as future discussions that are forthcoming from the Future Northants programme.

Regional Activity

As I have mentioned in previous reports, I am now actively involved in a number of sub-regional Boards and have recently attended the Arc Leaders meeting in November, the SEMLEP Board meeting and the East Midland Councils' Executive Board, ensuring that Northampton's key issues and areas of opportunity are promoted on this sub-regional stage.

Economic Growth

Work on the development and regeneration of the town continues at pace and I have chaired a number of Northampton Forward Board meetings over the last 10 weeks. Work continues on the development of the Strategic Business Case through Grant Thornton, which will need to be submitted as part of the wider outline Business Case to MHCLG at the end of January. We have also been working with Gillespies (Landscape Architects) who are leading on the design for the new Market Square, and as you will have seen, was recently subject to consultation during the month of December. Part of that consultation included a dedicated Members' Briefing where we were able to take those that attended through the process of getting to the three designs, as well as seeking feedback from Members in the room. Prior to this myself, the Chief Executive and the Head of Economy and Assets had met with Market Traders to seek their views, and again this was a positive meeting where we were able to factor their comments into what will emerge as the final design.

Reflecting the desire from a Motion last year of a People's Panel, I have continued to progress this and recently chaired a meeting to help formulate several Sub Working Groups, which is being led by the University of Northampton. We hope to finalise this at the end of January and I will continue to update on the progress through the Cross-party Working Group that we have also established for this work, to keep Members up to date on activity of the wider growth agenda for the town.

In December I was pleased to formally open the Economic Growth Strategy workshop at the Park Inn, where over 20 key businesses came and fed into the current draft Economic Growth Strategy that is being developed. I was very pleased to hear the feedback as well as the level of energy there was in the room and to really help prioritise and focus on the key areas that we need to develop in order to maximise the Economic Growth of the town. We asked the businesses that attended to continue supporting the work as it progresses, and were delighted when they all agreed to do that. The outcomes of this event will be fed back to the 50-plus businesses that we have been consulting with on the development of the Strategy, with the final Strategy going through Cabinet before Easter.

November and December have also seen a number of Annual General Meetings linked to the wider Growth agenda here in Northampton. Amongst these, I was pleased to attend the Chamber AGM and to hear of their significant achievements and exciting plans for 2020, in supporting business growth.

Other Activity

Culture is one of the key strengths of the town and I have been involved in a number of discussions linked to this wider agenda, including a recent catch up with the CEO of the Royal & Derngate, Jo Gordon, as well as discussions on the development of a Shoosmith Gallery, which is still in its embryonic stage, and also discussions with the Chair and Director at Delapre to work with them and build a long term sustainable Business Plan for the future operation of this wonderful attraction we have in the town.

I was again pleased to be involved in the Rough Sleeper Count at the end of November and support the 50-plus volunteers that got involved this year, which is a key part of our understanding of Rough Sleeping in the town.

I was very glad to be able to visit the LowDown and better understand the great work that they do to support young people recently, and to be invited to take part in the International Men's

Day judging panel and attend the event and awards ceremony, as well as enjoying the wonderful Christmas events in the town, delivered by NBC and other partners, such as the Igloo Cinema, and the Frost Fair and Christmas Parade.

The Northamptonshire Sport launch of 'See Active Be Active' was a wonderful event to attend, as was the Northants Hour event in Cheyne Walk, as were the screening of Screen Northants film 'Nene' at the Cineworld cinema, and Rotary's splendid Santa Fun Run.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn

Leader of the Council

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council
Northampton Borough Council
Monday 20th January 2020

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have continued to play an active role in the establishment of a Unitary Council and the transition to it, while continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council. I can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

The market hosted the annual Frost Fair, children's workshop and parade on 1st December attracting over 60 traders and 9,000 visitors. In addition, various bands, acts and dancers entertained shoppers on Saturdays throughout December. Despite this, and the market traders' best efforts, footfall was down on last year in line with the rest of the town, mainly due to the wet weather throughout the month.

Councillor Development Group

As previously reported the Councillor Development Group met on 23rd September 2019 and further meetings will be scheduled as required.

Since the last meeting of this Council:

- The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Gangs and Knife Crime Scrutiny Working Group attended a national conference on this topic in December 2019. A report will be presented to the Working Group regarding the outcomes from this Conference.
- Councillors and an Officer attended the National Centre for Public Scrutiny Conference in December 2019. This provided an opportunity for Councillors to highlight good practice in Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton.

Further training sessions proposed by the Councillor Development Group are currently being investigated:

- S106 – What it is and how Members can become involved and engaged. An external training provider has been contacted and his response is awaited.
- Officers are working on potential sessions for Members around - Gangs and Knife Crime – information and video material shown to schools by the police is to be provided to Members
- A further information session on LGBTQ.

Since the last meeting of this Council training / briefing sessions have been held regarding:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Statement of Accounts
- Town Centre Master Plan.

Further briefing sessions on Local Government Reorganisation, led by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, are scheduled to be held on 23rd January 2020, and 18th March 2020 at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

Can Members wishing to attend any of these events please inform Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

Street Lighting

The contract with Balfour Beatty Street Lighting Ltd to undertake a scheme of column replacements and lamp renewals to this Council's street lighting assets across the Borough was finalised and signed just before Christmas. Unfortunately, this took a lot longer than expected.

Currently all the equipment and materials to undertake and complete the works are being procured. It is expected that works will commence early in February and a meeting with the contractor is scheduled to take place on 21st January 2020 to review the delivery schedule.

This meeting will also begin to address the details of the ongoing maintenance contract that will run to the end of NCC's PFI maintenance contract.

Rail Issues

The East West Rail Consortium has not met since 17th September 2019 as detailed in my last report to this Council. It is scheduled to meet again on 30th January 2020 in Bedford.

I and an officer attended a meeting of the West Coast Partnership, a partnership established by the new West Coast franchisee in Birmingham on 8th November 2019. The meeting was arranged by First Trenitalia, this is the new franchisee operating services on the West Coast Main Line, under the name Avanti West Coast, replacing Virgin Trains. The Chief Executive and I had previously met with a senior officer of the franchisee to discuss our aspirations for rail services in Northampton.

Both meetings were very positive, and we raised the case for better direct rail services from Northampton to the north. I believe our voice has been heard and I'm fairly confident that we may see some changes in the 2021 timetable that will benefit Northampton.

Sports Clubs

We are proceeding to finalise the lease with Thorplands 81 regarding the land at Round Spinney that the club wishes to take on. However, before we can complete the lease we have to publicly advertise the disposal of the land as open space. I'm told that this will be advertised either this week or next. Once this process has been completed the lease with the club can be finalised.

Governance Review

The Cross-party Working Group has met twice since the last meeting of this Council. The outcome of the Governance Review has been reported to and discussed by the Working Group. The final report on the review is for consideration by this Council later on the agenda.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

20th January 2020

Annual Rough Sleepers Count 2019

On 28th November, I joined the Leader of the Council, Councillor Beardsworth, Councillor Birch, Councillor Russell and dozens of volunteers in completing a 'snapshot' of rough sleepers.

A total of 49 volunteers (representing a broad range of organisations, including the Council, Northampton Hope Centre, Probation, Churches Together, NAASH, Bridge Substance Misuse Programme, Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter and Northamptonshire County Council) took part in the Count between Midnight and 3.00am.

The Count was attended by a representative from Homeless Link (commissioned by the Government to monitor, observe and validate rough sleepers estimates and counts) and by a journalist representing BBC Radio Northampton and BBC Look East.

During the borough-wide Count, a total of 28 people (21 men, 3 women and 4 people whose gender was not known) were found 'bedded down' in the borough and, of the 24 people who could be identified, a total of 21 were known to the Street Outreach Team.

Earlier that week, the Street Outreach Team visited several encampments (assessed as being too dangerous to visit at night) and found 12 people who were sleeping rough on those sites. On the night of the Count, 16 men were booked into Northampton's Nightshelter.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

In my last report, I explained that members of the Single Homelessness Forum – including the Council – would like 'windchill' to be taken into account in determining when SWEP is activated.

Arrangements are in hand to operate the SWEP Cold Weather Shelter from the Salvation Army Building in Tower Street, Northampton (instead of the Hope Centre which is much smaller and needs to be vacated early in order to be ready for the day centre to open at 8.30am) if it is needed from the end of January 2020.

When the Salvation Army Building is available, shelter will be provided from 9.00pm until 9.00am when the Met Office is forecasting that the 'feels like' temperature (taking into account windchill) will be 0°C or below for at least three consecutive nights. During exceptionally cold weather, consideration will be given to opening the shelter based on the forecast for just one or two nights.

This winter, the Hope Centre has extended the opening hours of its day centre, and the New Covenant Church in Kettering Road, Northampton is operating a nightshelter for women.

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

The draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is now complete and, as soon as it has been signed off by key stakeholders, a 28 day consultation will commence.

Implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by the Housing and Wellbeing Team and will be monitored by the Single Homelessness Forum and the Family Homelessness Forum.

Northampton Landlord Forum

A successful meeting of the Landlords Forum took place on 19th November.

More than 50 local landlords attended the meeting and heard presentations from Council officers and the National Landlords Association on recent housing enforcement activity, the new Additional HMO Licensing Scheme, consultation on the proposed Article 4 Direction, and new legislation affecting private landlords and letting agents.

The Landlord Forum provides the opportunity to learn, exchange ideas and information, and encourage good practice. It also provides good, responsible landlords with the reassurance that the Council is dealing robustly with the criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords who are undercutting them and knowingly letting substandard, unlicensed and unsafe accommodation.

Implementation of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme

Following Cabinet approval in October, the new Additional HMO Licensing Scheme comes into effect on 1st February 2020. To support the licensing process, we have introduced an online licensing system and, as an additional incentive, we are offering an 'early bird discount' for the first 150 licence applications that are received and complete.

Government funding to support multi-agency housing enforcement

I am really pleased to report that the Council has been successful in its bid for an Innovation and Enforcement Grant of £196,000 to tackle criminal landlords.

The Council is committed to raising standards in the private rented sector, using its enforcement powers and working with partners to tackle serious organised crime, and we are proud of our innovative intelligence-led, targeted approach to housing enforcement.

This extra funding has enabled us to set up a Special Operations Unit that will work proactively with the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Trading Standards, Immigration and the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority to spend three months targeting the property portfolios of Northampton's biggest and worst criminal landlords through intelligence led, multi-agency housing enforcement.

We are very keen to build on the success of a large, multi-agency operation that the Council and its partners carried out in November when we targeted the property portfolio of a landlord and identified more than one hundred criminal offences under the Housing Act 2004, including operating HMOs without a licence and allowing tenants to live in squalid and unsafe conditions.

At the end of this 3 months initiative, we will be publishing a report on what we have achieved and we will be hosting a one day seminar for other local authorities to learn more about Northampton's intelligence-led approach and the role that the Special Operations Unit has played in tackling criminal landlords and serious organised crime.

Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH)

NCC's Supported Living Projects

Following Cabinet approval of additional funding in December 2019, construction of the new homes at Moray Lodge and Billing Brook Road Thorplands has now commenced and is due to be completed in Autumn 2020.

Council House New Build Programme

- New homes have been completed in Longland Road, Eastfield and West Oval, Kings Heath.
- Construction has started on the development of new homes on 10 garage sites in Blackthorn and in Fieldway (Abington), Cherry Close (Abington) and Nursery Lane (Kingsthorpe).
- Construction will start soon on the construction of new homes in Limehurst Close, Newton Road and Pendle Road, Duston.
- Following Cabinet approval of 'The Roof Gardens' in November 2019, arrangements are being made to rehouse the remaining residents from Berkeley House and St Mary's Court. Demolition of the flats will be phased to enable archaeological investigations to take place.

Planned Investment Programme

The scoping and scheduling of works for the 2020/21 programme has been completed. Subject to final approval of the 2020/21 HRA budget, the neighbourhood investment works in Briar Hill, Goldings and Southfields will commence on site in April 2020.

Housemark Accreditation for ASB Service

I am delighted to report that the Anti-Social Behaviour Service has been accredited by Housemark for its work in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour.

NPH's ASB Service is one of only 26 ASB Services, nationally, to be accredited by Housemark and it is the only one that is accredited in Northamptonshire.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January, 2020

Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2019, a total of £102,013.45 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards.

Partnership Support

21 Nov – Defence ERS Silver Award received, demonstrates the Council’s continued commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

16 January, partnership showcase event held in the Court Room, 3-5pm, the event provided an opportunity for organisations that the Council funded during 2019-20 to showcase their work and launch the partnership grant for 2020-21, which opened in early January.

Forums

20 Nov- Supported Trans Day of Remembrance at the Guildhall, hosted by Q Space.

22 Nov –International Men’s Day held at the Guildhall between 4pm and 6pm, where health organisations and support agencies joined local producers at a market stall styled event. Organisations that took part included; The Grey Dogs Trust, I Did Adventure, The Lewis Foundation, Northampton Mind, Ngage, Northampton Leisure Trust, Northampton Town Football Club and the Frank Bruno Society. The Mayor announced the winner of this year’s Male Role Model of the Year Award and the top five shortlisted nominees were also recognised. An evening event also took place at the Charles Bradlaugh pub, a music and comedy fundraiser in aid of The Grey Dog Trust, a national charity providing mental health support to young people and schools.

29 Nov – I’m Still Me conference – an education conference providing teachers and other school staff with the skills, confidence and information to support LGBTQ students in primary and secondary schools in the county. Delivered from the LGBTQ Partnership made up of LGBTQ youth providers, Stonewall NCC and NBC’s LGBTQ forum. Event sold out.

3 Dec – joint film show with Northampton Filmhouse for International Day of People with Disabilities – a special relaxed showing, with discounted tickets, of ‘The Peanut Butter Falcon’ with a showing of Northamptonshire Sport’s short film about a local lad with Cerebral Palsy who has taken up wheelchair rugby to improve his self esteem

4 Dec – joint event for International Day of People with Disabilities with Deafconnect and police held at Spencer Dallington Community Centre. Information stands, refreshments and entertainment. Attended by over 50 people.

10 Dec – LGBTQ & Allies Forum Christmas social meeting. Being held at local LGBTQ friendly café and bar, Olly B’s for the first time.

Plans underway for Holocaust Memorial Day, which will be held on 27 January, at 6.30pm in the Great Hall.

Events

It has been a busy few weeks with the annual Remembrance Day Service and Parade (10 November) attracting thousands of visitors into the town centre to show their appreciation of our Armed Forces.

The four forty-foot Christmas trees, 200 x 5' small business trees, cross street Christmas lights, Christmas lamp post lights and general thousands of tree lights have been installed across the town centre, Wellingborough Road and St Leonards Road making our annual Christmas Light Switch-On (23 November) a great success. The thousands of visitors on the Market Square enjoyed the entertainment and the switch-on and the 'snow',

The Frost Fair (1 December) attracted more visitors into the town centre and enjoyed the Christmas Stalls on the Market Square, the stage entertainment and the wonderful parade along Abington Street with large puppets and children.

The Igloo Cinema (1 – 22 December) has attracted families into the town centre to take advantage of the free film shows including Peter Rabbit, Paddington Bear and The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

On the market we delivered stage entertainment (7 December) to attract more shoppers and visitors into the town centre and to take advantage of the free parking offer in our multi-storey car parks.

The annual Christmas parade took place on Sunday 1st December.

This year's theme was the chronicles of Narnia which consisted of many of the fantastic characters from the books and film.

Children were able to take part in a workshop beforehand on the market square to make costumes to also take part.

Thank you also to The Deco at the Savoy pantomime cast for parading and to Northampton Brownies and St. John's ambulance cadets who took part.

In the New Year we are looking forward to supporting our Chinese community with the Chinese New Year (Sunday 26 January 2020) at the Deco Theatre.

Culture & Heritage

Abington Park Museum continues to offer a wide range of exhibitions, activities and events which are appealing to young and old alike.

Early December will see the Northampton Town and County Art Society annual exhibition open. The majority of artwork will be for sale and the exhibition will include studies and preparatory drawings as well as final works.

A Japanese Street Food Cooking workshop led by Yuko Nakayamawas was fully booked and enjoyed by 16 adults. The October half term holidays saw 73 children take part in Musical Instrument and Veggie Sushi workshops and the ever popular Haunted Halloween attracted over 1,600 children and young families who enjoyed spooky craft activities. Three Over 60s talks in November and December sold out to 70 adults at each event and a Tour of Abington Park Museum was enjoyed by 12 members of the Brackley U3A group. The Autumn/Winter series of Art History lectures are continuing to be popular with art followers – over 250 attended the four talks held in October and November. The Senior Shoe Curator gave a presentation on the new museum expansion and shoe gallery to The Friends of Abington Park on Wednesday 6 November. Later in the month, she gave a paper on the orthopaedic project and exhibition 'I Stand Corrected?' to the Dress and Textile Society annual conference looking at Redressing Diversity: Making hidden histories visible.

The festive season kicked off with a dessert cooking event – this was the last in a series of Italian food workshops led by Italian cook and author Carmela Sereno Hayes and was enjoyed by 16 adults. A Festive Evening of Gin hosted by Quentin Neville, owner and distiller from Northampton's Phipps Brewery and Artisan Blending Limited sold out to 31 adults. The annual two-day Christmas Fair took place at the end of November and attracted over 50 traders and weather permitting, is expected to attract over 1,500 visitors each day. A family 'Christmas Magic Lantern Show', Victorian entertainment at its best was delivered by Kevin Varty and sold out to an audience of 70.

During November the museum was hired out to 78 Derngate for their AGM, the Looking Glass Theatre for a series of six Ghost Walks and the Northampton Town & County Society hired the galleries for a private view prior to the exhibition opening. December saw the museum used as a wedding ceremony venue.

The work to regain accreditation is well underway - all policies have been reviewed and signed off by the council and Abington Park Museum has been awarded 'Eligibility for Accreditation'. Once the reopening date for has been confirmed, Northampton Museum & Art Gallery will be considered for 'Eligibility for Accreditation' by the Arts Council.

Northampton Museums was one of three partner museums which supported the project 'Knowledge of the Unseen' which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project re-connected British post-colonial communities with artefacts of their origin. A group of 18 participants selected five objects from the African ethnographic collections and one object from the shoe collections. The objects went on display with narrative written by the participants in an exhibition at Leicester City Museum from October to November 2019. The journey was documented through photography and film that will be rolled out to BME community organisations, schools & website for longevity.

Volunteers are being recruited to assist with re-install of the displays prior to re-opening.

Finally, the History Curator is advising members of the NBC board for the Blue Plaques scheme and some of our volunteers will be providing the research about Northampton Philanthropists and Benefactors.

Museum Expansion Project

Completion of curtain wall and cladding to the exterior of the building has been completed. Roof glazing has been installed and flashing works completed. The building is now watertight and final works on the interior of the atrium are underway.

Creative Events Ltd have been appointed as operator for the museum café and they have been able to input into the fit out of the kitchen and servery now underway.

Electricity and gas are now fully operational in the building and commissioning of mechanical and electrical services is underway.

The exhibition fit out contractor has completed the installation of the shop, selling gallery and temporary exhibition gallery. Work has begun on the Shoe gallery set-works and cases.

Customer Services

The OSS has again successfully achieved the Hearing Accreditation Charter Mark for the 4th consecutive year running.

Building Better Opportunities delivered by Goodwill Solutions will be operating from the OSS again as from 20th November.

Cyber Awareness delivered by Northamptonshire Police is a new Partner that has joined the hub in the OSS and have delivered 4 sessions and assisted 24 customers.

The Smoking Cessation clinic delivered by First for Wellbeing will be back in the OSS as from 18th November providing specialist support to assist customers who want to stop smoking.

Community Safety

14 Nov – Support University, Volunteer Fair with nights out, personal and property safety advice.

25 Nov - support #cutitout campaign launch event at Collingtree Hilton. More than 150 hairdressers from Northampton learning how to signpost clients who may disclose to them they are victims of domestic or sexual abuse.

25 Nov – 10 Dec – 16 Days of Activism – working with the domestic abuse and sexual violence charities in the Borough to provide pop up, support cafes across businesses and organisations in the Town. Posters, baubles and leaflets handed out to businesses, including restaurants, cafes, and shops across the borough.

26 Nov – Our first Secondary School Community Safety Event delivered in partnership to 540 students in year 8 and 9 from Weston Favell Academy around relevant safety issues such as healthy relationships, hate crime and gangs and knife crime.

27 Nov and 6 Dec - Town Centre day of action; community safety officers, police and Big in the Grosvenor centre sharing key safety messages, information and advice to members of the public. Raising awareness of 16 days of activism (international domestic/sexual violence campaign) and sharing materials to businesses in town centre.

2 Dec – World Aids Day civic event. Speeches in the courtyard followed by refreshments and information in the court room.

Anti-Social Behaviour

A Cuckooing Injunction is being progressed to tackle a persistent offender.

7 CPN and 15 CPW's issued, in relation to neighbour nuisance, shoplifting, noise and street drinking.

Councillor Anna King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety



Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January, 2020

Environmental Services Re-Provision

The Environmental Service provided through the contract continues to improve, recycling rates continue to improve, missed bin collections continue to decrease.

Approximately 3000 properties transferred from sacks to bins in November/December with little or no problems though we have received a few negative enquiries but we hope to resolve these in the very near future.

Street cleansing standards continue to improve and a task and finish group has been established to reduce the amount of flytipping experienced in some hotspots in the town.

The winter maintenance programme continues and plans are being prepared for next seasons grass cutting operations.

A Cemeteries and graveyard guidance document has been produced and is now being prepared for adoption into policy.

Senior management meetings with Veolia continue to take place, assessing and monitoring performance.

Environmental Services (Direct Services)

Ecton Brook Play Area has been completed and the feedback from local residents has been very positive.

Abington Park Aviary – The old dilapidated Peacock sheds have been replaced with new ones with lights and heaters.

St David's Allotments – The entrance gates at the allotments have been replaced with a new set. They have also been moved further back on to the site to allow more space for cars when turning into the entrance, as there were traffic issues entering from the main road.

Upton Country Park (Phase 1) – A new long awaited trim trail has been installed near the Elgar Centre.

Hunsbury Country Park – The old slide has been removed and replaced with a new one. Also, the play safety matting has been replaced under a number of other pieces of play equipment at that site.

Grangewood Park – Bunding has been put in place at the entrance to the park from Clannell Road to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.

Alliston Gardens – A new fence has been installed across a gap to stop ASB issues in the Semilong area – Working in partnership with the Police.

Environmental Health

The technical work required to progress the declaration of the town centre air quality management area is still being progressed and we are hoping to be able to come back to Cabinet with a report on the precise details of the area in the coming months.

The work on the installation of the electric vehicle charging points is progressing with surveys being undertaken by the power providers and work is beginning to put the required Traffic Regulation Orders in place to restrict the use of the parking bays to electric vehicle charging.

The Climate Change Forum met on 12 November. Data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy confirms that between 2005 and 2017 there has been a 45% decrease in per capita emissions of CO2 in Northampton. This compares with an national average decrease of 40%.

During November the environmental enforcement officers started working closely with the neighbourhood wardens to take additional enforcement action in relation to fly tipping and accumulations of refuse bags in the Mounts. In the first month a total of 42 fixed penalty notices were issued. This trial is continuing and will be expanded to other parts of the town.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment



Development

A busy December in planning saw the following applications determined:

- Outline planning application N/2017/1369 for the development of up to 525 dwellings, open space and associated infrastructure (cross boundary planning application) on land north of Newport Pagnell Road was approved in principle by the Planning Committee on 19th November 2019, subject to the finalisation of a S106 agreement.
- Planning application for the conversion of existing dwelling to 6 no. apartments, construction of 4 new apartments and 4 new dwellings at Highfield House, 383 Kettering Road was approved by the Planning Committee on 19th November 2019.
- Planning permission N/2018/0774 for the erection of 118 dwellings on land west of St Crispin Drive was granted on 25th November 2019, following the completion of a S106 agreement.
- Planning permission N/2018/1207 for the erection of 138 dwellings on land at former British Timken site, Main Road, Duston was granted on 22nd November 2019, following the completion of a S106 agreement.
- 83 Planning Applications have been determined in November 2019.
- Development Management has maintained 100% performance standard in terms of major, minor and other applications in November 2019.

Planning Policy

Work is continuing on the next steps in the process of producing the Northampton Local Plan Part 2.

Important and long awaited Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) on Houses in Multiple Occupation, Parking Standards and Specialist Housing were adopted by the Council at the November meeting of Cabinet. These SPDs will be material considerations when planning applications are being considered which will be of great assistance to Planning Officers and the Planning Committee.

Public consultation has begun on an Borough wide Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for converting dwelling houses (Use Class C3) to houses in multiple occupation for three to six people (Use Class C4) in those parts of the Borough that are not already covered by such a direction. This is something which both Councillors and residents have been keen to see rolled out for some time.

Heritage

Works have concluded on the sensitive repair of the Queen Eleanor Cross.

Public consultation on the St Giles Conservation Area Re-appraisal and Management Plan has taken place and concluded on 23rd December 2019.

A new Tree Preservation Order has been put in place for land to the rear of 48 – 84 Southfield Road, Duston.

Building Controls Cabinet bullet points

In the last month:

- 4 dangerous structure notifications were received and actioned.
- 5 Demolition notifications were received.
- 61 Building Regulation applications were submitted.
- 8 Street naming and numbering applications were submitted.
- 81 notifications for the commencement of work were received.
- 39 certificates of completions were issued.
- 369 Building Regulation related site inspections were carried out.

Councillor James Hill
Cabinet Member for Planning



Cabinet Member Report for Cllr Tim Hadland

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January 2020

Economic Growth and Regeneration

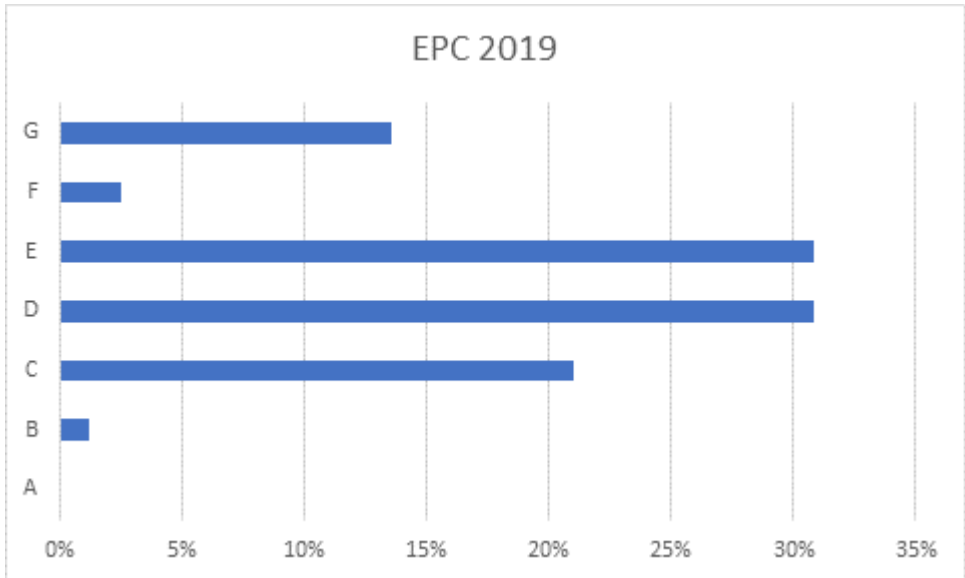
Negotiations have been ongoing for some months to enter into a contract with Balfour Beatty Street Lighting Ltd to replace all c1300 street lights on NBC land. This includes replacement of approx. 400 columns. The new lights will be LED to save money on our energy bills and reduce our carbon footprint. The project order was signed at the end of December and it is anticipated that work will commence on site mid-February. The programme is currently being drawn up and is intended to take 24 weeks. The value of the contract is £998k and the overall project value is £1.05m to include consultants and contingency.

Ridge consulting via Bloom procurement are carrying out condition surveys on c120 properties. 80 are complete and the remainder will be concluded by end of February. The information obtained from the surveys will feed into a planned maintenance schedule. It will also help with the Asset Strategy being produced and provide helpful information for the move into unitary

Asset Management

The Annual Property Accounting Valuations for year end 2019 is ongoing. Valuers have begun reviewing assets for 2020 year.

There are 81 EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) surveys have been completed. The chart below shows the percentage of each type of those completed. From 1 April 2018 it became illegal to create a new tenancy if the rating was below E (some exemptions apply) and as of 1 April 2023 it will be illegal to continue to let property under and E. The information will help form the asset strategy and determine disposals.



A corporate asset manager is now in post and establishing a new team with the aim of improving performance in the service and reducing the reliance on interim staff. The posts will be advertised in January.

We are driving forward the community asset transfer of public space to Parish Councils and one of the new positions in the asset team will be focussed on this role.

Regeneration

In August 2019 Cabinet approved the purchase of The Old Black Lion Pub to enable the regeneration of a Grade II listed public house, in order to strengthen the sense of place in the heritage Gateway area. We are pleased to confirm the purchase is now complete which is the first stage in delivering our regeneration plans. We will be working in partnership with the Churches Conservation Trust

The Future High Street Project team (Grant Thornton, 5Plus, Gillespies, CS2 and Avison Young) along with the Northampton Forward Board have continued with developing a Business Case. A draft Business Case must be submitted to MHCLG by the 15th January, with the full Business Case being submitted by 30th April 2020.

Public consultation on latest Market Square design proposals took place between 28th November and 3rd January, and received 1067 responses. I am grateful to the staff members who facilitated the public display on the Market Square on a particularly cold and wet December Saturday. The report is expected within the next few weeks.

The Horizon Park pre-application will be submitted in January for option 1 office use.

The Vulcan Works project continues to move at pace with steel structures in place along Angel Street and well underway on St Johns site.

Upton Country Park Phase 2 is due to complete in February 2020 with information boards to be installed and board walk awaiting approval from Environmental Agency.

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery works are near completion with phased internal fit out underway. Launch is programmed for the 16th March 2020.

NN Contemporary Art have move from 9 Guildhall Road to refurbished accommodation in the Council's Guildhall Road bloc

Cllr Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January, 2020

Finance

On the 23 December the Cabinet considered the published draft Budget 2020/21 and medium term financial plans for consultation. Full details of our draft Budget and the consultation can be found on our website using the following link:

[NBC Budget Consultation 2020-21](#)

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published in the week before

Christmas, Friday 20 December 2019. This broadly confirmed the funding estimates made in our draft Budget. There were a few announcements in the Settlement that are likely to affect our medium term financial position,

Including:

- Council tax referendum limits reduced to the greater of £5 or 2.00% (a reduction of 1% from 2019-20) for lower tier councils.
- Confirmation that the Business Rate Pilot (Which Northamptonshire Councils were a part of for 2019-20) will not be extended.
- Confirmation that New Homes Bonus Scheme is likely to come to an end soon.

An assessment is being undertaken on the impact of the provisional settlement on our draft Budget and any amendments will be reflected in the Council's final budget which is planned to be considered by Cabinet in February and at Council on 24 February 2020.

The Finance Team in addition to working hard on the next Budget, are also very busy with our new external Auditor (EY), who commenced their audit of 2018-19 in December 2019. They will also be commencing preparatory work for the closedown of 2019-20.

Revenues & Benefits

The Revenues and Benefits Service continues to deliver to service standards, it has also consulted on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which informed elements of the draft budget for 2020-21, with the majority of responses supporting no change to the existing scheme.

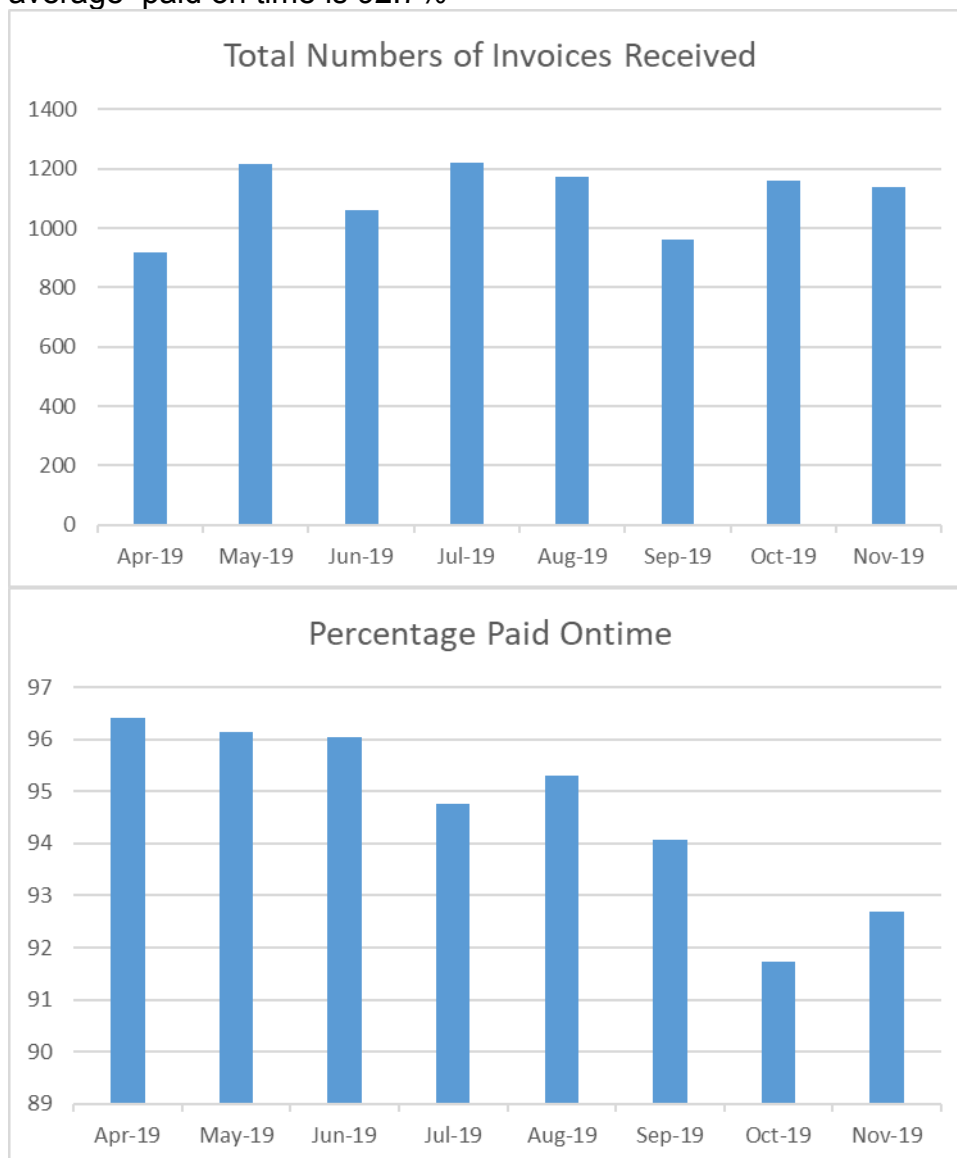
The impact of Universal Credit on the Revenue and Benefits Service and capacity requirements

will be monitored. A Single Person Discount review is active and having an impact, with several households being invited to update their status as appropriate. SPD is a 'benefit' and misuse can be considered a fraud and the Council is required to administer DWP benefits correctly.

The move by more households to pay Council Tax over twelve monthly instalments rather than the traditional ten, has had an impact on the collection rate profile, rather than the value collected.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE / RECEIVABLE

The table below reflect that 8850 Invoices were received, up to the end of November 2019, the average paid on time is 92.7%



In respect of recorded sundry debt as at the end of November 2019 there was a total of £1,928,206.46 (excluding Housing Benefit Debt) on the sundry debtors system of which £1,284,876.54 was older than 61 days. The largest service area debt is Asset Management with £635,834.97 of debt. The CFO Governance Team continues to work with the Asset Management Team to improve processes, procedures and debt management to reduce the level of aged debt.

Facilities Management

December:

- The election did impact on planning for Christmas Parties, 3 nights were hosted.
- Hosted 2 panto rehearsals, 1 conference and a wedding ceremony before being taken over by the election. Opened on 28th December to host 2 wedding ceremonies and 1 reception.

November:

- Guildhall Office team exceeded their income target for the month. With successful events including; the Junior Law Society Winter Ball, The Reel Affair Ball, Silver Linings Wedding Fair, Pre-Loved Vintage Wholesale, the NCC Staff Recognition Awards and Remembrance Sunday.
- Of 6 Wedding Enquiries this month we have converted 4 into confirmed bookings. We have also taken 7 enquiries for events/meetings for early 2020 and the team are busy trying to convert these into bookings
- Guildhall Officers had the mammoth task of re-arranging room bookings to accommodate the general election that was sprung on us at short notice.
- Repair and recommissioning of the OSS and Spencer Percival doors
- A total of 39,719 items of post dispatched
- 1,675 incoming documents scanned, overall scanning accuracy – 99.9%, with indexing accuracy – 99.1%
- 1,488 incoming Revs and Bens documents indexed in total, 2989 incoming Revs and Bens e-mails indexed
- Savings of just under £3,000 made by using Royal Mail Business Mail

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance

Appendices: 5



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
20th January, 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Chief Executive

Report Title	Community Governance Review and results of consultation
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To report to Full Council on the results of the consultation exercise carried out by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for a proposed town council for Northampton and the separate consultation exercise in respect of the proposed new parish council for Kingsthorpe and community council for Far Cotton & Delapre. In addition, to also consider the results of the consultation exercise in respect of the proposal by Duston Parish Council to extend its boundaries (see appendix 1 for all the results of the consultations referred to above).
- 1.2 To consider the recommendations made to Full Council by the Cross Party Working Group on 13th January, 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council:
- 2.2 Consider the report of ORS on the second and final stage of the consultation on a proposed town council for Northampton (Appendix 1)
- 2.3 Consider the results of the separate consultation exercise in respect of the proposals to create a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre and this to include the separate consultation in respect of Duston Parish Council's proposal to extend its boundaries. (Appendix 1)
- 2.4 Approve the following recommendations of the Cross Party Working Group at its meeting on 13th January, 2020, namely:

- a) That having considered the results of the ORS consultation exercise it accepts option 'A' as the preferred option for a town council in Northampton minus the area of Kingsthorpe and Far Cotton & Delapre which are now recommended as separate parish and community council's (see Appendix 2 for option A and B plans as per the ORS report)
- b) That it accepts the results of the consultation in respect of Far Cotton & Delapre and recommends the establishment of a community council for the said unparished area of the Borough Council with the boundaries as shown on the enclosed plan (Appendix 3)
- c) That it accepts the results of the consultation in respect of Kingsthorpe and recommends the establishment of a parish council for the said unparished area of the Borough Council with the boundaries as shown on the enclosed plan (Appendix 4)
- d) That discussions between the Whitehills & Spring Park Residents Association and various other voluntary groups etc in the Kingsthorpe area begin as soon as possible to ensure both cohesion and joint working in the setting up of the new parish council for Kingsthorpe
- e) That Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils are appointed to carry out work on the establishment of a town council for Northampton and any agreed ancillary work on the establishment of a new parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton in the unparished areas of the Borough Council, and to commence work on these proposals as soon as possible, once a final decision has been made by Full Council on the 20th January, 2020.
- f) That after consideration of the results of the consultation, the proposal made by Duston Parish Council to extend its boundaries is not approved (Appendix 5)
- g) That it approves the principle and method of initial financing by way of grant funding from the Borough Council and any necessary reports on this proposal be brought back to future meetings of the Cross Party Working Group and/or Full Council
- h) That it delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Cross Party Working Group to oversee the process of implementing the decisions of Full Council and the Cross Party Working Group which includes the appointment of any necessary consultants to assist the process of implementation and/or any required support
- i) That it notes the need for further additional meetings of Full Council and the Cross Party Working Group in respect of a number of issues that will require future approval such as agreeing statutory orders to set up a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton and issues relating to the number of town and parish councillors etc

- j) That Full Council agree an additional budget of £100,000 to cover the period to the end of the financial year 2019-2020 which will include costs already incurred on the consultation exercises and the implementation of decisions taken by Full Council at today's meeting
- k) That a financial statement be submitted to the next Cross Part Working Group on the costs of the community governance exercise and the estimated required funds which will be needed for the period 2020/21

3 Issues

- 3.1 The Cross Party Working Group at its two meetings on the 17th December, 2019 and 13th January, 2020 gave careful consideration to the results of the consultation exercise carried out by ORS into the proposal for a town council for Northampton. As shown in the ORS report there were two options, A & B put forward for consideration (see Appendix 2). After careful consideration at the said two meetings, the Cross Party Working Group opted for option A, minus the two proposals for a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre. As stated the Cross Party Working Group gave consideration to the results of the ORS consultation and in particular noted that while there was support for a town council, there was no overall majority for either option A or B.

The Cross Party Working Group in its deliberations considered that option A (minus the two proposed parish/community councils) would be a more realistic option to proceed with on the basis of giving better representation to the whole of the remaining unparished area of the Borough Council and also provided a better basis for delivering local community services. It was also cognisant of other issues such as an appropriate tax base, and cohesion between the communities and the extension of the mayoralty.

It was also recognised that within the next two to four years there could be a further Community Governance Review to reconsider the position after the appropriate consultations. This demand for a further Community Governance Review could of course, come from the communities themselves.

In addition, the Cross Party Working Group, after careful consideration of the outcomes of the consultation and debate, opted to accept the results of the consultation in respect of Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton & Delapre and Duston and recommend the establishment of a parish council for Kingsthorpe, a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre and to reject the proposal to extend the boundaries for Duston Parish Council.

It was felt that in respect of Kingsthorpe there had to be more discussion and interplay between the various residents and voluntary groups to ensure better cohesion and joint working to achieve a successful implementation of the new parish council. It is always important that all the communities that make up a parish council area are confident that such a council can represent their interests and the issues they care about and this can be facilitated by joint discussion and working.

4. Matters for Consideration

- 4.1 The following are a number of pointers (not exhaustive) which the Working Group considered when they discussed the proposal for a town council for Northampton and a community council for Kingsthorpe at their meeting on 13th January 2020:
- i) Size of the proposed town council/community council and social cohesion between different communities, common interest etc.
 - ii) Tax base for any proposed town council/community council precept and likely services to be delivered.
 - iii) What would the communities within a new town council/community council expect of such councils. Their priorities, aims, improvements etc.
 - iv) Boundary issues and community cohesion between different areas within a new town council and/or community council.
 - v) Building upon existing community areas and organisations i.e. local residents associations, community groups who already provide support to their communities, such as support for the elderly and disabled,

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has advised that every option for a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton has to be considered on its own merits and consideration given to issues such as geography, population and the various communities involved in these areas. Consideration also has to be given as to what kind of services might be delivered and the need to fill parish/community council vacancies.

In the end it is for Full Council to reach its decisions as based on every elected members knowledge of their communities and the wide and varied contacts they have in those same communities.

5. Appointment of the Northampton County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)

- 5.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the appointment of NCALC to assist in setting up the proposed town council for Northampton and further assistance in respect of the proposed two new parish/community councils for Kingsthorpe and Delapre & Far Cotton. Time is very short with only a six to eight week period to prepare for nominations etc to the proposed new councils and their elections in May 2020.

NCALC's involvement covers intensive work and support, including interim clerking support, councillor and clerk recruitment, training and induction for the new council. The aim is to ensure that the new council will be positioned to become fully embedded within their role over the next 15 months. NCALC have extensive local knowledge of Northamptonshire and provides advice and

assistance to all the parish/community councils in the County area. They also have experience in assisting in the creation of new parish and town councils.

Financial reports will be submitted to future meetings of the Cross Party Working Group in order that costs can be monitored and further reports made to Full Council as and when necessary.

6. Resources and Risk

- 6.1 In July 2018 Council agreed to delegate a budget of up to £30k to undertake any specialist activity associated with undertaking a community governance review. It is recommended in this report to agree an additional budget of £100k to cover the period to the end of 2019/20. This would give an overall budget of £130k to the end of 2019/20. Total spend to date on the community governance review, covering both 2018/19 and 2019/20, is £111k. This money will come from the Council's reserves.
- 6.2 In addition, this report recognises further budget will be required in 2020/21 for the community governance review. No estimate is currently available for these additional costs, but it is proposed that the next Cross Party Working Group will review these planned costs. Any additional funding required in 2020/21 will also need to come from the Council's reserves.
- 6.3 This report proposes that any new parish councils would initially be funded by a grant from Northampton Borough Council, until the new parish/community councils are in a position to set their own precept. Any additional funding required for Northampton Borough Council to provide this grant will also need to come from the Council's reserves.

7. Legal

- 7.1 There are no legal issues at this stage except the need to comply with the requisite legislation

8. Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

- 8.1 None

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 Need to achieve the initial establishment of a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre in time for the nominations of councillors to be received for elections to these new councils.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 As enclosed.

George Candler
Chief Executive



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Northampton Borough Council

Consultation on the creation of a new Town Council and Parish and/or Community Councils for the Northampton Borough Council Area

As with all our studies, findings from this report are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

Any press release or publication of the findings of this report requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation

This study was conducted in accordance with ISO 20252:2012 and ISO 9001:2008.

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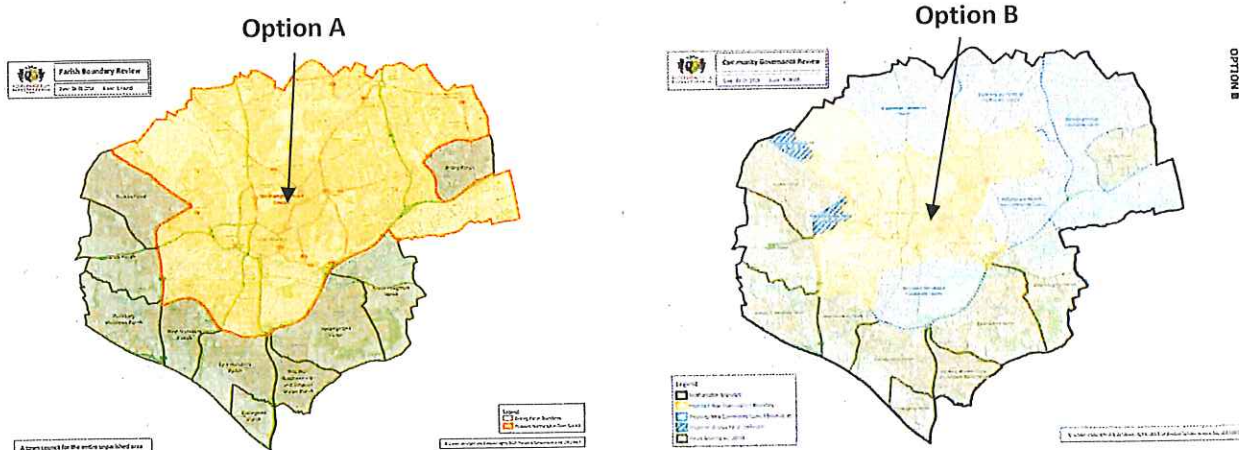
At all stages of the project, ORS' status as an independent organisation consulting stakeholders, councillors and members of the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for that trust and hope this report will contribute to the ongoing Community Governance Review (CGR) consultation process.

1. Executive Summary

Summary of main findings

The engagement context

- 1.1 All District and Borough Councils, including the County Council, are currently engaged in a restructure of local government across Northamptonshire. All existing Councils in the county were due to be abolished in 2021, with two new Unitary Authorities being created to provide all services in their respective areas; the existing Northampton Borough area is intended to fall within the new West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority. However, this has temporarily been put on hold until after the December 2019 General Election.
- 1.2 Northampton Borough Council (NBC) has been considering the benefits of creating a new Town Council for the town of Northampton to ensure residents have a stronger voice in the provision of services and the needs of the town; preserve the town's historic identity and heritage; and promote its interests once the new West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority comes into effect.
- 1.3 In Spring 2019, the Council undertook an initial listening and engagement phase of consultation to understand the views from key stakeholders on possible options for a new Town Council or any alternatives.
- 1.4 A subsequent debate at Full Council on 3rd June 2019 carefully considered the results of the initial stage of consultation and following this, the Council decided to:
 - » Undertake further localised consultation (letters to every household) in particular areas (Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton and Delapre) to understand views of residents on the possible creation of parish or community councils in these areas.
 - » Undertake a wider consultation on the possible creation of a new Town Council.
 - » Amend the shape and size of Option B (a smaller Town Council) to allow areas surrounding the town, the option of expressing interest in being separate parishes or Community Councils.
- 1.5 The two options for a new Town Council now being consulted on are:
 - » A: Creation of a new Town Council covering the whole of the Northampton area where no Parish/Community Councils currently exist; or
 - » B: Creation of a smaller Town Council covering the central urban core of Northampton¹



¹ The boundary would be dependent on which, if any, of the surrounding areas end up becoming Parish or Community Councils

The commission and consultation process

- 1.6 NBC commenced the second phase of consultation in September 2019. This final formal phase of consultation was designed to gather views on the two options outlined previously – as well as any proposed alternatives. These views will be considered by the Council before it makes its final decision on these matters.
- 1.7 The consultation period started on 27th September 2019 and ended on 8th November 2019. Opinion Research Services (ORS) - a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research - was appointed by NBC to:
- » Design and analyse an open consultation questionnaire (which was available via the Council's website and on paper), to which there were 209 responses from individuals and 8 responses from organisations;
 - » Facilitate a forum with local stakeholders and parish councillors;
 - » Convene and facilitate three focus groups with 31 randomly-selected members of the public (one in the north, one in the east and one in the centre of Northampton); and
 - » Independently report all of these elements.

The report

- 1.8 This executive summary summarises the consultation outcomes to highlight the overall balance of opinion. We trust that this summary is a sound guide to these outcomes, but readers are urged to consult the full report that follows for more detailed insights and understanding of the assumptions, arguments, conclusions and feelings about the principle of and options for a new Town Council and Parish and/or Community Councils for the Northampton Borough Council Area. In contrast to the more thematic approach in this executive summary, the full report considers the feedback from the three main elements of the consultation in turn because it is important that the full report provides a full evidence-base for those considering the research and its findings. We trust that both this summary and full report will be helpful to all concerned.

Awareness of the change to the structure of local government in Northamptonshire

Residents' Survey

- 1.9 Less than half (45%) reported they were either very aware or fairly aware of the possible change to local government in the area.

Open Questionnaire

- 1.10 In contrast, around four fifths (81%) of individual respondents and all eight organisations reported they were either very aware or fairly aware of possible change to local government in the area. This demonstrates that respondents to the consultation questionnaire are more informed than general residents; it may therefore suggest that the profile of questionnaire respondents is somewhat different in composition, compared to general residents.

Importance of having an organisation that promotes the interests of the town, preserves its historic identity/heritage and delivers services at a local level

Residents' Survey

- 1.11 The majority said that it is important to them to have an organisation that delivers services at a local level (97%), promotes the interests of the town (95%) and preserves the town's historic identity/heritage (89%).

Open Questionnaire

- 1.12 Most said that it is important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town (93% of individuals; 8 of 8 organisations), delivers services at a local level (92% of individuals; 8 of 8 organisations) and preserves the town's historic identity/heritage (91% of individuals; 7 of 8 organisations).

Deliberative Sessions

- 1.13 In the focus groups and forums, there was considerable support for the *principle* of having a new Town Council, particularly within a more remote unitary local government structure, chiefly for the following reasons: promoting the interests of Northampton and its residents, preserving the town's historic identity/heritage and ensuring local service delivery. The overarching concern from the deliberative sessions was the need to revitalise the town centre.

Proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished

Residents' Survey

- 1.14 Over three fifths (62%) of agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished, whilst around one in seven (15%) disagree.

Open Questionnaire

- 1.15 Over two thirds (69%) of individuals agree with the proposal, as do 7 of 8 organisations, although nearly a quarter (24%) disagree.
- 1.16 As noted to some extent above, the main reasons for supporting the proposal were that a Town Council would: promote the interests of Northampton and its residents; retain decision-making at a local level; preserve the town's historic identity/heritage; and ensure local service delivery by residents with a care for their neighbourhoods. Moreover, it was suggested that a new Town Council would mitigate against the fear that as other areas of Northamptonshire are already largely parished, Northampton may not have as strong a voice as they would have within the proposed new unitary structure.
- 1.17 The most common reasons for opposition or concern were around: 'unnecessary bureaucracy' and the potential for damaging and divisive local politics; potentially unaffordable council tax rises for local residents; and the creation of duplication within services.

Deliberative Sessions

- 1.18 The main reasons given in the deliberative sessions for supporting the creation of a new Town Council were seeing the benefits of the town having a voice, yet having a small, focussed and accountable Town Council along with a perception that the Town Council would be a fresh start after the difficulties with local government in Northamptonshire over the previous few years. It was considered to be an opportunity to attract the best people.

- 1.19 In tandem with support for a Town Council came support for an increase in the number of parish or community councils outside the town centre, again to provide a local voice which is accountable locally.
- 1.20 Concerns about the proposal were based on a loss of faith in local government; that any new Town Council and unitary authority should not recreate a smaller version of the current structure (which is being dismantled) and that it should not be run by 'the same people'.
- 1.21 More generally, there were concerns that there should be representation for all across the (current) Borough; that preferably no area should be unparished and that monies gathered through the Council Tax precept should be spent across the area and not flow inequitably to the town centre; money should be spent in the local area where it is gathered. At the same time, deprivation in the town centre was recognised as an issue.

Which parts of the Borough a new Town Council should cover

Residents' Survey

- 1.22 Around half (48%) of residents reported that a new Town Council should be larger and cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst a similar proportion (50%) said it should be smaller and cover only part the central urban core of Northampton (Option B). 2% stated they would prefer the Town Council to cover a different part of the Borough.

Open Questionnaire

- 1.23 Over two fifths (45%) of individual questionnaire respondents felt that a new Town Council should cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst a similar proportion (42%) said it should be smaller and cover only part the central urban core of Northampton (Option B). 13% stated they would prefer the Town Council to cover a different part of the borough.
- 1.24 Looking at the organisational responses, three quarters (6 out of 8) felt a Town Council should cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst 2 out of 8 felt it should cover the central urban core of Northampton (Option B).

Deliberative Sessions

- 1.25 In the deliberative sessions, the majority of stakeholders in the workshop preferred Option A – a larger Town Council, with their primary reason being that a large Town Council would provide the strongest representation for Northampton residents within the new unitary structure. The majority in the focus groups favoured Option B – a smaller Town Council, as being the most advantageous option for local (parish) communities and did not emulate the existing structure in miniature.
- 1.26 Under either option, it was considered necessary to implement a plan, to revitalise the town centre to deal with social issues, re-let empty shops and increase other facilities designed to encourage people to come into the town centre for shopping and leisure – and a new Town Council was felt to be a good way to help with this.

Minimising costs to residents or taking responsibility for as many services as possible

Open Questionnaire

- 1.27 Three fifths of questionnaire respondents provided responses which fell at the extremes of the scale – 35% selected option 1 (Town Council should take responsibility for as many local services as possible),

whilst 25% answered option 9 (Town Council should minimise the cost to residents). A further 15% chose the middle option – option 5.

- 1.28 When percentages are combined, it is evident that respondents have a slight preference for the Town Council to taking responsibility for more local services (options 1-4; 46%), as opposed to minimising the cost to residents (options 6-9; 39%). Opinion was also similarly divided among the organisations responding.

Deliberative Sessions

- 1.29 There were a number of subtly different views expressed by the public focus group participants, but the general thrust of most were a concern that local taxes should be spent locally, and that spending should be accountable. One participant may have summed up the general feeling in saying: *"I don't necessarily want it to be cheaper, but I'd like them to spend the money better."* That said, participants were concerned that spending decisions should work for people who are already deprived. Starting small and building up from there was also suggested with the understanding that that residents would not mind paying more for increased local service provision if they are able to see the Town Council, and any new parish councils, achieving results from the outset.

Overall Conclusions

- Less than half of residents' survey respondents are aware of the proposed changes to government in the area, although most of open questionnaire respondents reported being very or fairly aware.
- It is considered important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town, preserves its historic identity/heritage and delivers services at a local level.
- Most agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished.
- Opinion is equally divided over which parts of the Borough a new Town Council should cover.
- Respondents have a slight preference for the Town Council taking responsibility for more local services, as opposed to minimising the cost to residents.

- 1.30 While it was generally considered important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town, preserves its historic identity and heritage and delivers services at a local level, there was considerable debate events about what the remit and responsibilities of any new organisation would be.
- 1.31 There are, though, concerns even among those who support the principle of creating a new Town Council, chiefly around: 'unnecessary bureaucracy' and the potential for damaging and divisive local politics; potentially unaffordable council tax rises for local residents; and the creation of duplication within services. Focus group participants also noted that the new structure should not replicate the existing structure and should not be run by 'the same people'.

- 1.32 Budgets and funding for a Town Council were matters of concern, particularly the size of the precept that residents would need to pay in parishes outside of the Town Council in relation to where the money would be spent; across the whole area from which it was collected or more focussed on the town centre.
- 1.33 As for the preferred size and shape of any new Town Council, opinion was equally divided in the residents' survey and open questionnaire, whilst in the deliberative events, Option B was slightly preferred by members of the public who attended the focus groups and Option A was favoured by stakeholders and parish councillors.
- 1.34 Those in favour of Option A noted that all Northampton residents will need local representation (with the introduction of unitary authorities) and that a large Town Council was the best option, whilst for those whose preference was Option B, they spoke of the benefits that could be obtained from creating a more community-centred body.
- 1.35 There is also a need for careful consideration of the level of precept which would need to be charged by any new Town Council, particularly under Option B, the smaller town council. Participants in favour of either option made important arguments about the need to keep council tax affordable, and also highlighted the comparatively large proportion of households around the town centre who are in receipt of benefits and therefore who do not pay Council Tax, which would be particularly relevant under the smaller Town Council, Option B. These points will need to be considered very carefully by decision makers in considering the most appropriate size and shape of any new Town Council and if one is created, its eventual budget and associated precept, as care needs to be taken around the possible disproportionate burden that any rise to council tax may place on the least affluent residents such as the working poor: *"The smaller {town centre} area encompasses some of the poorest areas... You're asking some of the poorest to pay more"*.
- 1.36 Lastly, many attendees of the deliberative sessions remarked that insufficient information was made available to residents; although in practice ORS notes that this is difficult, as the precise cost of any Town Council would depend on the size and shape, and the services it eventually took responsibility for.

2. The Consultation Process

Overview of the consultation

Background to the review

- 2.1 All District and Borough Councils, including the County Council, are currently engaged in a restructure of local government across Northamptonshire. All existing Councils in the county were due to be abolished in 2021, with two new Unitary Authorities being created to provide all services in their respective areas; the existing Northampton Borough area is intended to fall within the new West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority. However, this has temporarily been put on hold until after the December 2019 General Election.
- 2.2 Northampton Borough Council (NBC) has been considering the benefits of creating a new Town Council for the town of Northampton to ensure residents have a stronger voice in the provision of services and the needs of the town; preserve the town's historic identity and heritage; and promote its interests once the new West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority comes into effect.
- 2.3 In Spring 2019, the Council undertook an initial listening and engagement phase of consultation to understand the views from key stakeholders on possible options for a new Town Council or any alternatives. Findings from the engagement questionnaire showed that:
 - » Stakeholders feel that it is important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town, preserves its historic identity/heritage and delivers services at a local level
 - » Opinion was divided over the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished (51 per cent support – 41 per cent opposed)
 - » Option A (a Town Council covering the whole of the unparished area of Northampton) was preferred to Option B (a Town Council for part of Northampton covering the town centre)
- 2.4 During this initial phase, the Council also received some petitions and expressions of interest for new parish and Community Councils to be created in particular areas that are currently unparished (e.g. Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton and Delapre etc).
- 2.5 A subsequent debate at Full Council on 3rd June 2019 carefully considered the results of the initial stage of consultation and following this, the Council decided to:
 - » Undertake further localised consultation (letters to every household) in particular areas (Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton and Delapre) to understand views of residents on the possible creation of parish or community councils in these areas. Undertake a wider consultation on the possible creation of a new Town Council.
 - » Amend the shape and size of Option B (a smaller Town Council) to allow areas surrounding the town, the option of expressing interest in being separate parishes or Community Councils
- 2.6 The two options for a new Town Council now being consulted on are:

- » A: Creation of a new Town Council covering the whole of the Northampton area where no Parish/Community Councils currently exist (this is the same area that was identified as Option A in the initial phase of the consultation); or
- » B: Creation of a smaller Town Council covering the central urban core of Northampton²

The commission

- 2.7 NBC commenced the second phase of consultation in September 2019. This final formal phase of consultation was designed to gather views on the two options outlined previously – as well as any proposed alternatives. These views will be considered by the Council before it makes its final decision on these matters.
- 2.8 The consultation period started on 27th September 2019 and ended on 8th November 2019. Opinion Research Services (ORS) - a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research - was appointed by NBC to; design and analyse an open consultation questionnaire (which was available via the Council's website and on paper); facilitate one forum with local stakeholders and parish councillors; convene and facilitate three focus groups with randomly-selected members of the public; and independently report all of these elements.

Quantitative engagement

Residents Survey

- 1.1 The first form of quantitative engagement was the residents' survey. The survey was undertaken over the telephone with residents aged 18 and over to ensure that a broadly representative profile of opinions was achieved from those living in the unparished areas of Northampton using the same core questions as in the open questionnaire.
- 1.2 ORS staff conducted 300 structured telephone interviews between 14th October and 8th November 2019 using a 'CATI' (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) technology. The survey was conducted using a quota controlled sampling approach, to ensure a broadly representative sample across the unparished areas of Northampton.
- 1.3 The extent to which results can be generalised from a sample depends on how well the sample represents the population from which it is drawn, and different types of people in different places may have been more or less likely to take part. This is known as response bias and can be corrected through a process of statistical weighting.
- 1.4 During this process, the demographic characteristics of residents were compared against data for the whole population (in this instance, the population in the unparished areas of Northampton) to identify which types of people were more or less likely to take part in the survey. Statistical weights were then calculated and applied to the data so that the survey results are broadly consistent with the overall population.

² The boundary would be dependent on which, if any, of the surrounding areas end up becoming Parish or Community Councils

- 1.5 During the weighting process, it is important to ensure that no individual respondent has an unduly large influence on the overall survey results, so the statistical weights are 'capped'; therefore, the survey data may not be identical to the comparative data even after it has been weighted.
- 1.6 Survey results based on the weighted data are broadly representative of the unparished areas of Northampton. After taking account of the weighting process, we can be 95% confident that the residents' survey results will be within around $\pm 5.7\%$ points of the views of the population that the sample represents. Therefore, if everyone in the population had given their views, then 19-times-out-of-20 the results would be within around 5.7% points of the survey estimate.
- 1.7 Given this context, when the report refers to results based on the weighted data the results are given as the proportion of "residents". Any results based on unweighted data (including the results from the open questionnaire) refer specifically to the proportion of "respondents".

Open consultation questionnaire

- 2.9 The open consultation questionnaire was available for anyone to complete via the Council's website and on paper and 209 responses were received from individuals and 8 from organisations. The questionnaire included questions about:
 - » The extent to which people were aware of the proposed changes to local government in Northamptonshire;
 - » The importance or unimportance of having an organisation that preserves the town's heritage and history, promotes its interest and delivers services at a local level;
 - » The principle of a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished;
 - » The two proposed options; and
 - » The services a new Town Council could or should manage.
- 2.10 It should be noted that open questionnaires are important forms of engagement in being inclusive and giving people an opportunity to express their views; but they are not random sample surveys of a given population - so they cannot normally be expected to be representative of the general balance of opinion. For example, the young are usually under-represented while the elderly are over-represented; and the more motivated groups or areas are also typically over-represented compared with others.

Deliberative engagement

Focus groups and forums

- 2.11 A series of deliberative sessions were held in October 2019: one with local stakeholders and Parish Councillors; and three with 31 randomly-selected members of the public (one in the north, one in the east and one in the centre of Northampton).
- 2.12 The stakeholders and parish councillors were invited to their meeting by NBC, whereas the randomly-selected members of the public were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS' Social Research Call Centre. Having been initially contacted by phone, all participants were then written to – to confirm the invitation and the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or

written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community.

- 2.13 In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors, and the venues at which the focus groups met were readily accessible. The random telephone recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria – including, for example: gender; age; ethnicity; social grade; and disability/limiting long-term illness (LLTI). Overall, participants represented a broad cross-section of residents and, as standard good practice, were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part.
- 2.14 Although, like all other forms of qualitative engagement, deliberative groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse members of the public the opportunity to participate actively. Because the meetings were inclusive, the outcomes are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

Deliberative events: the agenda

- 2.15 All sessions lasted for around two hours and began with an ORS presentation or verbal explanation to provide the contextual background information outlined above. Participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout, and the meetings were thorough and truly deliberative in listening to and responding openly to the issues under question.

The report

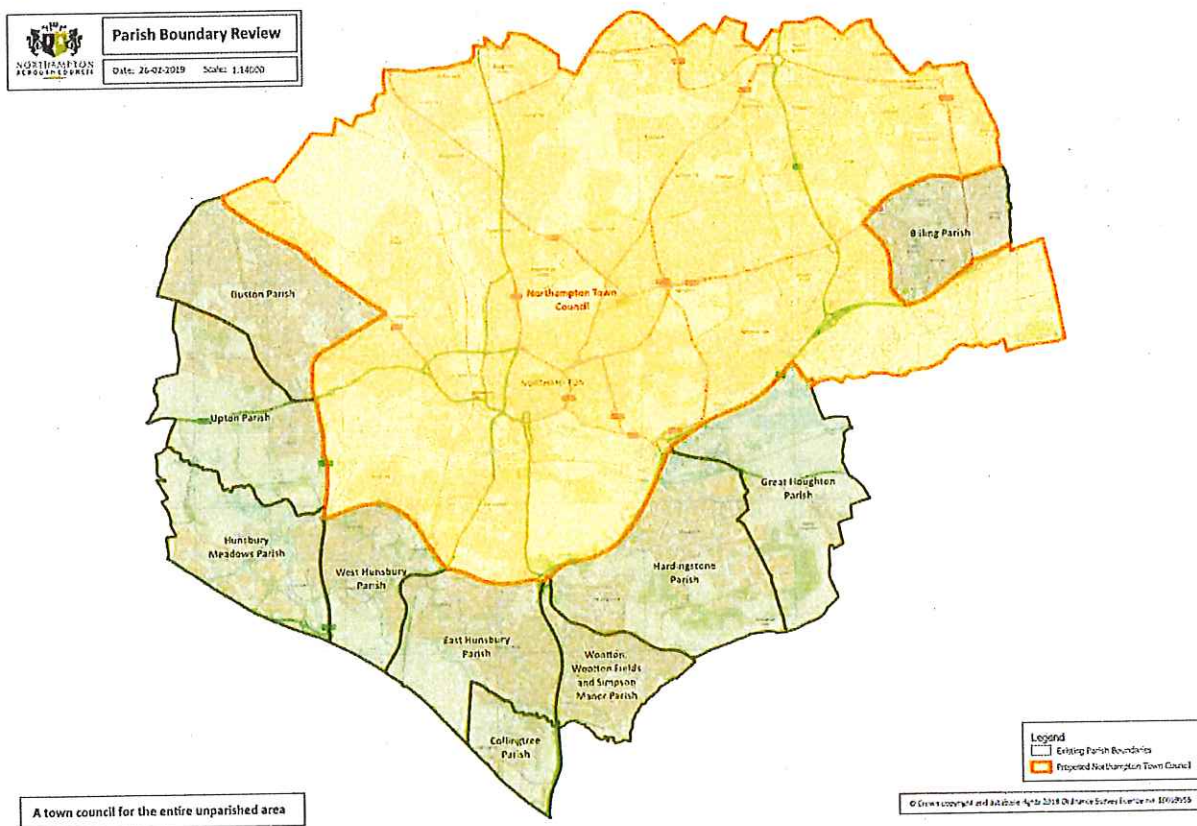
- 2.16 This report reviews the sentiments and judgements of respondents and participants on the proposals for a new Town Council and Parish and/or Community Councils for the Northampton Borough Council Area. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them - but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse any opinions but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by those taking part.

3. Residents' Survey

The Survey

- 1.8 The purpose of the survey was to achieve a broadly representative sample of interviews with residents (aged 18 and over) living in the unparished areas of Northampton (i.e. the area highlighted in yellow in the map below) in order to provide an estimate of the views that would have been obtained had it been possible to survey the entire population.

Figure 1: Map outlining the (unparished) areas of Northampton interviewed as part of the residents' survey



- 1.9 The survey was conducted through structured telephone interviews undertaken by IQCS-trained interviewers using a quota based sampling approach. Residents were provided with summary information about both proposals before being asked the associated questions, based on the questions within the consultation questionnaire. Residents who wanted further information before responding were directed to NBC's dedicated consultation website and were given an opportunity to make an appointment to be interviewed subsequently.
- 1.10 Quota controls were applied by age, gender, working status and area ('town centre' and 'outer area') to ensure the achieved sample was representative of the (18+) population living in the unparished areas of Northampton. The survey was conducted using a quota controlled sampling approach, to ensure a broadly representative sample across the unparished areas of Northampton.

- 1.11 In total, ORS staff conducted 300 interviews between 14th October and 8th November 2019 using a 'CATI' (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system and residents were provided with detailed information about the proposals upon request.

Weighting the Data

- 1.12 The extent to which results can be generalised from a sample depends on how well the sample represents the population from which it is drawn, and different types of people in different places may have been more or less likely to take part. This is known as response bias and can be corrected through a process of statistical weighting.
- 1.13 During this process, the demographic characteristics of residents were compared against data for the whole population (in this instance, the population in the unparished areas of Northampton) to identify which types of people were more or less likely to take part in the survey. Statistical weights were then calculated and applied to the data so that the survey results are broadly consistent with the overall population.
- 1.14 The returned sample was checked against comparative data for Northampton (from 2017 Mid-Year Population Estimates and Census 2011), for gender, age, economic status, ethnicity and area, then subsequently weighted by age, economic status and area. To ensure that no individual respondent had an unduly large influence on the overall survey results, a cap of 5 was then applied and then a final weight for district.
- 1.15 Survey results based on the weighted data are broadly representative of the unparished areas of Northampton. After taking account of the weighting process, we can be 95% confident that the residents' survey results will be within around $\pm 5.7\%$ points of the views of the population that the sample represents. Therefore, if everyone in the population had given their views, then 19-times-out-of-20 the results would be within around 5.7% points of the survey estimate.
- 1.16 Given this context, when the report refers to results based on the weighted data the results are given as the proportion of "residents". Any results based on unweighted data (including the results from the open questionnaire) refer specifically to the proportion of "respondents".

Respondent Profile

- 1.17 The tables below show the profile characteristics of respondents to the survey. Please note that the figures may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.
- 1.18 During the weighting process, it is important to ensure that no individual respondent has an unduly large influence on the overall survey results, so the statistical weights are 'capped'; therefore, the survey data may not be identical to the comparative data even after it has been weighted.

Table 1: Residents survey responses (unweighted and weighted) and resident population by age, gender, ethnic group, economic status and area

Characteristic	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Population %
BY AGE				
18 to 34	103	34%	33%	33%
35 to 54	61	20%	35%	35%
55 to 74	93	31%	24%	24%

	75 or over	43	14%	8%	8%
	Total valid responses	300	100%	100%	100%
	<i>Not known</i>	-	-	-	-
BY GENDER					
	Male	139	46%	45%	50%
	Female	161	54%	55%	50%
	Total valid responses	300	100%	100%	100%
	<i>Not known</i>	-	-	-	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP					
	White	252	88%	87%	83%
	BAME	34	12%	13%	17%
	Total valid responses	286	100%	100%	100%
	<i>Not known</i>	14	-	-	-
BY ECONOMIC STATUS					
	In employment	162	54%	61%	59%
	Retired from work	101	34%	18%	18%
	Otherwise unemployed	37	12%	21%	23%
	Total valid responses	300	100%	100%	100%
	<i>Not known</i>	-	-	-	-
BY AREA					
	Town Centre	109	36%	48%	49%
	Outer Area	191	64%	52%	51%
	Total valid responses	300	100%	100%	100%
	<i>Not known</i>	-	-	-	-

Interpretation of the data

1.19 Graphics are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The pie charts and other graphics show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a 'traffic light' system in which:

- » Green shades represent positive responses
- » Beige and purple/blue shades represent neither positive nor negative responses
- » Red shades represent negative responses
- » The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the 'extremes', for example, very satisfied or very dissatisfied

1.20 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half a per cent.

1.21 In some cases, figures of 2% or below have been excluded from graphs.

1.22 The base numbers provided alongside each chart show the unweighted number of responses on which results are based ('don't know' and 'missing' responses are treated as invalid and excluded from charts; this also accounts for the variation in base sizes across the different charts).

- 1.23 It should be remembered that a sample, and not the entire population living in the areas of Northampton that will be affected by the proposals, have been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. When considering changes in responses between different groups within the population, differences have been analysed using appropriate statistical means to check for statistical significance (i.e. not happened 'by chance'). Statistical significance is at a 95% level of confidence.
- 1.24 Differences that are not said to be 'significant' or 'statistically significant' are indicative only.

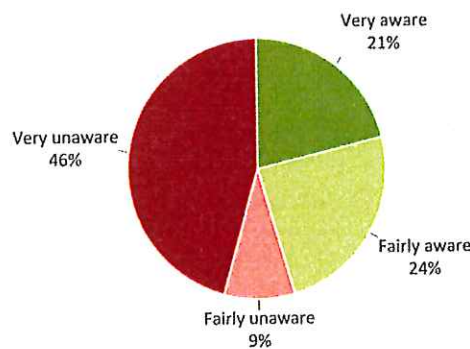
Main Findings

Less than half are aware of the proposed changes to local government in the area

Prior to this consultation exercise, to what extent were you aware of the possible change to local government in this area?

- 3.2 Less than half (45%) of residents reported they were either very aware or fairly aware of the possible change to local government in the area.

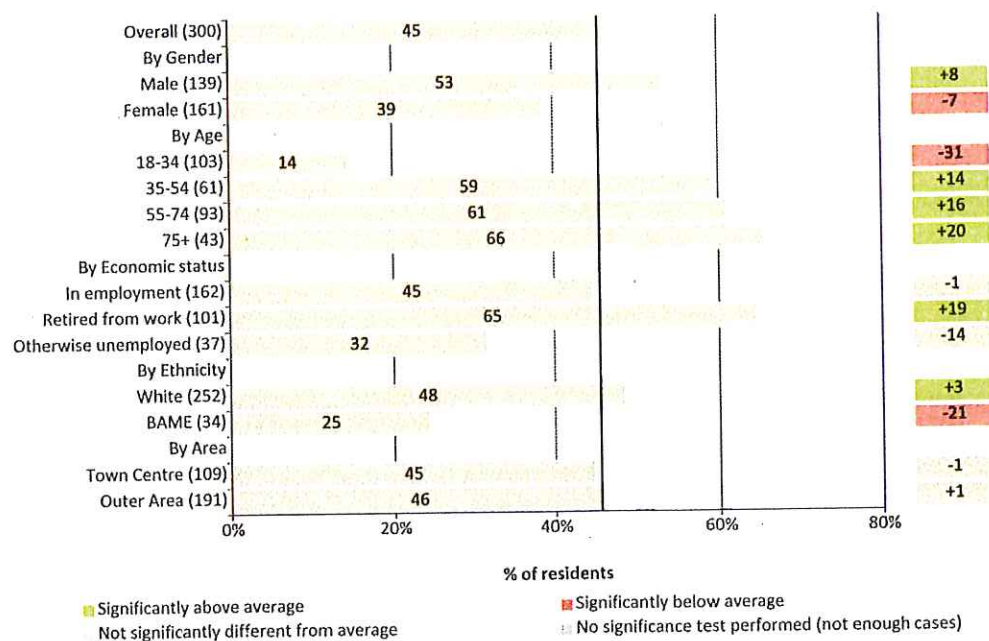
Figure 2: Awareness of possible change to local government in the area
Base: All residents (300)



Differences by demographic sub-groups

- 3.3 The following chart shows how views varied across different demographic subgroups of residents who are aware of the possible change to local government in the area. For example, you can see that male residents, those aged 35+, retired from work or White are significantly more likely to say they are aware, whilst female residents those aged 18-34 or BAME are significantly less likely to say this.

Figure 3: Awareness of possible change to local government in the area: by demographic sub-group (Base: All residents)

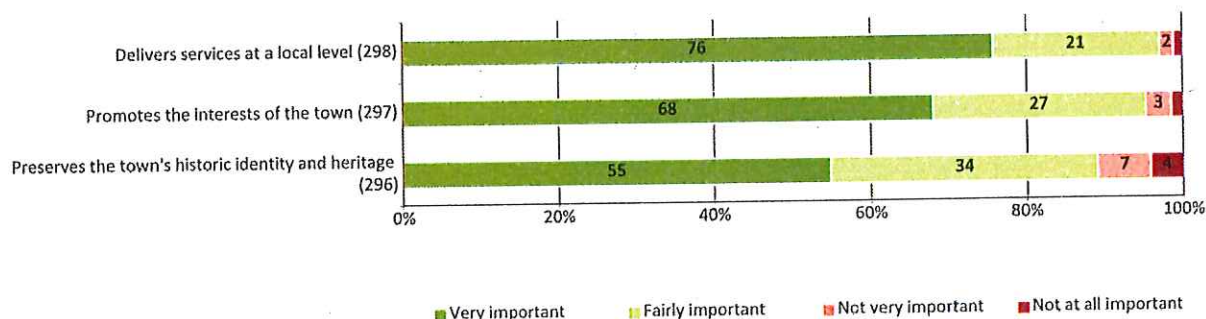


It is considered important to have an organisation that delivers services at a local level, promotes the interests of the town and preserves its historic identity/heritage

How important or unimportant is it to have either a Town Council in Northampton or a Parish Council in some areas of Northampton that...?

- 3.4 The majority of residents said that it is important to them to have an organisation that delivers services at a local level (97%), promotes the interests of the town (95%) and preserves the town's historic identity/heritage (89%).

Figure 4: Possible role of new organisation
Base: All residents (number of residents shown in brackets)

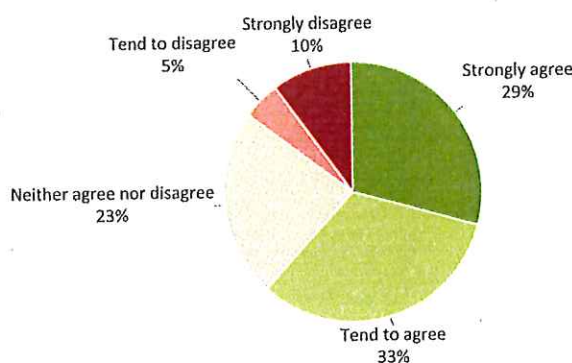


Over three fifths agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished?

- 3.5 Over three fifths (62%) of residents agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished, whilst around one in seven (15%) disagree.

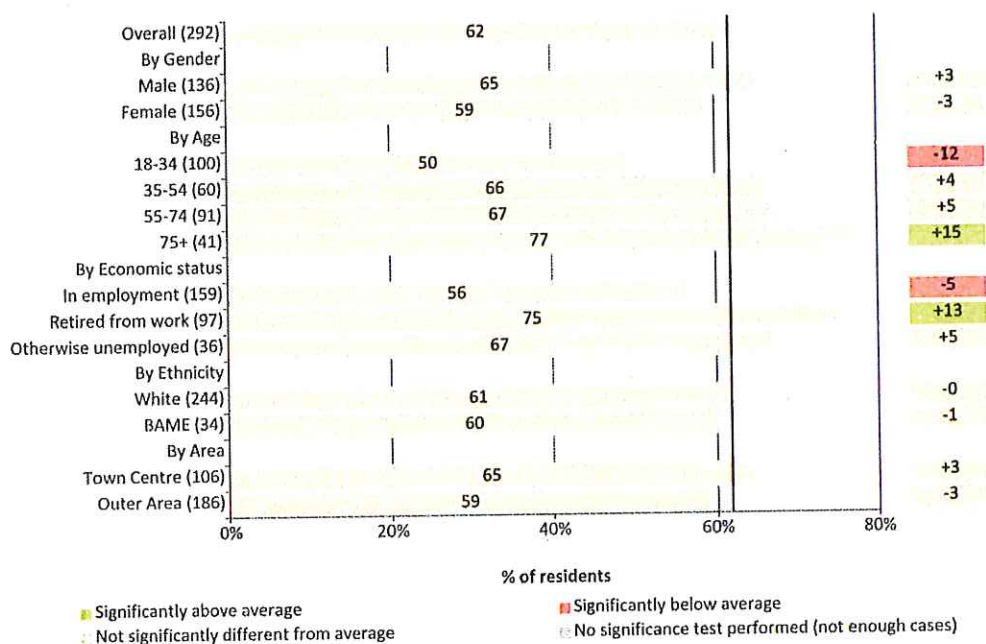
Figure 5: Agreement with proposal to create a new Town Council
Base: All residents (292)



Differences by demographic sub-groups

3.6 The following chart shows how views varied across different demographic subgroups of residents who agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council. For example, you can see that those aged 75+ or retired from work are significantly more likely to agree, whilst those aged 18-34 or in employment are significantly less likely to say this.

Figure 6: Agreement with proposal to create a new Town Council: by demographic sub-group (Base: All residents)



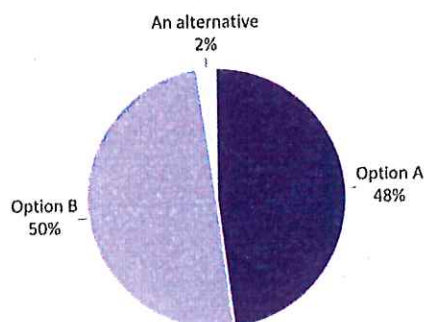
Opinion is divided over which parts of the Borough a new Town Council should cover

If a new Town Council were created, which parts of the Borough do you believe it should cover?

3.7 Around half (48%) of residents reported that a new Town Council should be larger and cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst a similar proportion (50%) said it should be smaller and cover only part the central urban core of Northampton (Option B). Only 2% stated they would prefer the Town Council to cover an alternative area in a different part of the borough.

3.8 It is worth pointing out that those currently living in the area which would become a Town Council under Option B (i.e. the town centre), were more likely to choose Option B (52%) than Option A (44%).

Figure 7: Parts of the borough a new Town Council should cover
Base: All residents (276)



If you support Option A, why is that?

3.9 Residents were given the opportunity to expand on and outline why they supported Option A. 104 residents provided comments and a summary is provided below:

Table 2: Reasons for supporting Option A
Base: All residents who made comments (104)

Explanation for answer		No. of comments	%
GENERAL ACCEPTANCE / SUPPORT FOR CHANGE	Prefer larger town council/better coverage/bigger is better/provides better access	61	61
	Best option/will provide better services/facilities	18	21
	Need to keep Councils local/local decision making/the interests of the area	17	19
	This is most cost efficient/best way to save money	6	6
	More local accountability	5	5
	Agree with the creation of a town council	5	4
	It will help with town centre improvements	4	3
	Need to preserve town identity/local town needs its own voice/protect historic tradition	3	3
	Urban/rural areas have different needs	3	3
	It will reduce unnecessary admin/duplication of services	2	2
	Prefer larger town council/easier to manage	2	2
	Generally support proposals/agree with the need for change	2	1
	Agree with Option A	1	1
	It will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy	1	1
CONCERN / OPPOSITION FOR CHANGE	Disagree with smaller town council/doesn't cover a large enough area	5	4
	Proposals will increase council tax/just an additional cost	3	2
	Urban/rural areas have different needs	1	1
OTHER COMMENTS	Other	19	15

If you support Option B, why is that?

3.10 Residents were given the opportunity to expand on and outline why they supported Option B. 133 residents provided comments and a summary is provided below:

Table 3: Reasons for supporting Option B**Base: All residents who made comments (133)**

Explanation for answer		No. of comments	%
	Prefer small town council/easier to manage	60	48
	Need to keep Councils local/local decision making/the interests of the area	50	38
	It will help with town centre improvements	23	18
	Best option/will provide better services/facilities	16	11
	Need to preserve town identity/local town needs its own voice/protect historic traditions	12	8
GENERAL ACCEPTANCE / SUPPORT FOR CHANGE	This is most cost efficient/best way to save money	8	7
	Agree with Option B as it is in the centre/keep things central	6	5
	Generally support proposals/agree with the need for change	5	3
	More local accountability	4	3
	Agree with the creation of a town council	3	3
	Agree with Option B	3	3
	Urban/rural areas have different needs	3	3
	It will help improve communication between councils	2	2
	It will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy	1	1
	It will reduce unnecessary admin/duplication of services	1	1
CONCERN / OPPOSITION FOR CHANGE	Disagree with larger town council/covers too large an area	8	5
	Disagree with Option A	1	2
	Proposal will spread councils too thin	2	1
ALTERNATIVE	Every ward should have a parish council	1	1
OTHER COMMENTS	Other	8	6

3.11 Only six residents said that a new Town Council should cover an alternative area (i.e. not the area covered by Option A or Option B) and were asked to clarify what area this should be. Responses included: *“Covering a smaller area but covering the areas that need it the most unlike the central districts”*; and *“I believe the borough boundary should be covered by one Council, Northampton. The other parts of Northampton should be covered by their own parish councils”*

3.12 These residents were also asked why they think a Town Council should be created in a different part of the borough and their comments are provided below:

Table 4: Why a Town Council should be created in a different part of the borough
Base: All residents who think a new Town Council should cover an alternative area (6)

Comment
<i>Either the town stands, or it doesn't. To select parts of the town and exclude the rest doesn't make a lot of sense to me.</i>
<i>I am against the idea.</i>
<i>I am talking about the villages around Northampton and they should be covered by a parish council.</i>
<i>I think there would be no miscommunication if there was one leading branch.</i>
<i>If its localised then it can deal with the local problems at the ground level.</i>
<i>There are areas that are affected by the lack of attention.</i>

3.13 In addition, a further eight residents answered ‘no Town Council’ when asked for their preference but were asked a follow up question to try and elicit a response. If a new Town Council were created and they had to choose, three said they would choose Option A and two would choose Option B (the other three residents could still not provide an answer).

3.14 Finally, 16 residents said they were unsure when asked what part of the borough a new Town Council should cover and were then asked what makes them unsure or what would help them decide. Most made comments relating to them needing more information to make a decision such as: *“I don't feel like I know enough about each individual Option And what would be best for residents”*; *“I don't really understand the benefits of the various options”*; and *“I don't know which option would benefit the community more”*.

4. Open Consultation Questionnaire

Introduction

- 4.1 A consultation document outlining the issues under consideration was produced by NBC, and a corresponding consultation questionnaire was available for completion online (on the Council's website) and on paper. The questionnaire included questions about the extent to which people were aware of the proposed changes to local government in Northamptonshire; the importance or unimportance of having an organisation that preserves the town's heritage and history, promotes its interest and delivers services at a local level; the principle of a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished; the two proposed options; and the services a new Town Council could or should manage. The questionnaire was available in online and paper formats between 27th September and 8th November 2019 and 217 responses were received in total.
- 4.2 Of the 217 responses, 8 were received from organisations. Responses from organisations might represent the views of large numbers of individuals or key stakeholders who might be particularly informed about the impacts on their members, or they could raise technical arguments that cannot easily be summarised. For these reasons, ORS typically reports the views of individual respondents and organisations separately.

Respondent Profile

- 4.3 It should be noted that open questionnaires are important forms of engagement in being inclusive and giving people an opportunity to express their views; but they are not random sample surveys of a given population - so they cannot normally be expected to be representative of the general population (and, as such, results indicate the views of those who choose to respond, rather than acting as a statistically reliable guide to the general population's views).
- 4.4 For example, the table overleaf summarising the 209 individual respondents to the questionnaire shows that very few responses were received from the very youngest and oldest residents, whereas over four fifths of respondents (84%) were aged between 35 and 74.
- 4.5 Table 5 overleaf provides a breakdown of the respondent profile of the 209 individuals who responded either online or by post to the open questionnaire.

Table 5: Open questionnaire responses by demographics and area

Characteristic	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %
BY AGE		
Under 25	4	2%
25 to 34	10	6%
35 to 44	18	11%
45 to 54	26	16%
55 to 64	42	26%
65 to 74	51	31%
75 to 84	10	6%
85 or over	2	1%
Total valid responses	163	100%
<i>Not known</i>	46	-
BY GENDER		
Male	94	58%
Female	67	42%
Total valid responses	161	100%
<i>Not known</i>	48	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP		
White	145	94%
BAME	10	6%
Total valid responses	155	100%
<i>Not known</i>	54	-
BY WHETHER RESPONDENT HAS A DISABILITY		
Yes	15	9%
No	143	91%
Total valid responses	158	100%
<i>Not known</i>	51	-
BY OPTION A AREAS		
Existing parished area	27	19%
Proposed town council area under Option A	117	81%
Total valid responses	144	100%
<i>Not known</i>	65	-
BY OPTION B AREAS		
Existing parished area	27	19%
Proposed Town Council area under Option B	31	22%
Proposed community council under Option B	86	60%
Total valid responses	144	100%
<i>Not known</i>	65	-

Interpretation of the data

- 4.6 Graphics are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The pie charts and other graphics show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a 'traffic light' system in which:
- » Green shades represent positive responses
 - » Beige shades represent neither positive nor negative responses
 - » Red shades represent negative responses
 - » The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the 'extremes', for example, very satisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 4.7 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers.
- 4.8 The consultation questionnaire contained a number of open-ended questions and, as with most engagement of this nature, some respondents do address the specific questions asked, but some respondents choose to focus on other issues not necessarily directly related to the question asked; however, in either case we have sought to classify and quantify the number of mentions of each comment.

Duplicate and Co-ordinated Responses

- 4.9 It is important that consultation questionnaires are open and accessible to all, while being alert to the possibility of multiple completions (by the same people) distorting the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the questionnaire online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which questionnaires are completed. A similar analysis of "cookies" was also undertaken – where responses originated from users on the same computer using the same browser and the same credentials (e.g. user account). Some submissions were received with duplicate cookies, and after careful study of these responses, six were considered to be identical responses or appeared to be attempting to skew the results and were excluded from the results. However, no physical copies of questionnaires returned to ORS were considered to be duplicated responses.

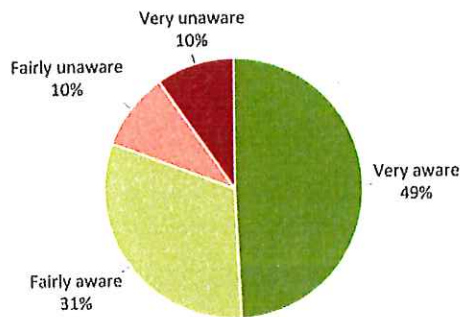
Main Findings (individuals)

Most respondents are aware of the proposed changes to local government in the area

Prior to this consultation exercise, to what extent were you aware of the possible change to local government in this area?

- 4.10 Around four fifths (81%) of consultation questionnaire respondents reported they were either very aware or fairly aware of the possible change to local government in the area. This is in contrast to the residents' survey (45% aware), and demonstrates that respondents to the consultation questionnaire are more informed than general residents; it may therefore suggest that the profile of questionnaire respondents is somewhat different in composition, compared to general residents.

Figure 8: Awareness of possible change to local government in the area
Base: All individuals (207)

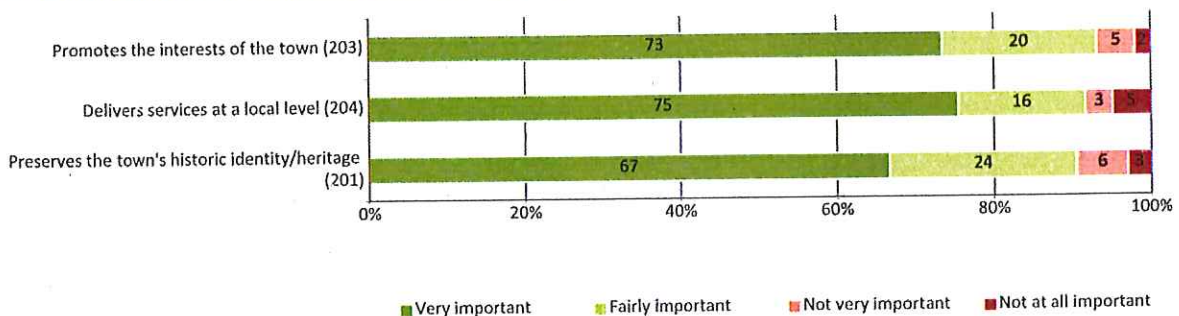


It is considered important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town, delivers services at a local level and preserves its historic identity/heritage

How important or unimportant is it to you to have an organisation that...?

- 4.11 The majority of respondents said that it is important to them to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town (93%), delivers services at a local level (92%) and preserves the town's historic identity/heritage (91%).

Figure 9: Possible role of new organisation
Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

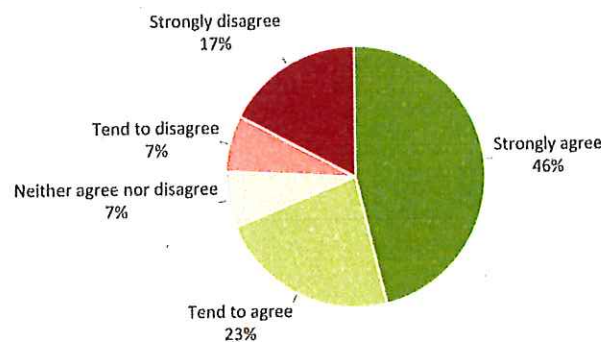


Most agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished?

- 4.12 Over two thirds (69%) of respondents agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished, whilst around a quarter (24%) disagree.

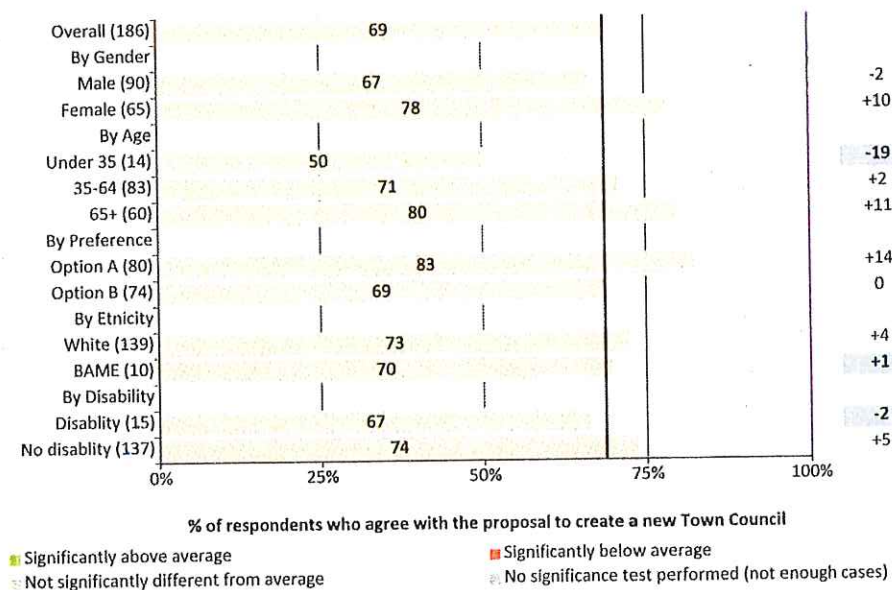
Figure 10: Agreement with proposal to create a new Town Council
Base: All individuals (186)



Differences by demographic sub-groups

- 4.13 The following chart shows how views varied across different demographic subgroups of respondents who agree with the proposal to create a new Town Council. For example, you can see that female respondents or those aged 65+ were more likely to agree, whilst those aged under 35 were less likely to (please note that the differences between sub-groups are indicative only).

Figure 11: Agreement with proposal to create a new Town Council: by demographic sub-group (Base: All individuals)



Please explain the reasons for your answer.

- 4.14 Respondents were given the opportunity to explain why they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished. 140 respondents provided comments and a summary is provided below:

Table 6: Reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with proposal to create a new Town Council
Base: All individuals who made comments (140)

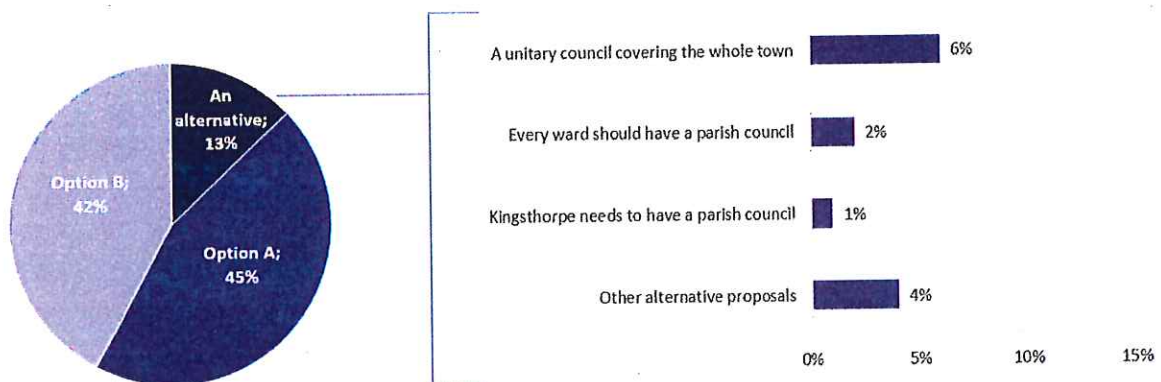
	Explanation for answer	No. of comments	%
GENERAL ACCEPTANCE / SUPPORT FOR CHANGE	Need to keep Councils local/local decision making/the interests of the area	46	33
	Need to preserve town identity/local town needs its own voice/protect historic tradition	22	16
	Generally support proposals/agree with the need for change	7	5
	Agree with the creation of a town council	7	5
	More local accountability	5	4
	Prefer larger town council/better coverage/bigger is better/provides better access	5	4
	Agree with Option A	3	2
	Agree with Option B	2	1
	This is most cost efficient/best way to save money	2	1
	It will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy	2	1
	It will help with town centre improvements	2	1
	Prefer small town council/easier to manage	1	1
	Agree with Option B as it is in the centre/keep things central	1	1
	CONCERN / OPPOSITION FOR CHANGE	Proposal will create added/unnecessary bureaucracy	13
Generally disagree with creating a town council		9	6
Proposals will increase council tax/just an additional cost		7	5
Waste of money		6	4
This is creating duplication within services		5	4
This will just cause confusion		5	4
Won't work/make a difference/improve anything		4	3
Disagree with larger town council/covers too large an area		3	2
Disagree with smaller town council/doesn't cover a large enough area		2	1
Less accountability with one council		1	1
Urban/rural areas have different needs		1	1
ALTERNATIVE	Disagree with additional town council as already too many parish councils/councillors	1	1
	A unitary council covering the whole town	10	7
	Kingsthorpe needs to have a parish council	5	4
	Every ward should have a parish council	4	3
OTHER COMMENTS	Other alternative comments	5	4
	Consultation is flawed/loaded question	3	2
	More funding is needed	3	2
	Need more information to make decision	2	1
	Maintain/keep old districts/disagree with decision to create unitaries	2	1
	Other	35	25

Opinion is divided over which parts of the borough a new Town Council should cover

If a new Town Council were created, which parts of the borough do you believe it should cover?

- 4.15 Over two fifths (45%) of respondents reported that a new Town Council should be larger and cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst slightly fewer (42%) said it should be smaller and cover only part the central urban core of Northampton (Option B). Only 13% stated they would prefer the Town Council to cover an alternative area in a different part of the Borough.
- 4.16 Looking at the alternative proposals in more depth, 6% reported that a unitary council should cover the whole town, whilst smaller proportions said every ward should have a parish council (2%) and that Kingsthorpe needs to have a parish council (1%). 4% made other alternative proposals.

Figure 12: Parts of the Borough a new Town Council should cover
Base: All individuals (172)



Please outline the reasons for your answer and explain any alternatives you prefer.

- 4.17 Respondents were given the opportunity to expand on and outline why they supported Option A, Option B or explain any alternatives they prefer. 117 respondents provided comments and a summary is provided below:

Table 7: Reasons for supporting Option A, Option B or any alternatives

Base: All individuals who made comments (117)

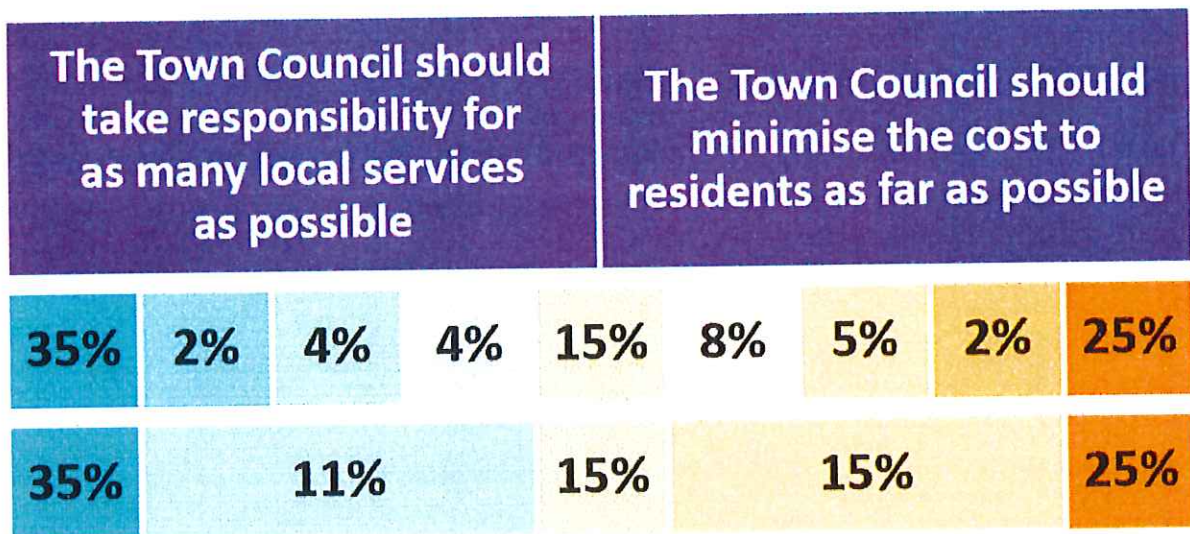
	Explanation for answer	No. of comments	%
GENERAL ACCEPTANCE / SUPPORT FOR CHANGE	Need to keep Councils local/local decision making/the interests of the area	16	14
	Prefer larger town council/better coverage/bigger is better/provides better access	10	9
	Agree with the creation of a town council	9	8
	Prefer small town council/easier to manage	8	7
	Generally support proposals/agree with the need for change	6	5
	Agree with Option B as it is in the centre/keep things central	6	5
	Urban/rural areas have different needs	5	4
	This is most cost efficient/best way to save money	5	4
	Need to preserve town identity/local town needs its own voice/protect historic tradition	4	3
	More local accountability	4	3
	Agree with Option B	3	3
	Agree with Option A	2	2
	It will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy	1	1
	It will help with town centre improvements	1	1
	Prefer larger town council/easier to manage	1	1
	CONCERN / OPPOSITION FOR CHANGE	Generally disagree with creating a town council	6
Urban/rural areas have different needs		6	5
Disagree with larger town council/covers too large an area		6	5
Disagree with Option B		4	3
Waste of money		2	2
Disagree with Option A		2	2
This is creating duplication within services		1	1
Proposal will create added/unnecessary bureaucracy		1	1
ALTERNATIVE	Proposals will increase council tax/just an additional cost	1	1
	Disagree with smaller town council/doesn't cover a large enough area	1	1
	A unitary council covering the whole town	9	8
	Every ward should have a parish council	4	3
OTHER COMMENTS	Kingsthorpe needs to have a parish council	2	2
	Other alternative proposals	6	5
	Maintain/keep old districts/disagree with decision to create unitaries	3	3
	Consultation is flawed/loaded question	2	2
	Need more information to make decision	2	2
	Other	39	33

Preference for a Town Council which takes responsibility for as many services as possible

How would you prioritise between the following two approaches?

- 4.18 The graphic below helps to illustrate how respondents would prioritise between having a Town Council which takes responsibility for as many local services as possible versus having a Town Council which minimises the cost to residents as far as possible.
- 4.19 Three fifths of respondents provided responses which fell at the extremes of the scale – 35% selected option 1 (Town Council should take responsibility for as many local services as possible), whilst 25% answered option 9 (Town Council should minimise the cost to residents). A further 15% chose the middle option – option 5.
- 4.20 When percentages are combined, it is evident that respondents have a slight preference for the Town Council to taking responsibility for as many local services as possible (options 1-4; 46%), as opposed to minimising the cost to residents (options 6-9; 39%).

Figure 13: Taking responsibility for as many services as possible vs minimising costs for residents
 Base: All individuals (179)



Organisations in the open engagement questionnaire

4.21 In total, 8 organisations and their representatives responded to the questionnaire, including: 3 Parish Councils (Billing; Kingsthorpe; and Hardingstone), 1 residents association (Far Cotton), 1 community organisation (Growing Together Northampton), 1 charitable organisation (Pastures Community Company), 1 county councillor and the Town Centre Conservation Areas Advisory Committee.

4.22 In terms of the initial questions about awareness of local government and the possible role of a new organisation:

All organisations (8 out of 8) were aware of the possible change to local government in the area;

All (8 out of 8) felt it was important to have an organisation that promotes the interests of the town and delivers services at a local level, whilst 7 out of 8 felt it was important to preserve the town's historic identity/heritage;

4.23 Regarding the proposal to create a Town Council and the parts of the Borough one should cover:

The majority (7 out of 8) agreed with the proposal to create a new Town Council for all or part of the areas in Northampton Borough that remain unparished;

Three quarters (6 out of 8) felt a Town Council should cover the whole of the Borough that is currently unparished (Option A), whilst a quarter (2 out of 8) felt it should cover the central urban core of Northampton (Option B).

4.24 Looking at Town Council priorities:

4 organisations indicated the Town Council should take responsibility for as many local services as possible (by selecting options 1-4), whilst 3 organisations suggested the Town Council should minimise the cost to residents as far as possible (by selecting options 6-9). 1 organisation provided no response to this question.

Other comments by organisations

4.25 When asked about the proposal to create a new Town Council, a couple of organisations noted that it was important for one to be created as the local town needs its own voice, for example *'most of the areas that are unparished have not expressed a wish to create local parish councils, this will mean that they have a less local voice - their only recourse will be via the local Councillor for the unitary authority. Many of these areas that are unparished are the more deprived areas of the town and it is therefore not surprising that there are fewer people interested in setting up a local parish council. Being part of a Town Council would give them a way to have a local voice'*.

4.26 In terms of the areas which a Town Council should cover, one organisation commented that *'the larger the Council, the more likely it is to be efficient and effective'*, whilst another organisation stated that *'I do think the unparished areas should be automatically put into Option B if they decide not to create their own parish council'*.

5. Focus Groups and Forums

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter reports four deliberative meetings with members of the public and stakeholders (including local Parish, Town and County Councillors).

Three focus groups with members of the public

- 5.2 The focus groups with members of the public took place in three separate locations across Northampton Borough; in the Central, East and West areas of the Borough. The meeting was independently facilitated by ORS and each was structured around an ORS presentation outlining the context and background to the consultation, along with a series of discussions about issues related to the proposal to form a new town council in Northampton, as well as the specific options being put forward.
- 5.3 The ORS presentation ensured that standardised information was provided to each of the sessions and explained: the current council structure across Northamptonshire and the planned move to two unitaries (one for Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire); the case for a new Town Council/Community Councils/Parish Councils; costs; and the proposed option and implications of change. Participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout, and the meetings were deliberative in listening to and responding openly to any evidence and issues raised. It was made clear that the planned move to unitaries was out of the scope of this discussion, while the proposal to form a Town Council was taking place in response to the creation of the new unitary authority.
- 5.4 Participants were recruited by phone, follow up letter and phone reminder in advance and in total 31 individuals attended the meetings, representing a range of gender, ages, ethnicity and social class:
- » 16 Female and 15 Male participants
 - » 12 participants aged 16-34; 8 aged 35-54; 11 aged 55+
 - » 22 White British; 8 Non-white British; 1 White EU national (long term resident in UK)

FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Central: Guildhall, Northampton	29 th October 2019	10
East: Blackthorn Community Centre, Northampton	30 th October 2019	10
West: The Beehive, Kingsthorpe, Northampton	31 st October 2019	11

Summary of responses

- 5.5 There was broad support for an organisation to preserve Northampton's identity and heritage, to promote its interest and give residents a voice.
- 5.6 Representation for unparished areas was considered important for focus group participants.

- 5.7 Budgets and funding for a Town Council were matters of concern, particularly the size of the precept that residents would need to pay in parishes outside of the Town Council and where the money would be spent; across the whole area from which it was collected or focussed on the town centre.
- 5.8 There was some variation in views regarding the effect of introducing a town council on individual communities; local decision-making was a key issue for focus group participants.
- 5.9 When asked to consider the two options put forward with regard to the size of a new council, the balance of opinion overall was in favour of Option B – a smaller, urban town council – on the basis that it was the best option for local communities, particularly those outside the urban centre of Northampton:
- » Option B – 20
 - » Option A – 5
 - » Undecided – 5
 - » Alternative suggestion – 1
- 5.10 In many cases, the choice of option made came with a caveat that it is based on the information provided. There was a request in all three focus groups for more information with figures for the costs and benefits for individual parishes as well as the prospective town council areas. At the same time, people requested that the information should be clear and simple.

Main findings from Focus Groups

There was broad support for an organisation to preserve Northampton’s identity and heritage, to promote its interest and give residents a voice was important

- 5.11 While a vote was not taken, most participants voiced support and none actively dissented to the idea of an organisation to promote Northampton and in particular the town centre of Northampton; that is, there appeared to be a consensus in support.
- 5.12 There was considerable debate about what the remit and responsibilities of any new organisation, but the broad consensus was that it would be beneficial to have a locally accountable organisation and that the creation of such a council represented an opportunity for a fresh start:

“Town councils have a better grip. I’m not sure it’s a better grip but they just CARE more. The borough is too big for very local issues.”

“You have to have it because it designates where the buck stops... you can go in and say I’m sorry this is your problem and you’re going to have to deal with it.”

“It is an opportunity to get rid of a lot of dead wood... I don’t think anyone should be assumed to get a job, they should apply for jobs”

- 5.13 It was felt that lessons could be learnt from other local towns that participants had positive experiences of:

“Daventry and Towcester, they manage it, they manage the planning very well.”

"It's no good us going down this route unless we can emulate what Daventry and Towcester have."

- 5.14 Some were particularly keen on preserving the heritage of the town, discussing the rich history and loss of museums summed up by stressing the consequences of that loss:

"The character of the town"

"Most important. If you forget your history, you are missing something very important."

- 5.15 Others may or may not be sympathetic to preserving the towns heritage, thought that too much heritage has already been lost and it was too late to restore much:

"The historic and heritage bit is a waste of time. They've got rid of most of the heritage."

- 5.16 A number of participants were concerned about planning:

"Northampton town centre is a victim of planning decisions in the past."

"...you can't get around the town; traffic is so bad in town."

- 5.17 ... and others about social issues in the town centre:

"I'm more worried about knife crime, the smell of weed everywhere."

- 5.18 The three focus groups all voiced ideas of ways to improve the town centre. Several participants felt that a strategy is needed to revitalise the town centre, largely by attracting in new businesses and people shopping or socialising:

"They need a strategy to attract people to Northampton town."

"...need a plan of what to do. Find ways to make money, find ways to bring in businesses."

"Why don't they lower the rents in these empty shops, get more people in the shops and get people in the town."

"Parking; used to be free parking, you have to pay now."

- 5.19 Some advocated that any new town or community council should take a cautionary, step by step approach in order to ensure that the organisation would be a success and could be seen as a success before residents were called on to pay for additional services:

"Whichever is decided, the Town Council should start small (and cheap), get up and running, then take on extra responsibilities – learn to walk before running."

Representation for unparished areas is important for focus group participants

- 5.20 There was also general agreement with the idea of creating a town or community council for the central core of Northampton Borough along with parish or community councils for the areas which are currently unparished. Again, there were no actively dissenting voices and it is likely that there was a consensus agreeing with the proposal.
- 5.21 However, there were caveats attached to the support by some participants, particularly supporters of Option A – a larger town council area. One theme running through all three discussions was loss of faith in local government, manifesting in several ways, such as that the new structure should not replicate the existing structure and should not be run by ‘the same people’:

“We went bust – the first county in the UK – now what we seem to be doing is recreating what the Government’s told us to get rid of and I can’t see the point.”

“Do not replicate what is there now.”

“My concern is that we are just replicating what we have already with the same people running it.”

“I’m concerned the same people will be running it.”

“My experience then was that the County wanted to keep hold of money.” [Need to avoid repeating that situation with the unitary]

- 5.22 There was some confusion between the responsibilities of the different councils; the County Council, borough and district councils, unitary councils and town/community/parish councils. Some of the concerns, which were raised in all three groups, about not having ‘the same people’ running the new structure included an element of confusion between the councils’ responsibilities, although these had positive as well as negative aspects:

“Are the current staff at the Borough Council going to take on new roles or is it going to be new people? Is it going to be a new name but the same operation?”

“It gives them the opportunity to identify the best people for the town council and say these are the people we want. It’s an ideal opportunity to cream the best staff.”

- 5.23 While the confusion about different councils’ responsibilities was real, nevertheless, many of the comments about not having ‘the same people’ running it came from a deep seated loss of faith in local government.

- 5.24 One corollary to this loss of faith in local government was a concern that consultation needs to be genuine:

“It’s important that we the people have a voice, but’s got to be realistic and it’s got to be authentic.”

- 5.25 Some attendees expressed concern that not having a town council, particularly of sufficient size to cover unparished areas, would leave many residents – included those in deprived areas – unrepresented, except by the unitary council covering Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire:

"The areas outside [of the town council] are going to be a much smaller population."

"If we go with the smaller we risk isolating certain communities which are already isolated."

"Bigger would give everybody a voice."

- 5.26 The issue of representation for unparished areas was discussed further in relation to the specific options put forward about the potential structure and size of a town council, the details of which are reported below.

Issues of budgets and funding for a town council were discussed at length, with strong opinions about the size of the precept that residents would need to pay in parishes outside of the town council area

- 5.27 The relative finances available to be raised and spent within the proposed town council compared to the possible parish councils was discussed in some detail. There were discussions of whether the Council Tax from surrounding affluent areas would subsidise the town council area to make up for a larger number of smaller properties and households on benefits in the town centre area. Some participants focussed on the inequality of payment compared to services received, arguing that the money would be raised across a larger area, but was likely to be spent in the core town centre with little in the surrounding suburbs. Others focussed on the inequality already existing in the town, such as the number of households on benefits:

"Option A - combined [at £64 for a band D property] they get £2.9m, but would it be spent on [the parishes] area. Or would it just be spent on the town centre? There's no guarantee."

"My train of thought is if it's the smaller ... it's the most densely populated but it's all As and Bs. The higher Council Tax is all out of town. The relativity between the income and the outgoings [is large]... The population density of the town is not relative to the income coming in. It is relative to the outgoing. If it were a smaller town council only doing the minimum; sweeping the streets, fixing this and that in the town, it's the rural ones that are going to suffer."

"You're going to have place like Hunsbury where they pay higher amounts of council tax, they're going to have more money to spend than the town centre where they need the money."

"A larger proportion of people in the town centre claim benefits [and don't pay CT]"

"The town centre is a lot less wealthy than some of those surrounding areas. It will have a much greater number of people [on benefits]."

"The smaller [town centre] area encompasses some of the poorest areas... You're asking some of the poorest to pay more."

- 5.28 Others pointed to a potential benefit, whereby currently unparished areas which formed parish or community councils could have more to spend locally. One argument suggested in two of the focus groups is that, based on the illustrative figures presented, at a precept of £64 for a band D property under Option B the total Council Tax raised would be around £2.9m, while under Option A it would be £900,000. The suggestion is that under Option B and if all the currently unparished areas became parishes charging the same precept, then those parishes would have around £2m in Council Tax receipts. This is a subtle

argument and depends on several assumptions, but while the figures used were purely illustrative, in principle it proved persuasive to several participants:

“To my mind; if it’s the larger area at £64 council tax, they’d get £2.9m, but if it’s the small area they’d get £900,000... on Option B they’d [the currently unparished areas] get £2m.”

- 5.29 Economies of scale were discussed and there was some support for the suggestion that under a structure of town, parish and community councils, these smaller councils should band together to commission some services. This was also seen by some as a reason to support Option A, the larger town council area:

“I though one of the reasons for us having a unitary council was so we could do things cheaper, now if they break of street cleaning into four areas, it’s going to be more expensive.”

“Economies have got to come in the larger the area you’ve got. If we set up 13 different parish councils all going to cut the grass, they’ve got to outsource it, there’s no way they can afford it. There is economies of scale.”

- 5.30 Spending efficiency is valued over actual cost, though there is also an acceptable limit to actual cost, again noting that the figures presented were illustrative but not unrealistic, even at the higher end:

“I don’t necessarily want it to be cheaper, but I’d like them to spend the money better.”

“There would be a riot if Council Tax increased by that amount... If I were paying £54 at the moment, I couldn’t afford to pay £100. Whoever they are they need to be very careful about how much they charge.”

- 5.31 In a similar vein, some participants valued local accountability overpaying higher Council Tax:

“Personally speaking, I’d pay a bit more for a parish council if it’s going to give me accountability, if it’s going to give me somewhere the buck stops. If I can go up there once a week, every single week and go ‘How are you? This is problem, deal with it’. It gives me a huge amount of accountability. At the moment I’m not getting a person I can go to; I’m just getting this ether of responsibility that I can’t actually get through.”

There was some variation in views regarding the effect of introducing a town council on individual communities, particularly with regard to decision-making at a local level

- 5.32 Representation and involvement was a particular concern, notably the problem of committed local people to participate:

“With the parish councils, would you get enough people? If they [the parish councils] were local, then you might [get enough].”

“My concern is the town council. My experience is that people do not participate as much [in towns] as in the rural areas, the villages”

- 5.33 Those in favour of parish councils tended to be particularly vocal in their view that decisions about funding and services needed to be made as locally as possible. It was considered very important that town and parish councils are expected to be run by local people who knew and had a commitment to the local area:

"If people are being asked to spend more money they want to know it's being spent in their area."

"Option B...its money spent on that small area. With option A the money is spent on a large area and there's a high chance some things will be neglected."

"I quite like the bit ... they have to live and work in the area. That's quite important because they're going to be more interested in the area."

"They need that connection."

When asked to consider the two options put forward with regard to the size of a new council, the balance of opinion overall was in favour of Option B – a smaller, urban town council – on the basis that it was the best option for local communities, particularly those outside the urban centre of Northampton

- 5.34 For those in favour of a smaller town council, preferably in tandem with an increase in the number of parish or community councils, their conviction of the benefits of local, community-centred bodies was key:

"The smaller it is people are there to hear you, the bigger it is nobody is there to take your point."

"... under option B yes we've got to get it set up, but I think there's enough support around this room I think we would go along because it's local and challenge and I think there would be more control."

- 5.35 A number of participants felt that option A, the larger town council, would be too similar to the existing local government structure, which is being dismantled, and crucially, that the previous structure had not worked. This view remained irrespective of explanations about the different roles of borough and town councils, and the role of the new unitary authorities:

"Option B 100%. I see Option A as something similar to what we have now. Things need to change as they don't work. The people need to take the reins."

"A is more or less just a slightly trimmed version of what we've already got which has not worked."

- 5.36 The retention of funding, raised through council tax precepts, for use at a local level was a key factor behind some stakeholders' preference for Option B, allowing parish councils to benefit their communities, while under Option A some felt that that money raised in their area could shift to the proposed town council:

"Option B - we'll be able to keep the money in Kingsthorpe and other areas as well; they'll be able to concentrate on what's best for them.

"B for me, the reason being is if people are being asked to spend more money they want to know it's being spent in their area. Option A, I think the centre of Northampton regeneration will come up and I think a lot more money will be spent there."

"I want to know [the money] will be spent in our area."

A minority of the focus groups participants favoured Option A – a larger town council covering the whole of the borough that is currently unparished

- 5.37 Those favouring Option A were concerned that, with the introduction of unitary authorities, a large town council was the best option to represent all resident of Northampton:

"We do need the people of Northampton as a whole. If we were to have separate parishes we could then be bits rather than Northampton as a whole."

- 5.38 Of particular concern to those in favour of Option A was how deprived areas might be left unrepresented without a town council. Aligned with this was the thought that insufficient funds could be allocated to improving deprived areas within the town council or a parish council:

"I would go for option A because I'd hate to see the people who are disadvantaged anyway be even more disadvantaged."

"I prefer option A the larger one as it's a fairer distribution of money. B I don't think is fair."

Concerns were raised about the level of Council Tax precept in Northampton town centre

- 5.39 Several participants pointed out the need to keep Council Tax affordable while others noted that the town centre included a comparatively large proportion of household in receipt of benefits and therefore who do not pay Council Tax. There was concern that under Option B, the smaller Town Council would need to raise much of the finance necessary for effective interventions to revitalise the town centre from already deprived and less affluent households, such as the working poor. The Central focus group said:

- 5.40 Those favouring Option A were concerned that, with the introduction of unitary authorities, a large town council was the best option to represent all resident of Northampton:

"A larger proportion of people in the town centre claim benefits [and don't pay Council Tax]."

"The town centre is a lot less wealthy than some of those surrounding areas. It will have a much greater number of people on benefits."

"Is it going to cost us a fortune?"

"There would be a riot if CT increased by that amount... If I were paying £54 at the moment, I couldn't afford to pay £100. Whoever they are they need to be very careful about how much they charge."

5.41 Comments from the other focus groups also addressed this question:

"We're paying our council taxes now and you're taking one layer out, then you're introducing another layer so it's going to increase them."

"The smaller {town centre} area encompasses some of the poorest areas... You're asking some of the poorest to pay more."

Alternative approaches

5.42 Two alternative approaches were put forward. One suggested that all unparished areas should be forced into forming parish councils to ensure everywhere had representation. The second was to redraw parish council boundaries to ensure equity of representation and of affluence to a greater extent than at present. In neither case was the mechanism to achieve the aim explored:

"...force the other areas to become parishes."

"There needs to be a redrawing of parish boundaries – if they're prepared to redraw the district and county boundaries it should be nothing to change [parish] boundaries and for existing parishes to expand their boundaries. [Some of the existing parishes] have already got experience and would get more funding [due to having a larger population]"

There were concerns on all sides that there was insufficient information to make a decision

5.43 Several participants requested more information, preferably costed, at least with illustrative costs, for each potential parish as well as for the two town council options and for that information to be clear and simple:

"If they said you pay more and this is what you'd get, x, y, z, that's fine, but not just asking people to pay more and not know where it's going."

"I don't know, we need more information saying if we do bring in parish councils if we've got a budget this will be spent on each parish and this is what you'll get for it. Then we can make a decision on that. We need more information because there's pros and cons to both of them at the moment. A we know, B we don't. We need clearer and simpler information and make it easy to understand."

Main Findings from Stakeholder/Parish Councillors' Forum

Introduction

- 5.44 The meeting for stakeholders, including parish, town and county councillors, took place at Guildhall, Northampton between 11:15am – 1:30pm on Tuesday 29th October 2019. The meeting was independently facilitated by ORS and comprised a presentation outlining the context and background to the consultation, followed by a series of discussions about issues related to the proposal to form a new Town Council in Northampton, as well as the specific options being put forward.
- 5.45 Participants were asked to register in advance and 18 individuals in total attended the meeting, representing a range of local government bodies, residents' associations and community groups and organisations.

Main findings

There was broad support for an organisation to preserve Northampton's identity and heritage, to promote its interest and give residents a voice was important

- 5.46 The balance of opinion among stakeholders regarding the formation of, for example, a Town or Community Council in Northampton was in favour, with the majority agreeing that it was important to have an organisation which would preserve the historic identity and heritage of the town, to promote its interests and to give residents a voice:

"Yes – the town of Northampton needs a voice and a say in the town."

"Basically, our answer is yes: we do need it, and we need it so that the people have a voice. And also, so that somebody has ownership of the problem."

"Heritage is important and must be preserved."

- 5.47 There was considerable debate about what the remit and responsibilities of any new organisation; some stakeholders favoured a town council with a broad remit:

"... we need a large town council to promote Northampton's needs..."

"I was in the group looking at what we want Northampton to look like – how is it going to reflect the community... The historical is also modern, so when we talk about the historic identity, we must not just think of something that happened 500 years ago; we need that, but we also need to modern side of heritage...we're really keen to have the whole thing reflect Northampton..."

"We went as deep as talking about the mayoralty – who holds what. We've lost our Sergeant; it's about bringing some of the old back; let's tidy up what we have already and then move forward..."

- 5.48 Others were concerned that a new organisation should be limited in size and scope, citing reasons including potential costs to residents, a remit which would focus too much on the town centre and unnecessary overlap with parish and community councils:

"What are people's expectations of a Town Council? You want it to protect heritage; how is it going to do that? It doesn't have a budget to do that. How is it going to promote Northampton [if] it doesn't have a budget to promote it?"

"Would a Town Council end up collecting funds from all areas but with spending focused on the central area?"

"A lot of people in my ward hardly ever go into Northampton; they go to local shops... I don't know how they would feel about paying for a [Town Council]."

"It's important to promote the heritage, but that's a shared responsibility with District and Parish."

"Some people we've talked to have wanted a good seized council, but others – when they've had it explained – go for more parishes."

5.49 For other stakeholders, it was exactly the potential for developing the town centre itself which made the prospect of a Town Council or other organisation to promote Northampton's interests an attractive proposition. The potential benefits mentioned included:

- » Greater representation from a wider group of residents making decisions around the future development of the town;
- » One point of contact for residents;
- » A town-wide strategy;
- » Increased tourist attraction;
- » Equality of service delivery town wide;
- » Support for festivals, arts, culture to be enjoyed by all;
- » Better promotion for businesses in Northampton; and
- » A sense of ownership and inclusion leading to pride in history and tradition of town.

5.50 Some attendees pointed out that, to be successful, a Town Council would need to work with other organisations (including existing and new parish councils) in order to best represent and promote the interests of Northampton and its residents:

"It's not just about the shops; we have a unique opportunity to engage with other organisations to help those areas. It's an opportunity that other groups may have to engage, to move people into the town, and enable things to happen. It's not all about the shops and the council, there has to be a kind of joined-up thinking process..."

"Even if we are in existing parishes then we need representation/input to the town as it is a really important hub for us residents."

5.51 Therefore, while there was broad support for some kind of organisation to represent the interests of Northampton residents to be put in place, there were strong differences of opinion about the specific type, size and remit of such a body. There was, however, agreement that whatever solution was forthcoming, that it needed to be focused on working for the town:

"...we were very aware of the democratic input that is required; we were all in agreement that people need representation. It's about how they are best represented, really – that's what this discussion is about."

"The council must be accountable; it must work for the town."

An important factor for stakeholders who agreed with the principle of forming a new Town Council was representation for unparished areas

- 5.52 Some attendees expressed concern that not having a Town Council, particularly of sufficient size to cover unparished areas, would leave many residents – included those in deprived areas – unrepresented, except for via the unitary council:

"A major part of the eastern district is deprived; they can't afford to have a parish [council]. What happens to them?"

"If you don't have a big council, those deprived areas will be very poor."

"We've had a debate in our residents' association committee – we went around asking people [if they wanted to be a parish]. Only about 5% wanted to; the rest said, "No, it's too expensive; who's going to do that, who's going to be responsible for this... We want to be in the borough where we have more power, a more persuasive position."

"I'm very concerned about the areas that have not put forward an expression of interest [in becoming parishes]; what happens to them is crucial. Are they left in limbo? Do they become part of the unitary [authority]? Do they just sit there, with the option of becoming a parish, which is open to everybody? I think it is a huge problem for those areas because, well, where do they sit?"

- 5.53 The issue of representation for unparished areas was discussed further in relation to the specific options put forward in relation to the potential structure and size of a town council, the details of which are reported below.

Issues of budgets and funding for a Town Council were discussed at length, with strong disagreement about the size of the precept that residents would need to pay to receive worthwhile benefits

- 5.54 The value for money of a small Town Council with a relatively low level of funding was questioned by some who felt that, while a small precept (and therefore budget) could support a mayor's office – for example – the council would be very limited in scope and responsibilities:

"You can say that there is a half a million pounds budget for the Town Council, but if you want to promote other things and do other things, that budget is going to go up."

"Twelve quid and half a million pounds may pay for the mayoralty, but is it going to pay for [Guildhall]? If they announce they are going to take on this building then, yes, it will generate an income, but it's very, very costly... unless they are going to run it from someone's front room."

- 5.55 Some stakeholders, however, argued that funding for Town Council-run services, particularly those for which the new unitary authorities would otherwise be responsible, would come from existing council tax charges rather than a new precept:

"If you are looking at a band D property in Northampton, we would work on the premise of something like £12 per year; that would give you half a million pounds to work with... Now the Council does have to run the mayoralty and the staff [but] any work that comes from the unitary, they have to pay for. If unitary [council] want us to do certain work, they have to pay us to do it. We are not charging Northampton twice for council tax, and then a precept on top to do work that the unitary should be responsible for."

"Surely, if you are doing work that would [otherwise] be done by a unitary council, the unitary will pay for it..."

- 5.56 When the question of Town Council funding was discussed, some stakeholders questioned what they saw as an assumption that a Town Council covering a larger area would require less funding per resident or household than a smaller council:

"I'm not clear on the point that the larger the Town Council, the less the tax that is paid. Surely you have to set a budget for that proposed council and then, by a method of division, the budget is divided by the number of people who are going to pay it... We don't know the area that it is going to be collected from."

"Councils are going to be elected and councillors are going to have their own view... At the end of the day, those people who are elected to it are the ones who are going to decide the precept, and they may want to put it up; they may have great big aspirations."

There was considerable variation in views regarding the effect of introducing a Town Council on individual communities, particularly with regard to decision-making at a local level

- 5.57 Those in favour of parish councils tended to be particularly vocal in their view that decisions about funding and services needed to be made as locally as possible:

"Would I be right in thinking that, if you have a parish council... the precept raised would actually be spent in that area? Whereas, if you have this massive Town Council, you've got people in the eastern district, Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton, all paying – not for their own community – but paying for the town centre. Is that your vision?"

"This is going to be a big Town Council – that is my concern. Having too many people sitting, making decisions... It's about the people who live in the area they live in; what do they want? [In Far Cotton] we always work together as a community and we're not forgotten... As a group, we would love to become a parish council, and that big [Town] Council concerns me that we are going to lose our little say."

- 5.58 Other stakeholders, however, were keen to point out that any new Town Council would be made up of local representatives seeking funding for their own communities, not just the town as a whole:

“Could I pick up on the point from a minute ago, that the money collected within a parish is spent in the parish. Similarly, the money spent in the Town Council precept - the councillors are elected locally; there will be very vocal people within the Town Council to fight for their particular area. It’s not just an amorphous mass of citizens; people will be representing their locality, their residents and their area and they will be able to bid for and promote projects in their area. Everyone will be represented...”

- 5.59 One attendee argued that the need for a Town Council to be funded by all parts of the community was justified because even those areas with existing or planned parish or community councils would still be able to benefit from the new organisation through, for example, access to a town mayor’s office:

“The problem we’ve got is that some of the town is parish and some of it isn’t; the existing Town Council will be like a parish. It’s still fragmenting it all up; if we have a whole-Town Council and the parishes are still there, [the parishes] will have to continue to give into the Town Council to access the mayor. Otherwise you’re getting somebody to pay for the mayor, and [if] they see the mayor going to other areas, they’re going to think it’s unfair that they are the only people paying.”

- 5.60 Another responded, however, by arguing that this could lead to parishes wanting to charge residents from outside their communities to use the services they fund and run, e.g. local parks and leisure facilities:

“We’re a parish – we’ve got a lot of open space and a lot of people enjoy walking in that space; have we got to charge them? If we’ve got to pay for the mayor to come out to [us], we’re going to charge the people who live adjoining us. We pay to maintain all the grounds, and they come and enjoy them.”

When asked to consider the two options put forward with regard to the size of a new council, the balance of opinion overall was in favour of Option A – a larger town council covering the whole of the borough that is currently unparished

- 5.61 The biggest concern of those favouring Option A was that, with the introduction of unitary authorities, all Northampton residents will need local representation and that a large Town Council was the best option:

“What concerns me is that, if people choose the smaller option [Option B], and the only two that are out for consultation [to become parishes] now are Kingsthorpe and Delapre - what happens to the rest, where they have no representation and nobody on the Town Council?”

“It’s important – if there are no additional parishes then there is a demographic deficit; therefore, there has to be a larger Town Council”

“You’ll have certain areas – what I would call “cold” areas – that don’t quite fit into Kingsthorpe or Far Cotton... There will be parts of Northampton that fall through the loop.”

“Depending on roles and responsibilities, both options are valuable, but I prefer one point of contact [which] helps to engage with a wide cross-section of the town...”

"Areas of Northampton should not be left out of having a voice."

- 5.62 Of particular concern to those in favour of Option A was how those areas described as "deprived" might be left unrepresented without a Town Council, in part because they would be unlikely or unable to engage with or fund a parish or community council:

"Of the two options, Option A is the better as it saves areas, especially deprived areas, not being represented."

"Because of the areas they are, it's not going to be their top priority. If you are struggling to get by, I agree that you probably couldn't care less about this... It's our responsibility, as people who make decisions, to understand that."

A smaller number of stakeholders argued passionately in favour of Option B – a smaller, urban town council – on the basis that it was the best option for local communities, particularly those outside the urban centre of Northampton

- 5.63 For those stakeholders who spoke out in favour of a smaller town council, preferably in tandem with an increase in the number of parish or community councils, their conviction of the benefits of local, community-centred bodies was key:

"A smaller [council] – community focused; working for the community."

"Option B, because it's community focussed – this is all about community. We've got a borough council that's disappearing, and we've got people here who want to replicate it as a town council. I believe that parish councils are there to benefit the community... I've seen the benefits that they bring to the area."

"Option B: a small town council, and existing parish councils and new parish councils."

"Encourage other areas to become parishes and then go for a "town centre" parish or town council."

- 5.64 The role of parish and community councils in preserving services which might otherwise have been cut was cited as a good example of the advantages of smaller, localised organisations to represent the interests of communities:

"One of the primary examples around here is libraries; the County Council has shut the libraries. Delapre has got a library... a parish council could take on that building and keep that library running. Wooton is building an extension to their building to actually take in the library... Libraries would be a prime thing; if the parishes and town want to take them on, they can do."

- 5.65 The retention of funding, raised through council tax precepts, for use at a local level was a key factor behind some stakeholders' preference for Option B, allowing parish councils to benefit their communities, with the accompanying views that shifting locally funded services to a Town Council could cost more:

"[Under Option B] the precept is retained in community for the benefit of the community."

"They bring youth facilities, they bring facilities for the elderly, they do a lot of environmental work..."

"The fantastic work that is done in our parishes, particularly among the elderly and with young people – if that was to be replicated by a Town Council, you would be talking millions."

- 5.66 Some attendees who favoured Option B envisaged a Town Council that effectively operated in a similar way to a parish council and suggested that it should be named accordingly:

"If the Town Council will be operating in a similar way to a parish council, why not just call it Northampton Parish Council? Then you'll have an umbrella group to look after the [unparished areas]."

"Town Council is wrong – if they have the same responsibilities as parish councils then call them Northampton Parish Council."

- 5.67 One proponent of Option B caveated their support, recognising the concerns voiced elsewhere that unparished areas might not be well represented if a smaller Town Council was put in place:

"I would prefer a smaller Town Council but only if all areas outside this become Parish Councils."

- 5.68 By contrast, others arguing in support of parish councils felt that residents of unparished areas would nonetheless get sufficient representation from the unitary authorities, and that Option B was the best route forward for everybody.

There were concerns on all sides that there was insufficient awareness among residents about the options available and their implications

- 5.69 The theme of a lack of awareness of, or interest in, the exact nature and size of a town and/or parish councils among residents in all areas – both parished and unparished – was commented on by a number of stakeholders:

"Do the residents in [the unparished areas] really care? Are the people aware?"

"I find in my own parish that the only time they really care is when they have a problem; if everything is going fine, they don't want to know about it."

"I don't think that the people who live in the parishes that are not Kingsthorpe or Far Cotton are aware of the position that they are in at the moment."

- 5.70 The comments above, however, drew sharp disagreement from some other attendees:

"I think people do care. If you go door-stepping or talking to people on the street, they do care..."

- 5.71 Some of those present expressed concerns that a lack of awareness about the way that parish councils work and are funded might affect their views on the different options:

"It amazes me how many people I have spoken to who have absolutely no idea about what a parish council is. I think they have distorted views from television programmes; they don't understand what they are. The only thing they think is, "If we have a parish council, we are going to end up paying an awful lot more money than we already do now.""

"If you are in the know [a parish council] works well, but what percentage of the people in a parish understand exactly what it means?"

- 5.72 Furthermore, some attendees expressed concern that the consultation itself had not been publicised sufficiently and, in one case, that holding a referendum instead would have been a preferable option to the open consultation (although it was pointed out that statutory requirements and time constraints):

"I don't think that any of this has been publicised enough – a lot of people have no idea that this consultation is going on. A lot of the people I know who live in these [unparished] areas and could be unrepresented under the unitaries don't even know it's happening!"

"Would it not have been simpler, quicker and more accurate to put a referendum out to ask people of this town which of the options they wanted, clearly and precisely. You would not then get people saying, "We haven't heard anything". Only I, as a representative of the residents' association, have heard about this; most of the people I know, even in our neighbourhood watch group, know nothing about this."

- 5.73 By contrast, some stakeholders felt that the communities they represented were well informed about the possibility of becoming a parish council and had made an informed decision to reject it in favour of a larger Town Council, while one attendee felt that launching additional consultations in relation to forming new parish councils should be left until after the change to unitary councils had taken place:

"Those of us who ... have had a debate in our residents' association are going for Option A, because we believe that is what is better for the town."

"If areas can choose to become parishes at any time, why is there a rush to become parish councils now, when we are going through this hugely complicated business of becoming a unitary, which all of us are struggling with because it's a huge job to do. Surely we should just leave the status quo, have a bigger Town Council to be representative of Northampton, which is the county town, and then if people later want to be parished – well, we've got through the maze of what we're doing with the unitary – they can do that at a later date."

- 5.74 Further to concerns about promotion of the consultation, some attendees raised the concern that (particularly in relation to residents of 'deprived' areas) a lack of awareness of local government in general may mean that individuals who could make a significant contribution on behalf of their communities were unlikely to do so unless informed of the opportunity to do so:

"A successful parish or Town Council is successful because of the people who are actually on the council; the clerk and counsellors. You have to have people who are passionate. If [residents] don't know that this is happening, we won't get those passionate people coming forward; but they may be there - they may be living in those areas and desperate to come forward."

- 5.75 It should be noted that, at times, the discussions became quite heated with strong disagreement about the extent to which politics might both inform the opinions of those present, and might potentially impact a new Town Council and its work:

In support of Option A:

"I notice that all of those people who are going for Option B are [from] parish councils or would [choose to be] parish councils."

"[The issue is being] used as a political football to fight the unitary, not work for the community."

In support of Option B:

"...we're talking about a voice. Those parishes haven't had a voice under the previous administration, they will have one now. A Town Council is not about community – it's political..."

"A large council would be too political."

- 5.76 Other stakeholders disagreed, however, with one attendee concisely summarising their belief that a Town Council would not only *not* be political, but would also be strongly representative of local communities in Northampton:

"A Town Council would not have to be political; you would not have to belong to a political party to be a councillor. So, you would get this community representation and engagement; people would represent their communities and the streets they live in and I think that is a real strength."

Finally, the conversation returned to the subject of funding of services which might be run by unitary, town or parish councils (or a combination thereof)

- 5.77 A number of attendees reiterated the need for precepts and/or other funding to be distributed appropriately between different local government organisations to ensure that necessary services are provided without the burden of cost falling in the wrong place:

"If we have a higher parish precept or council precept, surely that would mean there would be no tax from the unitary because we would be doing the work that they would normally or should be doing."

"I've been asked, 'if we become a parish council, does it mean we will pay less council tax.' I said, 'No, there will be a precept depending on what you want to do.'"

- 5.78 One advocate of Option B reiterated the role that parish councils could play in helping to maintain local services, particularly non-statutory services which might otherwise be cut to make savings:

"The unitary authority will have statutory responsibilities... I don't think that [they] will be the be all and end all to resolving the financial problems that there are in this county. Therefore, the unitary is going to be looking to make savings from day one ... it can't cut social services, it can't cut children's services; it's got significant statutory responsibilities."

A lot of what the boroughs and districts do at the moment are not statutory services... we'll have to do some, but we won't have to do them all. It's those services that are currently done by the boroughs and districts that will be cut out by the unitary... I see that as an area where the parishes might be able to step in a work with them."

6. List of Tables and Figures

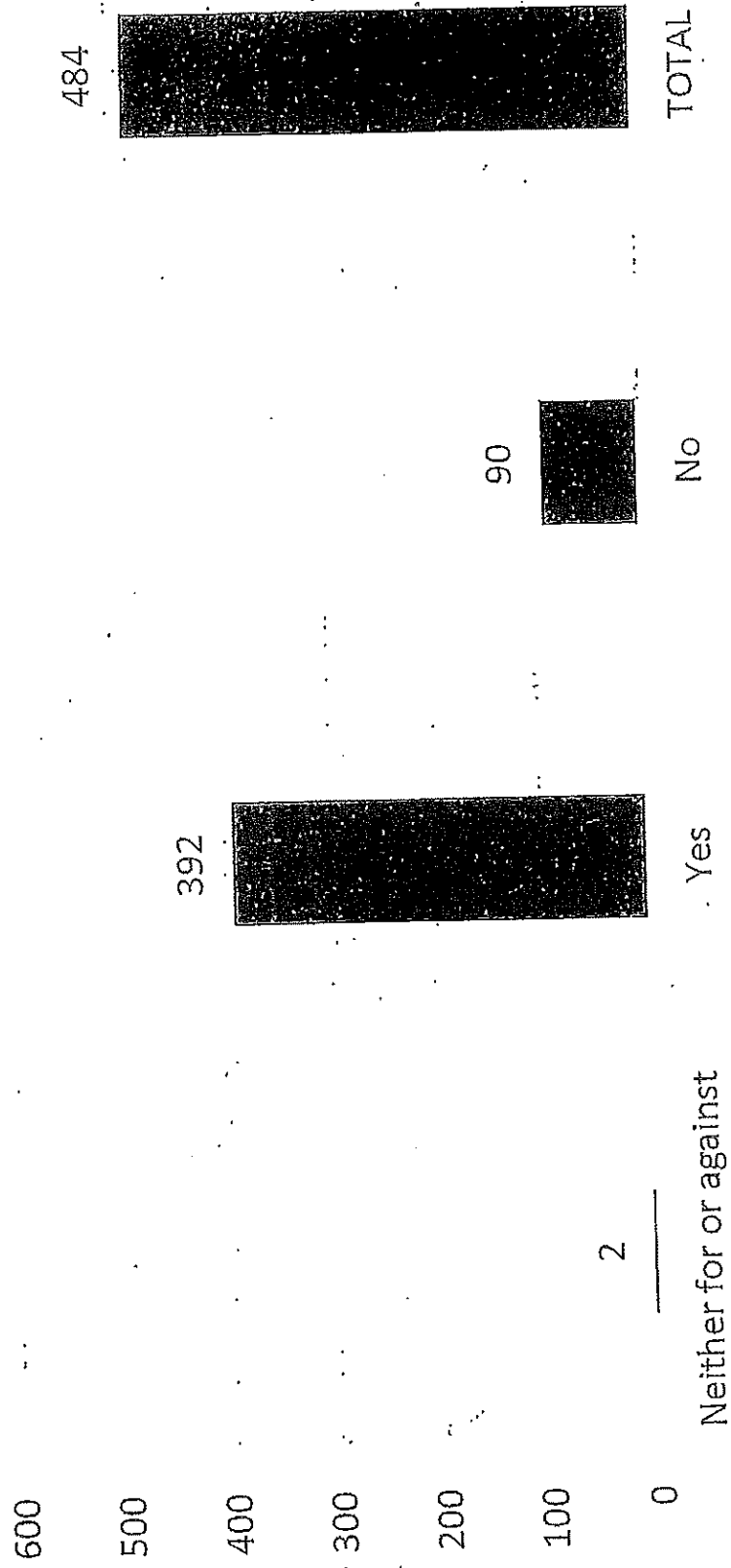
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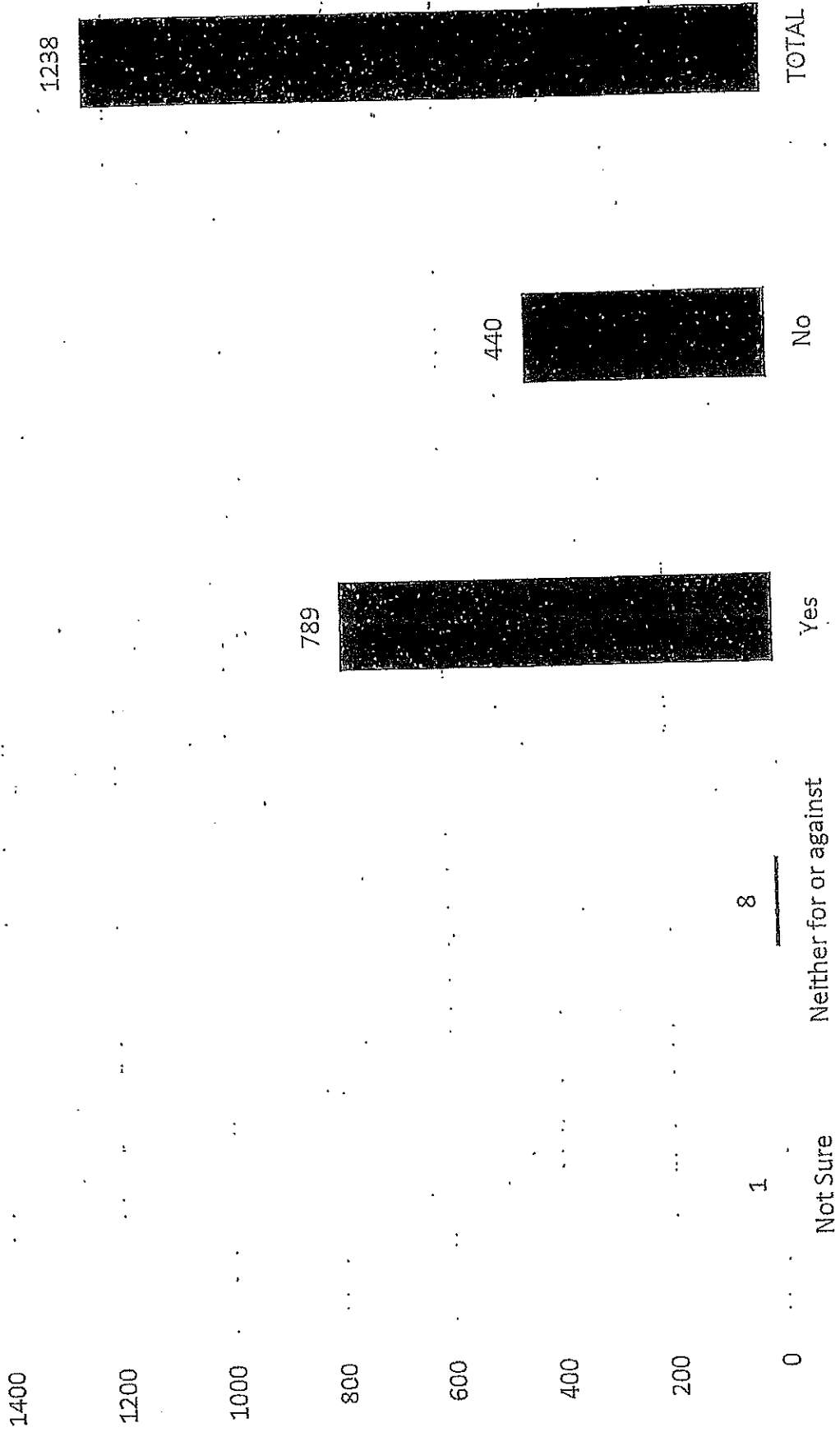
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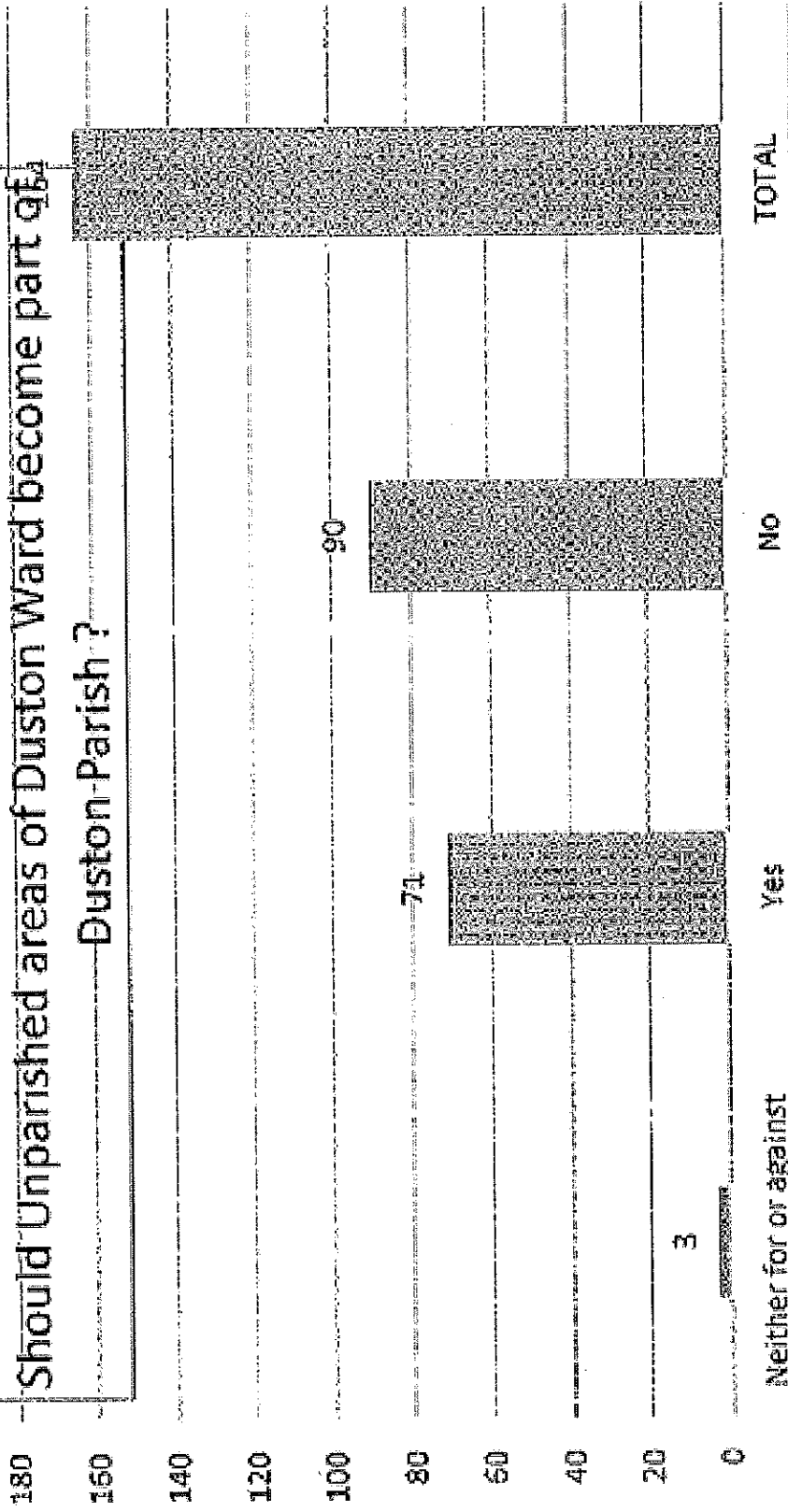
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Community Council in Far Cotton & Delapre



Proposal for a Parish Council in Kingsthorpe



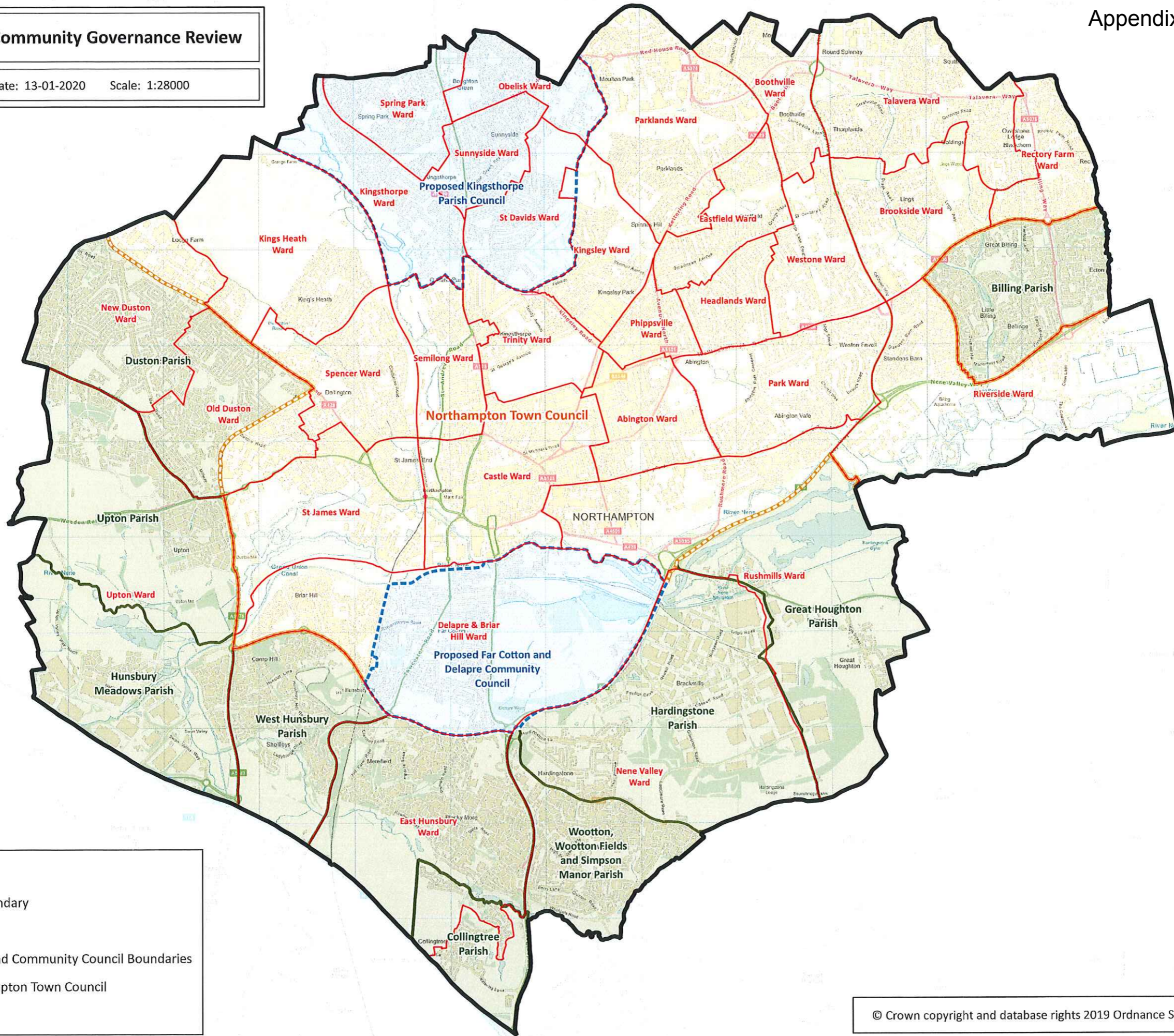




NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community Governance Review

Date: 13-01-2020 Scale: 1:28000



Legend

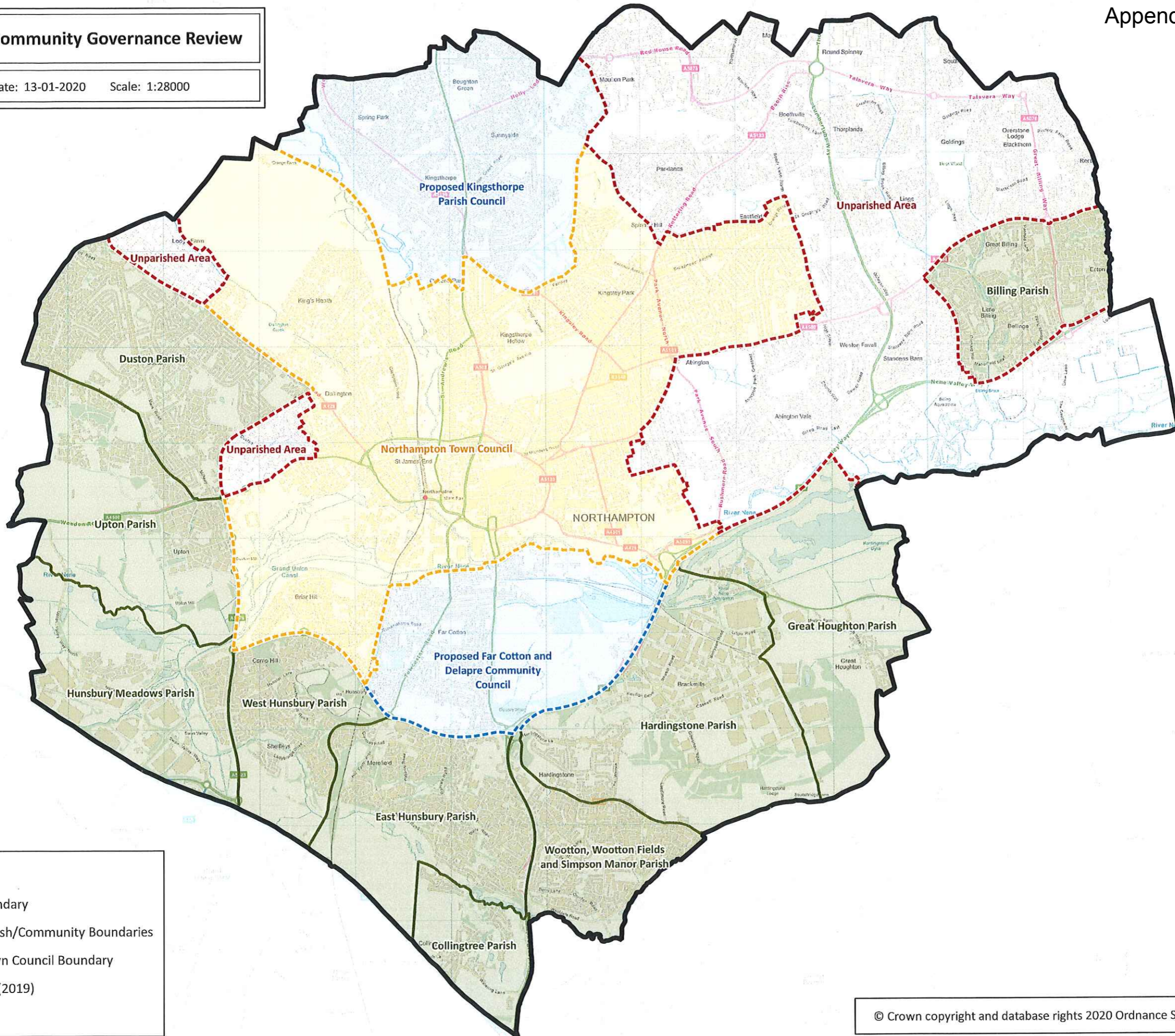
- Northampton Boundary
- Ward Boundaries
- Proposed Parish and Community Council Boundaries
- Proposed Northampton Town Council
- Parish Boundaries



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

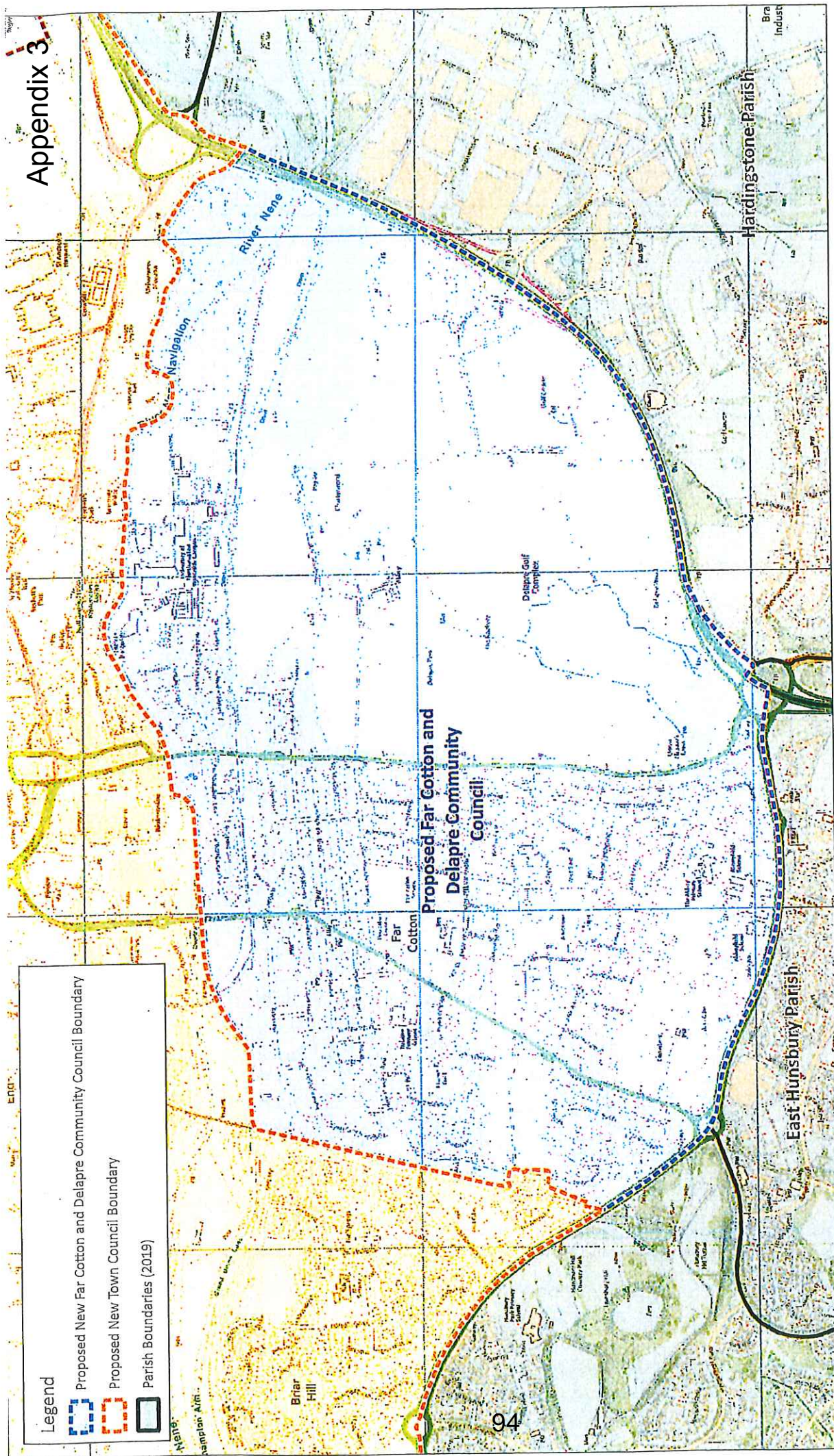
Community Governance Review

Date: 13-01-2020 Scale: 1:28000






Legend

- Northampton Boundary
- Proposed New Parish/Community Boundaries
- Proposed New Town Council Boundary
- Parish Boundaries (2019)
- Unparished Area



Legend

-  Proposed New Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council Boundary
-  Proposed New Town Council Boundary
-  Parish Boundaries (2019)



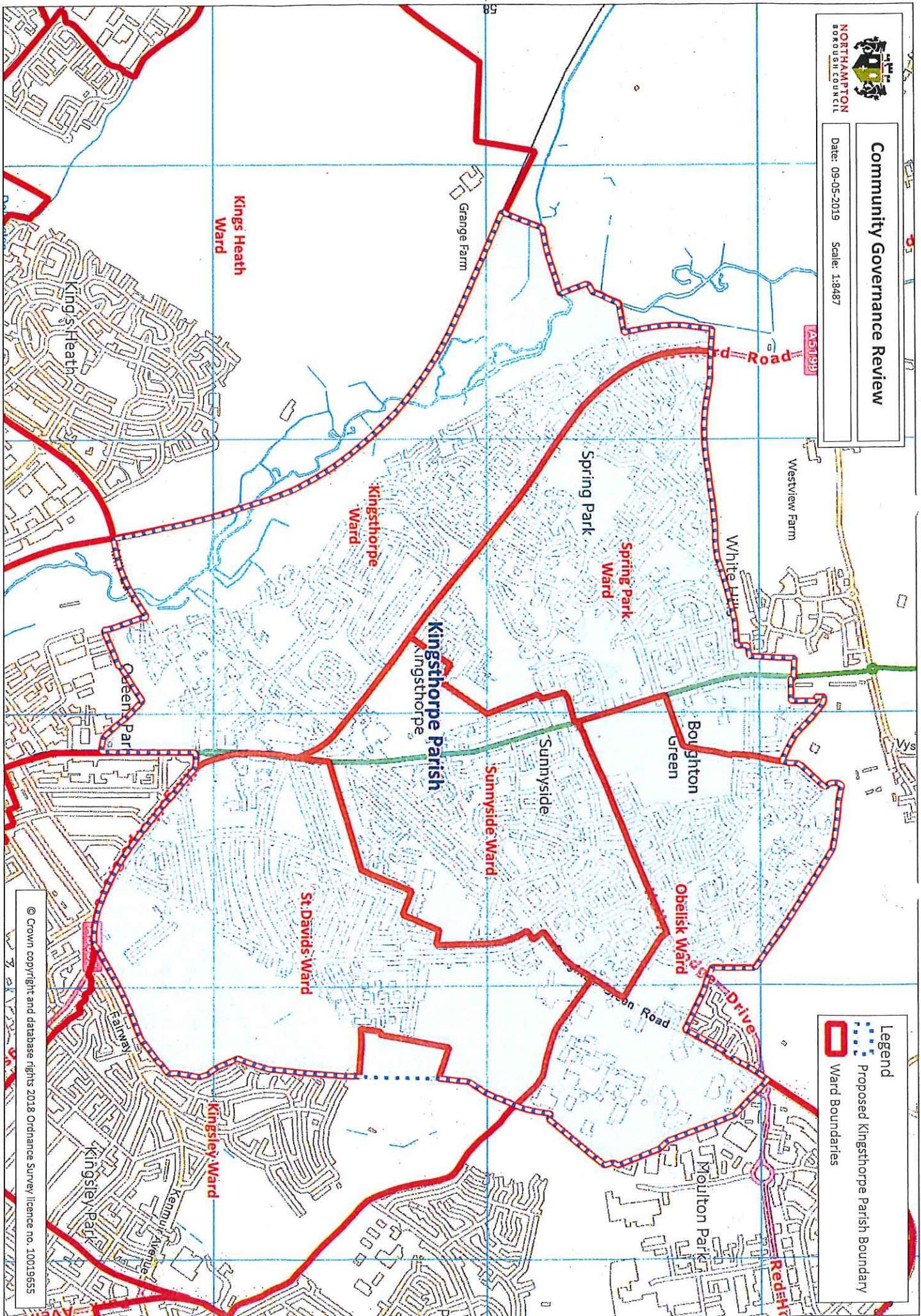
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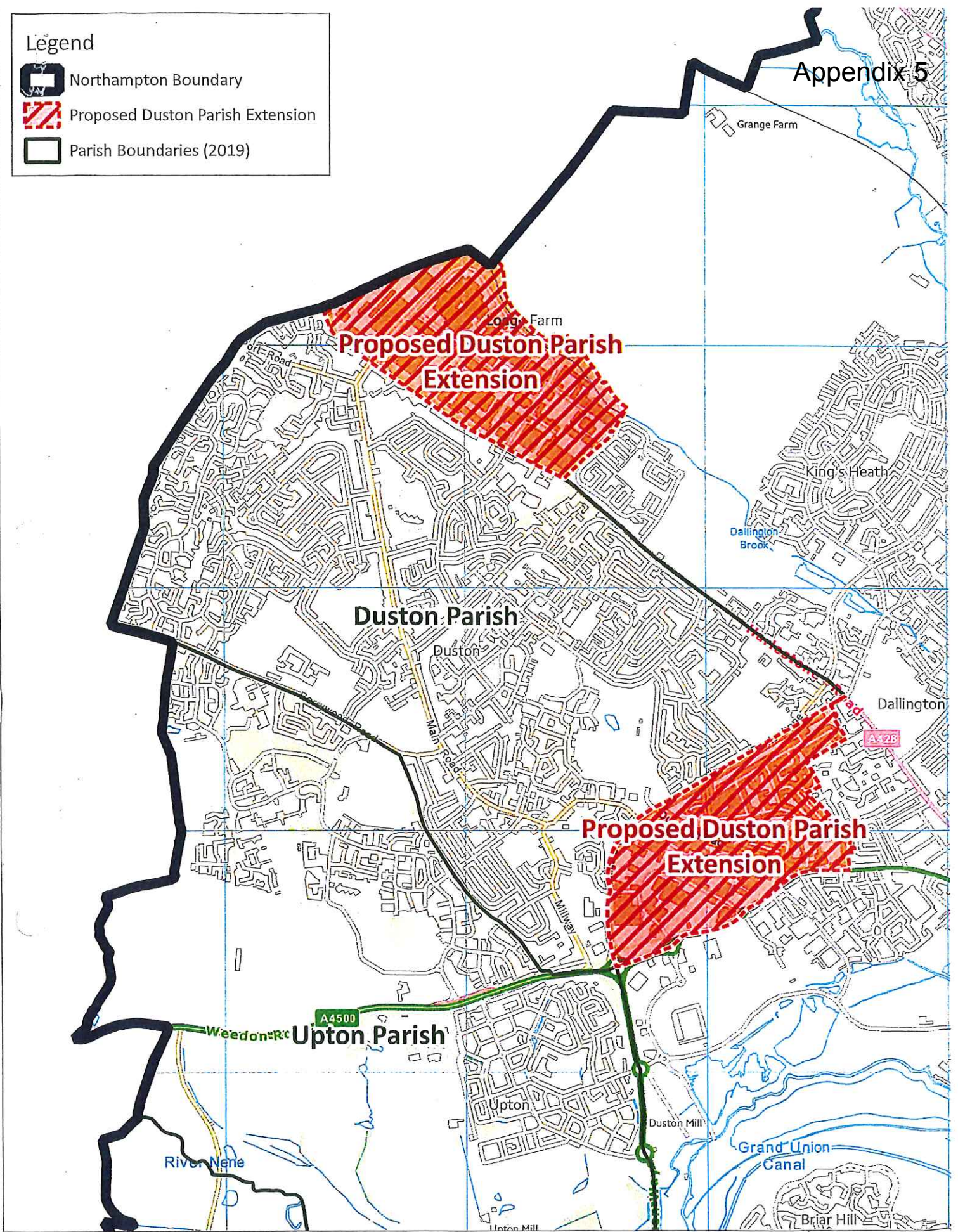
Legend

- Proposed Kingshorpe Parish Boundary
- Ward Boundaries

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Legend

-  Northampton Boundary
-  Proposed Duston Parish Extension
-  Parish Boundaries (2019)



Title: **Community Governance Review**

Date: 20-05-2019

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Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 January 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Finance & Resources

Report Title	Local Council Tax Support Scheme – 2020/21
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 That Council approve the proposal that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to remain at a 35% reduction in 2020/21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council endorse the recommendation contained in the Cabinet report attached no later than the 31st January 2020.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 See Cabinet Report attached

3.2 Decision details

- 3.2.1 See Cabinet Report attached.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 See Cabinet Report attached.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 See Cabinet Report attached.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 See Cabinet Report attached

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 See Cabinet Report attached

4.5 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

4.5.1 See Cabinet Report attached

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 See Cabinet Report attached

5. Background Papers

5.1 See Cabinet Report attached

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Appendices:
3



Report Title	LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME
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CABINET REPORT

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	23 rd December 2019
Key Decision:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Finance
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Brandon Eldred
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report recommends the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21, including amendments.
- 1.2 The report follows a period of consultation and provides the recommended scheme for approval at Council.

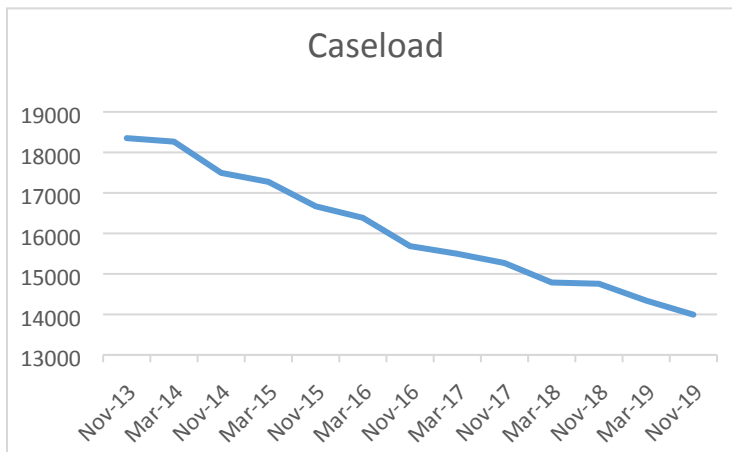
2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the recommendation for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to remain at a 35% reduction in 2020/21.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends the CTRS for approval at Council on the 20th January 2020.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Local Authorities are required to set up their own CTRS from the general funding allocation.
- 3.1.2 When the scheme was originally implemented, it was funded by Central Government. Several years ago this funding was provided to Local Authorities as part of their central government grant and with this funding, are expected to provide a service. Since that time, Central Government funding to Local Authorities has dropped year on year, therefore this requirement feeds into the overall demands and pressures on funding.
- 3.1.3 The graph below demonstrates that the CTRS caseload has continued to reduce each year. Monitoring closely over the period that the CTRS has been operating, has enabled modelling of final expenditure to be estimated more accurately.



- 3.1.4 Central Government suggested that Local Authorities could meet the funding deficit by implementing other changes, to ensure that Local Authorities maximise their opportunities to be financially efficient with the current budgetary pressures. As part of the implementation of the CTRS from 1st April 2013 we have already:
- Reconfigured funding, in particular its transfer of services to LGSS.
 - Used the new flexibility over Council Tax to remove the reliefs in respect of second homes and some empty properties; and other reforms of the council tax system, including the use of an electronic leaflet and removal of expensive printing costs traditionally associated with the annual billing process.
- 3.1.5 Under management from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), using devolved power under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended); Northampton Borough Council has been operating a means tested local reduction. This saw a 35% reduction in the support available to working age customers in 2019/20.

- 3.1.6 Local Authorities are expected to ensure their CTRS is suitable for its local community and promotes the Governments position on Welfare Reform, by protecting the vulnerable and encouraging work for those of working age.
- 3.1.7 Pensioners will not be affected by the proposed changes to our CTRS and will remain fully protected. This means that NBC will continue to administer protection for year 2020/21 for approximately 5,309 pensioners.
- 3.1.8 There are 8,571 claimants who are classed as working age and are currently entitled to the CTR scheme. These customers will be affected for collection and financial purposes by any change in their existing award. The entitlement is applied by a reduction in benefit after all other calculations have been made.
- 3.1.9 A full income disregard of War Widows Pension and War Disablement Pension will continue. This was originally adopted as part of the 2013/14 CTRS in Northampton. Protection for working age customers in receipt of these benefits will also continue.
- 3.1.10 Additional protection will continue for those in receipt of disablement benefits and **Appendix A** provides the groups afforded additional support under the scheme. The scheme will also continue to support people back into work through a 4-week run on period of support.
- 3.1.11 Part of the feedback from previous consultations is that people feel that reducing the amount of support would probably cause hardship for some people.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The options for amending the CTRS, as detailed in 3.3 below, were consulted upon. These could reduce or mitigate the impact of the reduced funding for the CTRS.
- 3.2.2 Positive responses from the consultation centred on the concept of ‘fairness’ and everyone having to contribute to protect services
- 3.2.3 Negative responses included concerns about being able to afford increasing contributions toward Council Tax bills, in addition to already increasing priority bills and static incomes.
- 3.2.4 Questions were raised about how those already on a low income being able to afford additional money and the impact on their ability to afford necessities and increased debt.
- 3.2.5 It was highlighted that these changes could impact vulnerable people and low income families.
- 3.2.6 Awareness was demonstrated of the impact of non-payment and subsequent increase on recovery costs.

3.3 Local Council Tax Reduction options for 2020/21

3.3.1 Option 1: No change - remain at 65%

This is where the Council continues with the same scheme as 2019/20 and makes

no further changes. This means the Council Tax contribution rate for those in receipt of CTRS remains at 35%

3.3.2 Option 2: Increase the maximum amount of CTRS.

This is where the council increases the support for recipients of CTRS, and means that they would have to pay less Council Tax. Each 1% increase would cost the Council £10,531.

3.3.3 Option 3: Reduce the maximum amount of CTRS.

This is where the council decreases the support for recipients of CTRS, and means that they would have to pay more Council Tax. Each 1% decrease would save the Council £10,531.

3.4 Choices – Northampton Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

3.4.1 Option 1: No change - remain at 65%

The current scheme has worked well and provides additional protection and support for the most vulnerable in the community, alongside supporting incentives to those starting work.

The funding will reduce again in 2020/21, resulting in the Council being expected to find additional monies from other sources to protect the existing level of support afforded through CTRS. However the drop in caseload over the last year, as demonstrated in 3.1.3 has meant the current scheme remains self-funding.

When the Council consulted for the 2020/21 scheme, this was the most popular option overall, whether in receipt of CTRS or not, and regardless of age, gender, or disability status, with 74% of respondents in favour.

3.4.2 Option 2: Increase the maximum amount of CTRS.

Funding will reduce again in 2020/21 and therefore the Council would have been left to find £10,531 for each 1% increase from other sources to provide this increased level of support from CTRS.

This means that working age CTRS claimants would need to pay less Council tax.

When the Council consulted for the 2020/21 scheme, 40% of respondents were in favour of this option. This figure increased to 73% when looking at just those in receipt of CTRS.

This also means that the Council will need to fund the difference between the additional paid by the working age CTRS recipients and the funding available and will impact on the wider community in Northampton.

3.4.3 Option 3: Decrease the maximum amount of CTRS.

Funding will reduce again in 2020/21 and reducing the level of support from CTRS in this way would provide £10,531 of additional income for each 1% decrease in support

This means that working age CTRS claimants would need to pay more Council

tax.

When the Council consulted for the 2020/21 scheme, this was the least popular option with 65% of respondents against it. Respondents felt that this proposal would cause additional hardship, and suggested alternative ways of funding the shortfall by reviewing Council spending on other projects.

There was concern that increasing the amount payable would cause considerable difficulties for both individuals and the council in terms of collecting the shortfall in support.

Increasing the contribution rate is likely to lead to increased administration costs in recovering the Council Tax owed.

3.5 Recommended Option (Chosen CTR Scheme)

- 3.5.1 A reduction of 35% in CTRS from working age recipients from 1st April 2020. This option balances the financial position in 2020/21.
- 3.5.2 Protection as set out in Appendix A will continue to be afforded to ensure the Council protects disabled and vulnerable citizens, whilst ensuring there remains an incentive to work.
- 3.5.3 Alongside this the Council will continue to provide protection for recipients of war widows and war disablement pension. Therefore income and capital disregards for this group will be retained.
- 3.5.4 A four-week period of extended payments will continue to be provided for customers moving into work. This period will mean that benefit rates are retained for 4 weeks before any reduction is made.
- 3.5.5 The Council will review carefully the position in 2021/22. Alongside this it will ensure its policies and procedures to support those in hardship meet the needs of our citizens in providing or referring for financial advice.

4 Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1 The report outlines options for the Council's CTRS, which if chosen, will set policy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 There are significant financial implications to the Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as a result of the requirement to run a local council tax scheme, whilst protecting pensioners.
- 4.2.2 The Council aims for the CTRS to be self-funding. This means that the level of CTRS is set each year at a level where the forecast costs of the scheme match the funding of the scheme. The funding of the scheme is based on an assumed proportion of the Council's central government funding and business rates being

allocated to CTRS.

- 4.2.3 Over the last few years there has been a steady reduction in the CTRS caseload which has been reducing the cost of the scheme. However, at the same time there has also been a steady decrease in the level of central government funding, reducing the funding for the scheme.
- 4.2.4 The forecast in 2020/21 is that CTRS caseloads will continue to fall. Central government funding is also continuing to fall. That means that in 2020/21 it will be possible to maintain the scheme at 35% and still break even against the notional funding level.
- 4.2.5 The current financial modelling undertaken on the recommended CTRS for 2020/21 is based on the latest intelligence around collection rates and government funding forecasts and is considered to be self-funding. However, the position would need to be closely monitored during the financial year and the position re-assessed for 2021/22.
- 4.2.6 Increased recovery and associated court costs could see increased resource requirements within the revenues team. The impact of other welfare reforms could also contribute to reduced collection on Council Tax and wider corporate debts. The Council has taken full account of pressures across corporate income and debt in calculating the impact of the recommended CTRS.
- 4.2.7 If the Council fails to agree and implement an amended scheme by 31st January 2020, they will need to retain the current scheme.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 As part of the process of amending the CTRS, legal advice will be obtained in order to ensure that processes and procedures that underpin the CTRS are compliant.

4.4 Equality

A full equality impact assessment has been completed - this can be found at **Appendix C**.

- 4.4.1 The equality impact assessment recognises that the amendment to the CTRS will place an additional financial burden on working age customers in 2020/21. Included within this group will be individuals and families with vulnerable characteristics.
- 4.4.2 In order to mitigate against the impact on this group and in particular those vulnerable citizens the Council has continued to afford protection within the more generous means-tested element of the CTRS. This can be found at **Appendix A**. Alongside this the Council will continue to consider fair debt collection principles and provide or refer those under financial pressure for debt advice.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 Local Authorities are obligated to carry out a thorough consultation in-line with the Governments Consultation Principles July 2012, in order to reduce the opportunity for the scheme not to reflect the needs of the local population. The methodology and results of the consultation is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 4.5.2 Consideration required that any consultation that occurred be proportional to the needs of the community and time barred in line with good practice
- 4.5.3 Care must be given to ensure that all members of the community have access to this consultation to ensure that everyone is given a right to be heard on CTRS.
- 4.5.4 The Council's methodology and approach included the following:
- On-line survey
 - News release(s)
 - Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
 - Northampton Borough Council's internet pages
 - All e-mail communication from the Benefit, Council Tax and Customer Services mailboxes included an invitation link to take-part in the consultation
 - Display screens in the One Stop Shop
 - Details of the consultation were emailed to the Multi Agency Forum and our welfare partners, including registered social landlords.
 - Invitations to participate was sent to key stakeholders, including Precepting Authorities, parishes, local Councillors and Members of Parliament
 - Engagement with housing associations and voluntary and community sectors via their various networks
 - Northampton Borough Council's Community Forum members were invited to take part
 - 5,415 email invitations were issued to email addresses held on the Benefit and Council Tax database
- 4.5.5 Consultation results:
- The website was viewed 15,702 times during the consultation period. Facebook and Twitter posts were viewed by 11,316 people, with 104 following links to the consultation documents. This demonstrates that media coverage of the consultation was active.
 - A total of 1,337 people completed the on-line survey.
 - 32 people expressed an interest in attending the drop-in information sessions, with 0 actually attending.
 - 398 individual comments were received in response to the consultation questions.
- 4.5.6 Nationally, the response to Local Authority engagement on local Council Tax schemes has been low. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities has established that this is the case.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The CTRS is a statutory requirement as a result of national austerity measures and wider reforms of the benefit system.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Appendix A – Specific Protection

5.2 Appendix B – Consultation

5.3 Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

**Stuart McGregor, Section 151 Officer, Northampton Borough Council
Ian Tyrer, Revenues & Benefits Technical Financial Manager**

Appendices: 2



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 JANUARY 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Finance & Resources

Report Title	COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020 -2021
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report sets out the calculation of Northampton Borough Council's Tax Base for the year 2020/21 under the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Amendment) (England) regulations 2003 (SI 2003/3012) and amendments made in the Local Government Act 2012.
- 1.2 The report sets out the option to change the level of premium for long term empty properties in accordance with the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, which came into effect in April 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the tax base for 2020/21 at 69,376.28 Band D equivalent properties and associated parish tax bases within this report.

'Band D' is used as a denominator value and changes to discounts, exemptions and collection rates will impact on the calculated 'tax base', in addition to any gains or losses in the number of physical properties.

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Billing	2,804.54	2,820.81	16.27
Collingtree	528.4673	536.15	7.68
Duston	5,562.62	5,581.06	18.44
Great Houghton	294.8073	289.50	-5.31
Hardingstone	816.3065	818.18	1.88
Upton	2,723.61	2,788.69	65.07
Wootton	2,980.14	2,990.71	10.57
East Hunsbury	3,510.44	3,506.83	-3.60
West Hunsbury	1,661.73	1,667.27	5.54
Hunsbury Meadow	888.343	972.28	83.93
Northampton (Unparished)	46,647.54	47,404.79	757.25
Total tax base	68,418.55	69,376.28	957.73

- 2.2 That Council approve the recommendation that the long-term empty property premium of 200% is implemented for properties vacant for over five years, to take effect from the 1st April 2020.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The tax base changes each year due to the movement in property type and how they are used. The key areas to review when making the estimate for next year are:

- The actual growth in the tax base as compared to the planning assumptions from the previous year.
- The planning assumptions for the rest of the current year and the next financial year
- The estimated movement in exemptions and discounts
- The estimated movement in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- The estimated non-collection in the tax base as a whole.

- 3.1.2 A summary of movement in the tax base is summarised below.

2019/20		2020/21
74,651.36	Tax Base (Band D equivalent)	75,260.13
271.11	Growth in tax base (note 1)	318.11
388.89	Planning Assumptions (note 2)	499.11
-51.24	Exemptions & Discounts (note 3)	-83.75
-5,658.35	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (note 4)	-5,417.53
-1,183.23	Non-Collection (note 5)	-1,199.79
68,418.55	Taxbase for Council Tax	69,376.28

- 3.1.3 Note 1 – The number of properties completed by the builders since November 2018 has been in line with the estimate. There has been an increase of 833 properties (not the band D figure) from the 2019/20 tax base to the 2020/21 tax base.

- 3.1.4 Note 2 – This is an estimate of the properties that the builders expect to complete in the next financial year, plus any that are due to be completed between the 1st December 2019 and the 31st March 2020. There is currently a reduction of 50% of the potential banding applied to the estimated new build figures to allow for part year liability, discounts and exemptions.
- 3.1.5 Note 3 – The main changes to exemptions, discounts and disregards are increases in awards for
- 3.1.5.1 Customers in hospital or care has increased (21%), this is due to an aging population.
 - 3.1.5.2 Customers where the property is awaiting probate (19%) have increased.
 - 3.1.5.3 Students in halls of residence (573%) has increased, this due to the extra accommodation available in the University and the district valuer rating the properties individually, rather than cumulatively.
 - 3.1.5.4 Customers in student accommodation (10%) has also increased, primarily due to a shift to flats, rather than shared houses.
 - 3.1.5.5 Properties occupied by persons under 18 years old (58%) have increased due an increase in accommodation being available to care leavers.
 - 3.1.5.6 Increase in Severe Mental Impairment (32%) and Carer (20%) cases is due to continued awareness, with more customers remaining in their homes for longer and the reduction in awards for CTRS.
 - 3.1.5.7 Single Person Discount awards have reduced by 5% due to a NCC funded review, which historically has resulted in a significant reduction in claims.

Please see appendix 2 for a list of all breakdown of all exemptions, discounts and disregards, as at the 30th November, used for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 tax bases.

- 3.1.6 Note 4 – The current Council tax Reduction Scheme is due to stay at the same level. Whilst there is a continued reduction in grant funding, the expenditure will reduce due to an expected to be a reduction in caseload.
- 3.1.7 Note 5 - The collection rate of council tax remains at 98.3% for the 2020/21 tax base setting. Collection rates have improved in recent years, especially against arrears, to a level where a surplus has been declared in the Collection Fund. The collection rate is reviewed each year as part of the tax base setting process.
- 3.1.8 There is an estimated surplus apportioned on the Collection Fund, detailed in the draft budget report to December Cabinet, which potentially could change prior to the formal notification on the 15th January 2020. The £126.7k, would be distributed as follows, £17.2k for NBC (which would equate to £87.8k for NCC, £4.3k for NCFRA and £17.4k for NPCC. This surplus also includes the bad debt provision remaining at 80%, due to continued improvement in collection rates.
- 3.1.9 The Government announced in budget in 2017 that they intended to review the level of discount for long term empty homes, and has subsequently published the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax

(Empty Dwellings) Bill, which has passed through the legislation process. This allows Billing Authorities to increase the level of premium from the existing 50%, dependent on the length of time the property has been empty and unfurnished:

- Up to 100% for homes empty between 2 and 5 years (this would come into effect in April 2019)
- Up to 200% for homes empty between 5 and 10 years (to come into effect from April 2020) and
- Up to 300% for homes empty for 10 years or more (to come into effect from April 2021)

3.1.10 The definition for allowing billing authorities to levy an 'empty homes premium' (also referred to as long term empty premium) over and above full council tax liability in respect of dwellings which have been left empty for two years or more.

3.1 Decision details

3.2.1 The report represents the application of a prescribed process.

3.2.2 To not set a tax base would render the authority unable to set a council tax.

3.2.3 The methodology used to calculate the tax base, has taken into account the previous decision by Council in 2013/14 in relation to the level of reductions awarded for Exemptions and Discounts.

3.2.4 Each of these previous decisions, either individually or as a whole, could be reconsidered by Full Council and the discounts reinstated. Any decision to change the current position would have a negative financial impact on the budget report and tax base. The value of the removal of discounts is shown as a band D equivalent in appendix 1.

3.2.5 To approve the recommendations in the report

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no such implications in this report

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 No resource required. The base has to be determined by the 31st January 2020 by Full Council

4.2.2 The proposal to change council tax long term empty premium must be seen in the wider context of delivering a balance budget for 2020/21 and is part of a number of options to achieve the same.

- 4.2.3 The premium only applies to properties that unoccupied and unfurnished, should a property become furnished at any time then the premium would no longer be applicable, even if it remained unoccupied.
- 4.2.4 Currently there are 56 properties in the borough of Northampton where the increase in premium from 100% to 200% could be applied. If applied, this would increase the 20/21 tax base by 45 band d equivalent properties. Based on the estimated precepts for 20/21 this has the potential to raise the following income.

	£
NBC	11,157.96
NCC	57,843.92
Fire	3,414.85
Police	11,625.42
	<u>84,042.15</u>

- 4.2.5 A risk of the premium for long term empty properties in raising additional income, is that customers may take steps to evade this, or avoiding informing us that the property has become empty.
- 4.2.6 The Government has announced an intention to develop guidance on considerations for properties subject to long term empty premium, but this not available to date. However, it will be necessary for the Council to consider any recommendations when available.
- 4.2.7 That the above policy position in respect of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be kept under review in respect of future years
- 4.2.8 That the above policy position in respect of discretionary discounts and exemptions be kept under review in respect of future years

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 These are covered within the body of the report.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 No direct impact on equality context, however any resulting impact on options/ consultations for budgets will have to be considered individually.
- 4.4.2 No direct impact on equality has been identified, however we will monitor to ensure unforeseen equality issues are identified and used to inform future reviews of this policy.

4.5 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

- 4.5.1 There are no such implications in this report

4.6 Other Implications

- 4.6.1 There are no such implications in this report

5. Background Papers

5.1 There are no such implications in this report

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Appendix 1

Northampton	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	97,509.00	98,342.00
less exemption	1,920.00	2,309.00
plus disabled from higher band	406.00	413.00
less disabled going into lower band	406.00	413.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	8,224.63	7,873.00
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-112.25	- 86.16
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	181.00	196.00
113 long-term empties x no discount	1,468.00	1,760.00
less CTRS	-7,601.43	- 7,269.73
plus f y e for new properties	450.50	617.00
Total	80,325.70	81,593.43
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	69,601.78	70,576.07
Assume 97.8% collection	68,418.55	Assume 98.3% collection 69,376.28

Duston	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	7300.00	7,298.00
less exemption	91.00	107.00
plus disabled from higher band	41.00	37.00
less disabled going into lower band	41.00	37.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	582.00	572.50
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-2.00	- 3.26
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	9.00	8.00
11 long-term empties x no discount	54.00	83.00
14 less CTRS	-354.77	- 341.47
plus f y e for new properties	2.50	21.50
Total	6276.73	6,301.79
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	5658.82	5,677.58
Assume 97.8% collection	5,562.62	Assume 98.3% collection
		5,581.06

Collingtree	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	434.00	433.00
less exemption	3.00	-
plus disabled from higher band	7.00	8.00
less disabled going into lower band	7.00	8.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	21.00	22.88
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-4.00	- 9.47
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	1.00	2.00
long-term empties x no discount	4.00	5.00
less CTRS	-10.69	- 9.45
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	3.50
Total	403.31	413.64
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	534.53	545.42
Assume 97.8% collection	522.77	Assume 98.3% collection
		536.15

Billing	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	3,912.00	3,908.00
less exemption	33.00	33.00
plus disabled from higher band	24.00	24.00
less disabled going into lower band	24.00	24.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	306.63	295.13
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	0.00	3.38
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	4.00	2.00
116 long-term empties x no discount	33.00	39.00
less CTRS	-392.07	- 372.01
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	-
Total	3,180.30	3,204.49
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	2,853.04	2,869.60
Assume 97.8% collection	2,804.54	Assume 98.3% collection 2,820.81

Great Houghton	2019/20		2020/21
BAND	Total		Total
Number on list	284.00		284.00
less exemption	0.00		5.00
plus disabled from higher band	1.00		1.00
less disabled going into lower band	1.00		1.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	17.75		17.00
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-2.00	-	1.61
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	1.00		-
↖ ↗ long-term empties x no discount	1.00		4.00
↖ ↗ less CTRS	-7.48	-	7.36
plus f y e for new properties	0.00		-
Total	260.77		256.25
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	299.91		294.50
Assume 97.8% collection	294.81	Assume 98.3% collection	289.50

Hardingstone	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	1,003.00	1,003.00
less exemption	7.00	8.00
plus disabled from higher band	9.00	10.00
less disabled going into lower band	9.00	10.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	74.75	74.25
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	0.00	0.50
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	3.00	3.00
long-term empties x no discount	8.00	9.00
less CTRS	-56.37	-
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	0.50
Total	864.88	867.23
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	830.42	832.33
Assume 97.8% collection	816.31	Assume 98.3% collection
		818.18

Upton	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	3,254.00	3,331.00
less exemption	50.00	57.00
plus disabled from higher band	13.00	14.00
less disabled going into lower band	13.00	14.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	289.75	283.50
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	0.50	- 0.93
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	7.00	8.00
119 long-term empties x no discount	52.00	90.00
less CTRS	-235.19	- 234.18
plus f y e for new properties	38.00	18.50
Total	2,716.56	2,775.75
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	2,770.72	2,836.91
Assume 97.8% collection	2,723.61	Assume 98.3% collection 2,788.69

Hunsbury Meadow		2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total	Total
Number on list	884.00	966.00	
less exemption	7.00	7.00	
plus disabled from higher band	2.00	3.00	
less disabled going into lower band	2.00	3.00	
less number of one adult resident household x25%	58.00	60.25	
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	0.00	-	
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	1.00	-	
120 long-term empties x no discount	6.00	4.00	
less CTRS	-33.05	-	33.12
plus f y e for new properties	57.50	61.50	
Total	843.45	927.13	
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	903.71	989.09	
Assume 97.8% collection	888.34	Assume 98.3% collection	972.28

West Hunsbury	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	1,868.00	1,868.00
less exemption	13.00	18.00
plus disabled from higher band	13.00	14.00
less disabled going into lower band	13.00	14.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	125.00	116.38
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-3.00	- 1.62
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	2.00	2.00
long-term empties x no discount	13.00	17.00
less CTRS	-93.48	- 87.64
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	-
Total	1,639.52	1,647.61
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	1,690.47	1,696.10
Assume 97.8% collection	1,661.73	Assume 98.3% collection 1,667.27

Wootton	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	3,014.00	3,015.00
less exemption	19.00	20.00
plus disabled from higher band	12.00	14.00
less disabled going into lower band	12.00	14.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	178.50	169.00
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	1.50	2.00
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	6.00	4.00
122 long-term empties x no discount	28.00	29.00
less CTRS	-73.04	- 71.02
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	-
Total	2,741.96	2,752.98
conversion to band d equivalent band d equivalent	3,031.68	3,042.43
Assume 97.8% collection	2,980.14	Assume 98.3% collection 2,990.71

East Husbury	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	4,136.00	4,111.00
less exemption	26.00	36.00
plus disabled from higher band	18.00	18.00
less disabled going into lower band	18.00	18.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	284.50	274.00
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	0.38	1.07
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	6.00	6.00
long-term empties x no discount	61.00	53.00
less CTRS	-111.29	-
plus f y e for new properties	0.00	1.00
Total	3,713.83	3,697.16
conversion to band d equivalent		
band d equivalent	3,571.15	3,567.48
Assume 97.8% collection	3,510.44	Assume 98.3% collection
		3,506.83

Unparished	2019/20	2020/21
BAND	Total	Total
Number on list	71,421.00	72,125.00
less exemption	1,673.00	2,018.00
plus disabled from higher band	265.00	270.00
less disabled going into lower band	265.00	270.00
less number of one adult resident household x25%	6,284.00	5,988.13
less number of properties with no residents but not exempt x50%	-98.63	- 76.22
less number of second home properties with no residents but not exempt x10%	141.00	161.00
long-term empties x no discount	1,209.00	1,427.00
less CTRS	-6,234.74	- 5,956.17
plus f y e for new properties	352.00	510.50
Total	57,679.88	58,749.42
conversion to band d equivalent		
band d equivalent	47,454.27	48,224.61
Assume 97.8% collection	46,647.54	Assume 98.3% collection 47,404.79

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Appendix 2

EXEMPTIONS	2019/20	2020/21
Charity	24	20
Liable Person detained	15	12
In hospital / residential care	91	110
Awaiting Probate	210	249
Probate < 6 months	49	53
Occupation prohibited	5	3
Religious occupation	2	1
Receiving personal care	8	4
Providing personal care	-	1
Student	2	-
Mortgagee	7	7
Student Hall of Residence	22	126
Student household	1,074	1,177
Visiting forces	1	3
Bankrupt	5	5
Under 18 years	24	38
Difficult to let	4	4
Severe Mental Impairment	364	480
Foreign Diplomat	1	1
Granny annex	12	15
	1,920	2,309

DISCOUNTS		
Single Person Households	32,176	30,693
Job related Second Homes	2	1
Second homes or Furnished unoccupied*	181	196
Empty unfurnished*	1,468	1,760
	33,827	32,650

*These classes are currently awarded 0% discount (pay full charge)

DISREGARDS		
Person in Detention	8	5
Mentally Impaired	246	289
Child Benefit Payable	18	41
Student	449	455
Student Nurse	10	9
Apprentice	7	12
Hospital Patient	5	-
Patient in Home	48	52
Carer	60	72
Hostel Resident	2	2
Religious Community	3	3
School Leaver Under 20	1	5
	857	945

End of Report



Pay Policy Statement 2018/19

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northampton Borough Council recognises that, in the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to service of the public, but at the same time needs to avoid being unnecessarily generous or excessive.
- 1.2 It is important that local authorities are able to determine their own pay structures in order to address local priorities, compete in the local market and deliver value for money for local taxpayers.
- 1.3 In particular, it is recognised that senior management roles in local government are complex and diverse functions in a highly politicised environment where often national and local pressures conflict. The Council's ability to continue to attract and retain high calibre managers capable of delivering this complex agenda, particularly during times of financial challenge, is crucial if the Council is to retain its current high performance levels.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to ensuring that it is open and transparent about its pay policies and how pay decisions are made. This Pay Policy Statement fulfils the Council's statutory requirements under the Localism Act 2011 and was agreed by Full Council on [date]
- 1.5 The Council publishes information on all senior employees earning £50,000 or above in the open data pages of the Council's website.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Pay Policy Statement applies to all employees covered by the NBC local pay bargaining arrangements, which were introduced on the 1 April 2015.

It sets out the Council's policies on:

- a) The remuneration of Chief Officers
- b) The remuneration of the Council's lowest paid employees
- c) The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees who are not Chief Officers
- d) Remuneration for newly appointed Chief Officers
- e) Increases and additions to remuneration for each Chief Officer
- f) The use of performance related pay for Chief Officers

g) The use of bonuses (if applicable) for Chief Officers

2.2 Remuneration in this context is defined widely and includes not just salary, but other elements of remuneration including expenses, bonuses, performance related pay and other contractual arrangements that include possible future severance payments.

2.3 For the purposes of the Pay Policy Statement, the term Chief Officer refers to the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), the Monitoring Officer, Directors and Heads of Service.

3. Basic Pay Determination

3.1 The pay grade and terms and conditions that are applied to each post are determined through the process of job evaluation. Both Hay and National Joint Council (NJC) schemes are used. The key principles underlying the application of job evaluation in the Borough Council are:

- Consistency of application to ensure fairness;
- Application by appropriately trained and experienced employees;
- Openness and transparency to ensure accessibility for employees and their representatives;
- Incorporation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

3.2 The pay grade of the workforce (all staff other than Chief Officers) will be in accordance with pay grades 1-11 on locally agreed pay structures, also established on 1 April 2015.

3.3 Starting salary for all appointments (new recruits, employees who transfer within the organisation and promoted employees) is the first point of the new grade. In exceptional circumstances (which must be supported with a business case), a starting salary above the minimum will be approved. This occurs in cases where it is necessary to meet an existing salary and the candidate can demonstrate a level of skill and experience that is comparable to existing employees who have progressed through the grade.

4. Chief Officer Pay (Senior Management Team)

4.1 The pay grade of posts on Hay terms and conditions, (notably the Monitoring Officer, Directors and Heads of Service posts) will be in accordance with Senior Manager/Corporate Director pay grades on the locally agreed pay structures which were established on 1 April 2015.

Senior Management Pay Grades	
Grade	Salary range (£)
SMG1	48,179 – 55,851
SMG2	57,527 – 66,690

SMG3	68,690 – 79,642
SMG4	82,021 – 95,082

Director Pay Grade	
Grade	Salary Range (£)
CDG	100,868 – 121,629

4.2 Any increase to the senior pay group pay scale is locally negotiated on an annual basis. This covers posts in the top three tiers of the Council; that is, the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Directors and Heads of Service.

4.3 There are no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexi-leave, bank holiday working, standby payments for Chief Officers. Any duties undertaken by Chief Officers outside of their contractual hours are without additional payment.

4.4 Bonuses are not paid to Chief Officers.

5. Decisions on Remuneration

5.1 The Appointments and Appeals Committee comprises six members of the Council (of whom at least two are Cabinet members). In relation to appointments, the Appointments and Appeals Committee has the delegated authority to:

- (i) Recommend to the Council the appointment of the Chief Executive.
- (ii) To make appointments of other Chief Officers.
- (iii) To undertake all associated activities including agreeing job descriptions, person specifications, the interview process generally.

5.2 Decisions on remuneration are made as follows:

- a) Chief Executive Officer local pay level approved by Full Council;
- b) Director, Monitoring Officer and Head of Service local pay level approved by Appointments and Appeals Committee;
- c) Pay structure for all other posts approved by General Purposes Committee;
- d) Performance Progression Scheme in accordance with the locally agreed scheme, as approved by officers under existing delegated powers;
- e) Notwithstanding “a” to “d” above, any salary packages of £100,000 or more requires Full Council approval. (A salary package includes salary, any bonuses, fees or allowances routinely payable to the appointee and any benefits in kind to which the officer would be entitled as a result of their employment); and
- f) Notwithstanding “a” to “d” above or any aspect of this Statement, any severance package of £100,000 or more requires Full Council approval. The components of a severance package may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements (excluding the capital value of any pension entitlement), holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid).

5.3 **Pay award**

Since 1 April 2015, cost of living increases in relation to all employees are determined locally. The General Purposes Committee ratifies the level of increase, if any, to be applied to the published pay rates, by reference to the Council's performance against measurable targets and overall affordability. The pay rates will be updated as soon as negotiations are complete and Committee approval has been given each year.

5.4 **Individual salary level**

Progression through development points staff below Head of Service Level.

The Performance Progression Policy dates 1 April 2015 details how individuals might progress through the development points and there is no automatic progression. Personal development in role may be recognised by the award of discretionary consolidated pay movements each year, in accordance with locally agreed step values, through the grades. Awards may be considered only on completion of Personal Development Plan milestones and where contribution and competence have been suitably evidenced and assessed via the performance management scheme (appraisal).

Progression related to Performance for Chief Officers

Individuals are rated on their appraisal outcome, budget outturn and employee opinion results for their service area. Performance in role may then be recognised by the pay awards, which are at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.

5.5 **Additional Fees**

Additional fees apply to the role of the Returning Officer. This is a statutory role incurring personal responsibility and accountability separate from the Returning Officer's normal employment contract. The Returning Officer is paid a separate allowance for each election for which he/she is responsible. A scale of fees was agreed by the Council's Resources Committee for Borough and Parish Council elections in 1997, which increases in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Separate payments are made for Parliamentary, European, Police and Crime Commissioners Elections and national referenda are funded by central government.

5.6 **Market Supplements**

Paying a Market Supplement may be a necessity and the Market Supplement Policy dated August 2010 (under review) outlines the guidance for the application of a market supplement. Due to the impending unitary status in Northamptonshire, a number of posts have been allocated a Market Supplement to improve retention of key staff such as the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer.

6. Pay Equity and the Pay Multiple

- 6.1 A pay multiple is the ratio of the pay of an organisation's top earner to that of the mean/median earner.
- 6.2 The Council's current ratio in this respect is 01:05.8 i.e. the Chief Executive (top earner) earns 5.8 times more than the Council's median earner (£23,935). When measured against the mean salary (£26,405.28), the ratio is 01:05.3.
- 6.3 The Council does not currently have a policy of maintaining or reaching a specific pay multiple target. The Council commits to calculating the pay ratio on an annual basis to monitor trends and to ensure that this pay multiple does not widen.
- 6.4 The Council monitors the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of its lowest paid employees. The Council defines its 'lowest' paid employees as employees paid on the first spinal column point (scp 11) of the pay spine. This is the lowest rate of pay applied to Council employees, currently £18,082 per annum. The Council has applied the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage, which means that the lowest paid employee is on the equivalent of £18,082 a year for the full-time role. The Council has separate rates for Apprentices that are linked to the Living Wage.

7. Termination of employment and Severance Packages

- 7.1 On ceasing to be employed by the Council, employees will be paid contractual payments due under their contract of employment.
- 7.2 The Council's Redundancy Framework (implemented in January 2012, revised in January 2015 and reviewed in February 2016) details the conditions under which redundancy payments can be made. The Council calculates redundancy payments based on an individual's actual pay, length of continuous service and age.
- 7.3 Severance payments are made in accordance with the Council's Redundancy Framework and relevant employment legislation.
- 7.4 Employees with more than two years' service will be entitled to redundancy pay in line with local government guidelines and statutory provisions. Redundant employees will receive two elements of their final pay:
- Normal pay (including pay in lieu of any outstanding leave) up to the agreed leaving date;
 - A redundancy payment (where entitled) calculated in accordance with the statutory provisions.

In exceptional circumstances, the Council reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of notice. This will only be considered if it is in the best interests of the Council, or on compassionate grounds, and will require authorisation by the Chief Executive or in his absence, the section 151 Officer.

Under the Council's redundancy scheme, a week's pay will be calculated on the basis of contractual pay.

7.5 Employees in the pension scheme and who are over age 55 are entitled to immediate onset of pension benefits based on actual reckonable service if they:

- Are over 55 at the termination date;
- Have three or more months membership in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) or with transferred service

7.6 An employee will lose their entitlement to redundancy pay if they take up a post with another body covered by the Redundancy Payments (Local Government)(Modification)(Amendment) Orders within four weeks of the date of the redundancy and the offer of the new job has been made before the end of the original contract.

7.7 **Re-engagement of former employees**

Any former NBC Council employee, who is in receipt of an early retirement pension on the grounds of voluntary or compulsory redundancy, should not normally be re-employed by the Council either on the basis of a contract of employment or a contract for services with the Council. If there is any doubt about the continuing need for an employee's services then early retirement should not be agreed.

However, it is recognised that there are some, very limited, circumstances when reemployment would be in the interests of the Council. In these cases a report should be submitted to the Chief Executive or his or her nominated senior management representative, seeking approval to re-employ.

7.8 **Use of consultants, contractors and temporary staff**

The Council is acutely aware of its obligation to secure value for money in the employment of its employees and those who carry out work on its behalf. Ordinarily employees will be employed directly by the Council but there may be occasions when consultants and contractors and temporary staff may be required to be employed for a period of time for their specialist expertise or to temporarily cover vacant posts. IR35 regulations will be taken into consideration when recruiting to these requirements.

8.0 **Discretionary Payments**

The policy for the award of any discretionary payments is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. The following arrangements apply:

Redundancy payments are calculated using actual pay instead of the statutory maximum when calculating redundancy payments.

Any discretionary payments arising through the termination of the employment contract will be made using delegated powers and will be based on a full written risk assessment and legal advice.

9.0 Review

This Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed annually and recommended to Full Council for approval. The statement for 2018/19 will be submitted to Full Council for approval after the 31 March 2019.

The Council may by resolution of the Full Council, amend this Pay Policy Statement during the course of the year to which it relates.

Appendices: 0



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
20th January 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Planning and Sustainability

Report Title	Northampton Borough Carbon Emissions baseline data
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1. Purpose

1.1 To report to Full Council on the carbon footprint of the Borough.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Full Council;
Consider the report and note its contents

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 At its meeting on 3rd June 2019, Northampton Borough Council agreed two Motions to declare a Climate Emergency.

First motion;

‘This council recognises the strength of public opinion recently expressed in London and Northampton to address the issue of climate change and the need to address carbon reduction to protect the health and wellbeing of future generations. The council also notes that the UK Parliament has declared a Climate Emergency.

The Council therefore declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council Requests a report to be submitted to the Council in 12 months’ time and updated in January 2021 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this

motion and detailing how progressing this objective has been communicated to and integrated within the start up plans of the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council.’

Second motion;

‘All parties within this Council acknowledge the urgency of dealing with climate change. We need cross party agreement to develop strategies for a greener, more sustainable society in Northampton. A green revolution is required.

Working with partners we will seek to implement the following actions, which we strongly believe will benefit Northampton in leading an eco-friendly Britain:

- A ban on single-use plastics within school environments. Schools across Northampton produce a huge amount of plastic waste each week
- Northampton schools would benefit from educating their students on eco issues through school schemes, where programs could be set up in order to teach students how to stay green in lessons, such as Personal, Social, Health and Economic education or by holding educational assemblies with influential speakers.
- To help further reduce the damaging effects of plastic littering, the council should support and work closely with schemes operated by companies like TerraCycle who turn many unrecyclable plastics (such as crisp packets and wrappers) into outdoor furniture.
- To explore with Local businesses and partners options for an eco-rewards scheme that would allow individuals and groups to gain something back from recycling.
- Northampton Borough Council to commit to reducing carbon emissions, both as an organisation and as the local planning authority and resolve to go further than the UK100 Agreement. To act in line with the scientific consensus that we must reduce emissions to net-zero carbon by 2030, thus use the planning process to encourage developers to consider low carbon developments.

Joining many councils who have already done the same, NBC declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target, in line with the above actions, of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council requests a production of a baseline report to be submitted to the council in the beginning of 2020 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this motion. This Council also resolves to work with other local authorities ahead of Unitary to use the baseline report as the basis on which to develop an action plan which could be adopted by the new Council.’

3.1 Decision details

3.2.1 Baseline data, based on Local Authority area, is collected by and published annually by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The data is grouped into three major categories;

- Industry and Commercial, including emissions from energy use and agriculture
- Domestic, including use of electricity and gas within residential properties
- Transport, including road and rail transport

3.2.2 Data is also published which excludes emissions from large industrial sites, railways, motorways and land use which are beyond Local Authority influence. Given the limited extent of these within the Borough, these figures for Northampton do not differ significantly.

NBC emissions

Year (Mt CO2 e)	Total			LA influence		
	2005	2017	%	2005	2017	%
Industry & Commercial	585	287		584	273	
Domestic total	489	308		489	308	
Transport total	348	316		348	316	
Grand total	1 422	909		1 422	897	
Population (000'ss, mid year estimate)	197	226		197	226	
Per capita emissions	7.2	4.0	-45%	7.2	4.0	-45%
UK per capita emissions	8.7	5.3	-40%			

3.2.3 Whilst the per capita emissions for the Borough have reduced by 45% since 2005, despite a 19 000 increase in population, this has resulted from increases in energy use efficiency at national level, and from the activity or influence of the Council.

3.2.4 Nationally, over the same period, per capita emissions reduced from 8.7 to 5.3 Mt CO2, a reduction of 40%.

3.2.5 Locally, the largest reductions were in the Industrial and Commercial, and Domestic sectors, whilst Transport emissions saw only a small reduction.

3.2.6 Recent Borough Council initiatives which have contributed to the reductions include;

- Using licensing policies and powers to require all taxis to be Electric Vehicles by 2028;
- Establish Air Quality Management Areas in areas experiencing high level of gases related to queueing motor vehicles. These are regularly monitored, reviewed and have already been extended;

- Negotiate to promote more energy efficient buildings through Planning and Building Regulations;
- Recent purchase of an electric vehicle for the Car Parks team;
- Promote biodiversity and green infrastructure through Planning policies, developer contributions and the delivery of Country Parks.

3.3 Next steps

3.3.1 The Councils' Cabinet will be asked to agree A Carbon Neutral Northampton 2030 Strategic Approach and Vision in February 2020. The Strategic Approach will propose that the following are included;

	Direct controllable emissions	Indirect controllable emissions	All other indirect emissions
Council emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned transport • Fuel use • Process emissions • Fuel use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased goods • Operational waste • Business travel • Capital goods purchased • Employee commute
Community emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use • Stationary fuel emissions • In boundary transportation • In boundary waste & wastewater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid supplied electricity 	

3.3.2 Following this, an Action Plan will be developed, setting out what actions are proposed in the following areas;

- Transport
- Buildings
- Waste
- Energy
- Procurements
- Green and Blue infrastructure
- Influence

These are based on guidance published by Friends of the Earth in 2019 aimed at assisting Councils declaring a climate emergency

3.3.3 The delivery of these actions will require partnership working with the following;

- Employers
- Major landowners, including NCC, Homes England

- Housing providers, including NPH
- Transport organisations, including bus service operators
- Education providers including UoN, Academies
- Health providers including NHS England, Public Health England, CCTs
- Sports and Leisure providers, including NLP
- Local interest groups
- Town and Parish Councils
- Energy providers

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no direct policy implications to the baseline data, but it is noted that the Council is committed to producing a Carbon Neutral Strategy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are no direct resource and risk implications to the baseline data, but it is noted that the Council is committed to producing a Carbon Neutral Strategy which will need resources to deliver its aims. Therefore it is intended to establish a new budget to support this.

4.3 Legal

4.2.1 No direct legal issues but it should be noted that the Strategic Approach proposals may give rise to procurement and other considerations which can be advised on once further details are available.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 Equalities impacts will need to be considered at all stages of drafting a Carbon Neutral Strategy, and Equality Impact assessments will be carried out.

4.4.1 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

4.5.1 Understanding the baseline position of the Boroughs carbon emissions is key to developing a Carbon Neutral Strategy with the aim of making both the Borough Council and the Borough carbon neutral by 2030

4.4.2 Other Implications

4.5.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

**Report Author
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Planning & Sustainability
0300 330 7000**

Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
20 January 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Chief Executive

Report Title	Corporate Plan 2019-2021
---------------------	---------------------------------

1. Purpose

1.1 To approve the updated Corporate Plan for the period 2019-2021.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Council approves the updated Corporate Plan for 2019-2021, and that the Chief Executive be authorised to finalise the document and publish this alongside the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The Council, as part of its policy and management framework adopts a Corporate Plan each year. This sets out the context of the future direction of the Council and commitments for action on behalf of the elected Administration.

3.1.2 The attached Corporate Plan is for the period 2019-2021. The Plan outlines the key strategic priorities and objectives that the Council has over that time period:

Strategic Priorities	Objectives
A stronger economy	Creating a cleaner, greener town Creating a thriving, vibrant town Driving growth whilst preserving the town’s heritage

Resilient communities	Keeping the town and people safe Empowering local people More homes, better homes Improving the health and wellbeing of local people
Exceptional services to be proud of	Putting the customer first Using public resources effectively Improving our governance

3.1.3 Under each of the above priorities and objectives, an action plan will be developed to ensure that the objectives are delivered against.

3.1.4 The previous Corporate Plan has been used as the starting point to refresh and focus on the three key strategic priorities. These have been reviewed and updated by senior colleagues and cabinet members.

3.1 Decision details

3.2.1 The key issue for any Corporate Plan is to ensure that it encapsulates the key priorities, objectives and commitments which the Council wishes to adopt. This plan is intended to do this.

3.2.2 The plan is the basis for the Council's financial plans, through to March 2021, showing the priorities for resource allocation and decision-making, subject to actual delivery according to prevailing conditions and any changing priorities in that time.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The Corporate Plan encompasses the main policy priorities of the Council. It will act as the main corporate guiding document alongside the budget and the individual service plans.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 The Corporate Plan guides the content of the MTFP and the deployment of resources therein. Risks are constantly assessed in the delivery and management of resources directed towards planned goals and commitments in accordance with the Council's risk management framework.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 The Corporate Plan reflects the Council's commitment to work in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. The Council's equality strategy and monitoring underpins this.

4.5 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

4.5.1 The Council has committed to addressing its impact on climate change through the development and implementation of policies and procedures and the implementation of actions, including those which are relevant, in the Corporate Plan. There are also a number of specific objectives linked to the wider carbon neutral agenda, flood alleviation and air quality.

4.6 Other Implications

4.5.1 None specifically.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Cabinet Report – Corporate Plan 23 December 2019

**George Candler
Chief Executive**

Ambitious
Prosperous
Proud

For more information about the Council:

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL



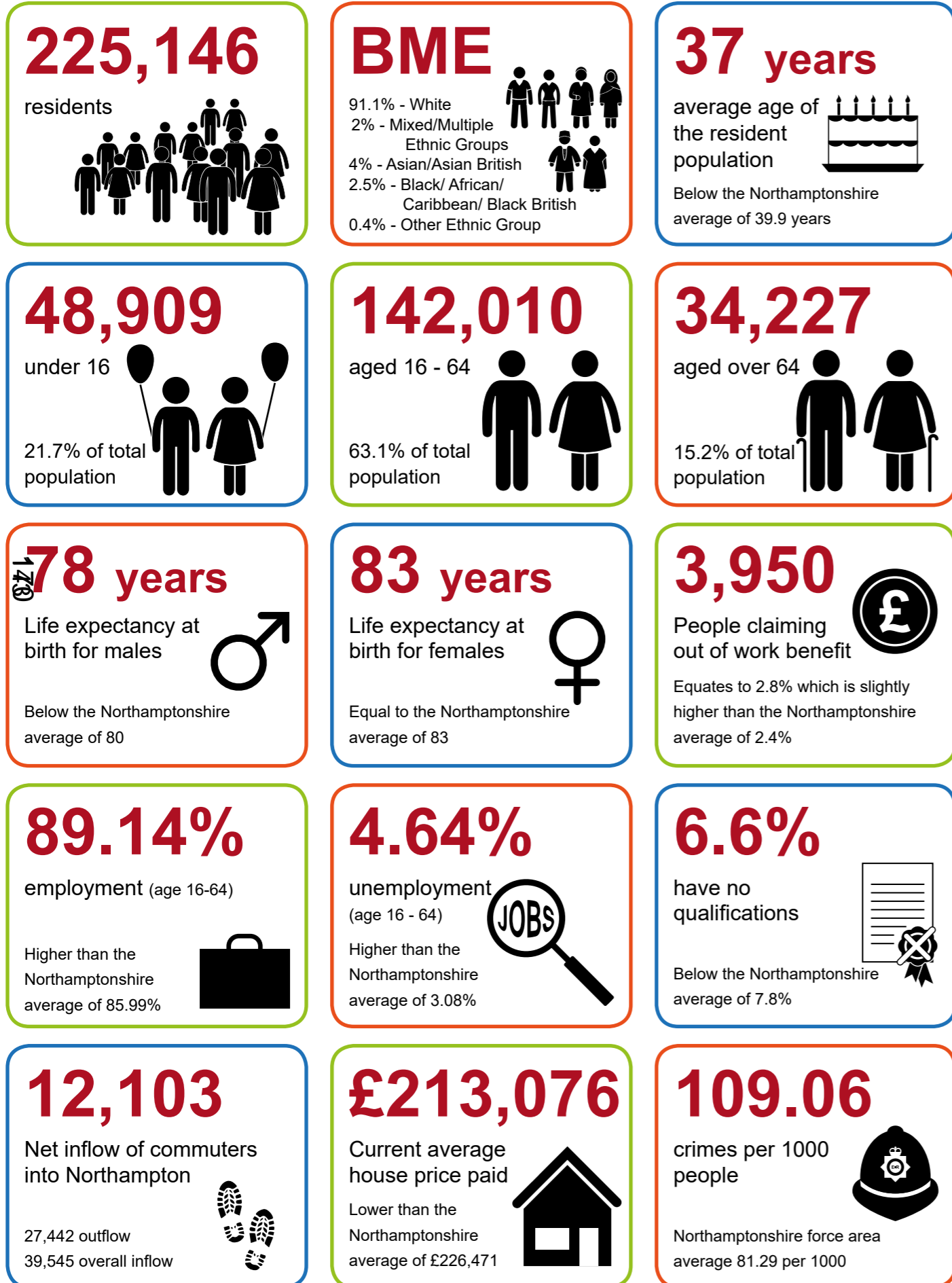
Northampton Borough Council

Corporate Plan 2019 - 2021

Ambitious | Prosperous | Proud



Northampton demographics



Northampton Borough Council continues to go from strength to strength and, as Council Leader, I am very proud of the work that we do in driving forward a number our key priorities that I believe will continue to make Northampton a great place to live, work, visit and study.

Last year we took the opportunity to refresh the Corporate Plan knowing that, at the time, we were moving towards a new Unitary Authority by April 2020.

In May 2019 we were informed by the Government that the two new Unitary Authorities wouldn't come into being until 1st April 2021 and therefore we have taken the opportunity to review the Corporate Plan and refresh our key objectives, to ensure that we sprint towards the new West Northants Council coming into being in April 2021.

Our vision still very much remains the same; ambitious, prosperous and proud in all that we do for the people of Northampton. There is still a lot that needs to be done between now and the spring of 2021.

Our strategic priorities therefore also remain the same, focussing on a stronger economy, and we are particularly pleased with the progress we have made in finalising the masterplan for the town centre. However this is just the beginning and there is much work to be done in order to invest the hundreds of millions of pounds that is needed to regenerate and reenergise our town centre, and we will continue to seek local residents' views as we implement individual projects from the masterplan.

Resilient communities is our second priority and we are incredibly proud of the many people that we work with, both at partner organisation level but also in local communities. You will see embedded within this plan the importance of those people and in what we need to deliver over the coming months, to further enhance and improve people's lives on a day to day basis.

As Leader of the Council, there is never one day where I don't feel immensely proud of what we are doing as an organisation and I have confidence that we will deliver this plan because of the support of all of the elected members and the excellent and dedicated workforce that we have here.

As a Northamptonian myself, I love to see how we are all collectively working together to drive improvement to the town and to people's wellbeing that will add to the wider prosperity of the Borough, and am incredibly excited about what we can achieve but pragmatic about the work that still needs to be done. We know that by working in partnership across both the town, the wider County, and sub-region, we will continue to develop Northampton as a great place to live, work, study and visit, both now and into the future.

Northampton - Ambitious, Prosperous and Proud.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Corporate Plan sets out what we will focus on between now and April 2021 in order to get the best for the people of Northampton Borough within the resources available. We want to deliver economic growth, improve the quality of life and provide services that consistently meet the expectations of our residents. This is set against a backdrop of our mission, vision and values.

Our vision is: Northampton - Ambitious, Prosperous, Proud

- Ambitious:** We have strong ambitions for Northampton's economy, with a focus on the town centre and the Enterprise Zone.
- Prosperous:** We want to encourage strong community bonds and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their ambitions.
- Proud:** We and a great many residents are extremely proud of our town and we want to help provide even more reasons for those feelings of belonging and ownership.

Our mission will enable us to deliver our strategic priorities

- We will:**
- Work with customers, communities and partners
 - Be enterprising and innovative
 - Deliver a great Northampton to live, work, study, invest in and visit

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Our values

Our values describe the type of organisation we want to be and the principles that will guide us in achieving our vision and priorities. They set out the way we will work and interact with our customers, members and each other.

Our values are:

- Leadership:** Creating and communicating a shared vision and influencing others through information and knowledge to realise the vision
- Integrity:** Honesty with strong moral principles
- Responsibility:** Being dependable and delivering promises
- Service Excellence:** Understanding what our customers want and in order to deliver above and beyond their expectations
- Challenge:** Facing things that are difficult to do and using effort and commitment to succeed

What We Deliver

- Household recycling and waste collection
- Housing
- Licensing
- Environmental health
- Benefits
- Local planning and building regulations
- Community safety
- Parks and open spaces
- Council tax collection
- Public car parks
- Supporting economic growth
- Regeneration projects



Strategic priorities

Our three strategic priorities set out the primary things we intend to focus on. They are not exhaustive, but will inform our decision-making, particularly around budgets. In brief, we aim to deliver the following. You can find more detail about how in the following sections.

A stronger economy

1. Improve recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill

- Extend the visitor offer
- Protect, enhance and promote our heritage
- Have a Local Plan that helps Northampton grow and prosper
- Establish a comprehensive Economic Growth Strategy
- Promote the Business Incentive Scheme
- Make the town centre a destination of choice for all
- Develop the Cultural Quarter

Creating a cleaner, greener town

Creating a thriving, vibrant town

Driving growth whilst preserving the town's heritage

Empowering local people

Improving the health and wellbeing of local people

Keeping the town and people safe

Putting the customer first

Using public resources effectively

Improving our governance

Ambitious
Prosperous
Proud

Resilient communities

- Work with partners to reduce violent crime, anti-social behaviour and hate crime
- Build stronger and more resilient communities
- Empower communities to develop their areas
- Support vulnerable people to achieve their full potential
- Encourage and support housing delivery
- Raise standards in private sector housing
- Tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness

Exceptional services to be proud of

- Make the best use of our assets
- Provide high quality services
- Provide value for money services
- Work with neighbouring councils to shape new local government arrangements
- Provide the best quality decision-making process

A stronger economy

A stronger economy can mean a great many things, from encouraging inward investment to ensuring our town centre remains prosperous. The key purpose is to ensure the best quality of life and provision of opportunities for residents.

Creating a cleaner, greener town

- Develop a strategic approach to delivering a carbon neutral Northampton by 2030
- Work with our environmental contractors to continually improve the delivery of the environmental services contract, maintain and increase the number of parks with Green Flag accreditation and the continued participation in Britain in Bloom
- Develop and deliver appropriate actions to address elevated levels of pollution to manage air quality in Northampton
- Support the Lead Local Flood Authority with the development and delivery of policies and plans to manage local flood risks

Creating a thriving, vibrant town

- Implement a Place Marketing Strategy to increase visitor numbers and inward investment
- Support a range of events and activities throughout the year to celebrate our town and its heritage
- Secure quality development which makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness
- Support the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the towns heritage can bring



80.97%

of fly tipping incidents were removed within 2 days of notification

43.8%

of household waste recycled and composted



54,102

visitors to Abington Park Museum in 2018/19



Driving growth whilst preserving the town's heritage

- Develop, adopt and deliver the Local Plan
- Develop and deliver the Economic Growth Strategy
- Continue towards and benefit from the Oxford-Cambridge Arc
- Promote the Council's support and involvement in strategic infrastructure projects, including HS2, East West Rail and the Expressway, as well as promoting regional projects including the Northampton Northern Orbital, to improve connectivity and support sustainable growth
- Developing priority sites in the Enterprise Zone
- Develop and deliver the Northampton Town Centre masterplan in partnership with Northampton Forward, continually seeking the views of local groups and residents
- Develop and run a sustainable and resilient museum service
- Develop, with key stakeholders, the wider Cultural Strategy for the town

14 car parks

have the Park Mark accreditation



Purple Flag

awarded for providing safe nightlife



21 businesses

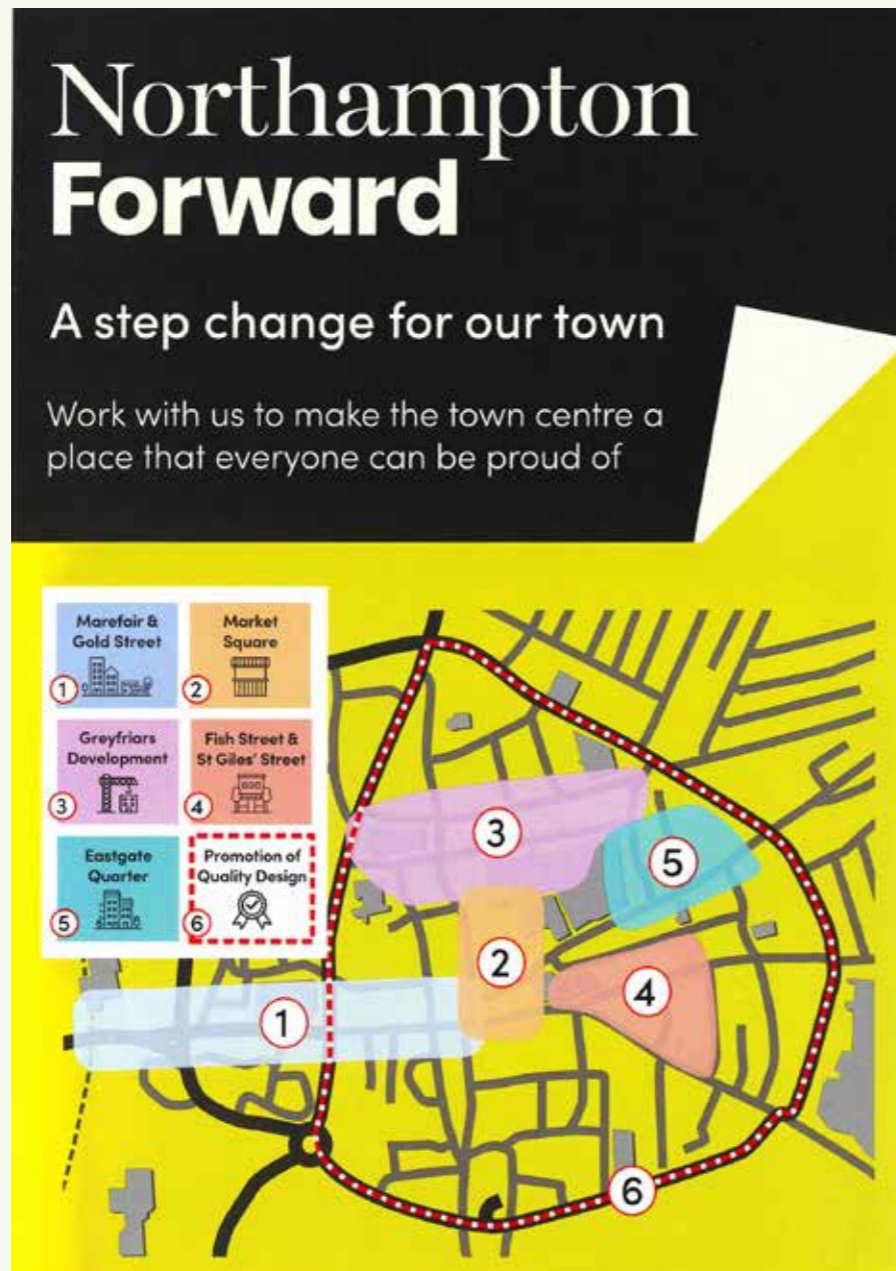
financially supported through the Business Incentive Scheme

89 new jobs created

£1.985M private sector investment in Northampton

13,985,144

Town Centre footfall in 2018/19



Resilient communities

We want communities across Northampton to feel supported in achieving their aspirations. This means ensuring that everyone feels they have a stake in their neighbourhoods and mechanisms are in place to guarantee inclusion. We will also place an emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable in our societies who might not have the means to help themselves.

- To continue to improve community safety, public confidence and public perception of the Town Centre, tackling alcohol related violence and nuisance behaviour, by continuing to invest in CCTV and committing to the Purple flag accreditation scheme

22



community safety awareness raising days in 2018/2019

Youth Offending Service funded to provide

38



knife crime awareness sessions in 2018/2019

25

*community protection warnings issued

16

*community protection notices issued

*in 2018/2019

Keeping the town and people safe

- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by working with partners to develop and deliver the community safety strategy, with a particular focus on violence and serious organised crime
- Protect and support the most vulnerable people within our communities, by tackling offenders and supporting victims
- Protect the health, wellbeing and safety of the people and environment of Northampton within the established regulatory framework
- Improve safety and community confidence, by raising awareness and promoting key community safety messages by working in partnership and utilising our community engagement networks, including Parish Councils, schools and local businesses

OUT TONIGHT?

do it right!

THESE ARE THE GUYS

The guys always plan how they are getting home before they head out

BE LIKE THE GUYS

#doitright



22 organisations

received partnership grant funding in 2019/20



totalling £197,410

Much Loved

status achieved by Abington Park the Field In Trust's UK's Best Park 2019 (in the East Midlands)



Empowering local people

- Celebrate the diversity of the Town, foster good relationships and promote understanding, through community events and days and weeks of partnership action

Improving the health and wellbeing of local people

- Working in partnership, and utilising grant funding, to support local people to improve their health and wellbeing

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More homes, better homes

- Engage with house builders and development agencies to encourage housing delivery
- Support Northampton Partnership Homes to build new affordable housing
- Develop a new Housing Allocation Scheme for the new West Northants Council
- Work with housing developers and registered providers to maximise the supply of affordable housing
- Make effective use of enforcement powers to ensure good standards in private rented housing
- Actively promote good practice and landlord accreditation
- Reduce homelessness through homelessness prevention and intervention
- Implement our multi-agency homelessness and rough sleeping strategy
- Exploring options for establishing a permanent emergency nightshelter that has the capacity and facilities to provide men and women with shelter and support
- Reduce the overall cost of temporary accommodation
- Increase stock of Council owned temporary accommodation homes (HRA/GF)

NORTHAMPTON Nightshelter

Help us to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton

Green Flag

awarded to Abington Park and Delapré Abbey



94.65% of food businesses

have a food hygiene rating of 3 or more stars



100%

of all 'major', 'minor' and 'other' applications received in 2018/19 were determined within the specified period against a target of 85%.



341 nightshelter guests have stayed since opening

- 232 guests have moved successfully into settled accommodation
- 158 volunteers have worked shifts
- Average length of stay: 31 nights
- Average guest age: 42

456 HMOs

with a mandatory licence



512 HMOs

with an additional licence



Exceptional services to be proud of

We are determined to provide services the residents of Northampton can be proud of. Not only is it our aim to guarantee the services we provide directly are the best they can be, we are also committed to working with partners to ensure a seamless experience.



Putting the customer first

- Resolve as many requests as possible at the first point of contact
- Provide residents and customers with easy access to services
- Work collaboratively with our partners to meet the needs of our customers

Using public resources effectively

- Deliver a balanced budget
- Ensure our assets are focused on delivering our strategic objectives through the delivery of a corporate asset strategy

94.87%

of customers were satisfied with the overall service provided by Customer Services

Customer Excellence

maintained our accreditation in 2018 and 2019



Improving our governance

- Doing the right things, in the right way for the people of Northampton in an open, honest and accountable manner
- Support work streams in the move to a unitary council
- Making quality information readily available to enable informed decisions to be made
- Ensure statutory consultations are carried out appropriately and effectively, using reasonable process and communicated to encourage engagement



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£29.5m

General Fund Budget 2019/20



99%

of invoices were paid within 30 days



£34.7 million

private sector investment secured in the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone in 2019/20



99%



of Freedom of Information requests were responded to within 20 working days in 2018/19

45 councillors



Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 January 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer

Report Title	Meeting Cycle 202/2021
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval of Council to the Meeting Cycle for 202/2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the Meeting Cycle for 2020/2021.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 It is necessary for the Council to agree a Calendar of meeting to enable the business of the Council to be programmed appropriately.
- 3.1.2 The draft Calendar of meetings is attached at Appendix 1 and follows an established practice and reflects comments made in consultation with Councillors, Directors and Heads of Service so that:
- Ordinarily, there are no main Committee meetings on the Tuesday evening following Council; and
 - The commencement time of meetings remain as for the existing cycle.
- 3.1.3 Future changes to meeting dates of Committees will be made on the Council's website and notification will be electronically sent to all relevant Members.

3.1.4 Meetings of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority will commence from May 2020 and will be programmed into the schedule of meetings when the dates have been confirmed.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The report continues existing policy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are no particular implications arising from the Meetings Cycle.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1.1 The proposed calendar ensures that the Council complies with various statutory functions, including the Access to Information Regulations.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no equity and equalities issues arising from this report.

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None.

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer
01604 837334

TITLE OF MEETING	TIME	APRIL 2020	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT	OCT
Cabinet	6pm Jeffery Room	8	20	10	22		9	14
Council	6.30pm Council Chamber		21 (Annual) 11am	15	20		14	
Standards Committee	5pm Jeffery Room			29			28 (Holding Room)	
Audit Committee	6pm Jeffery Room			22			28	
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6pm Jeffery Room	20		8	13		7	
Planning Committee	5pm Jeffery Room	14	12	9	7 & 28		1 & 29	27
Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee	6pm Jeffery Room	21		16	14		8	13
Taxi and General Licensing Committee	6:30pm Jeffery Room	21		16	14		8	13
General Purposes Committee	6pm Jeffery Room		26				15	
Scrutiny Panel 1	6pm Jeffery Room		18				9	
Scrutiny Panel 2	6pm Jeffery Room			29			16	
Scrutiny Panel 3	6pm Jeffery Room			1				5
Northampton Disabled Peoples Forum	11:00am Holding Room		15		10		11	
Northampton LGBT & Q Forum	7pm Holding Room		12		7		15	
Northampton Pensioners Forum	1:30pm Jeffery Room		28		30		24	
Northampton Diverse Communities Equalities Forum	11:00am Holding Room		21		23		17	
Northampton Women's Fourm	11am Holding Room		26		21		22	

Please note that this is for guidance purposes only. The website needs to be checked regularly as meetings may be changed.

Meeting locations are not guaranteed and may need to be moved.

TITLE OF MEETING	TIME	NOVEMBER	DEC	JAN 2021	FEB	MARCH
Cabinet	6pm Jeffery Room	11	2 & 16	20	3 & 17	3 & 24
Council	6.30pm Council Chamber	2		18	22	8
Standards Committee	5pm Jeffery Room	30				15
Audit Committee	6pm Jeffery Room		14			22
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6pm Jeffery Room	9		11	15	
Planning Committee	5pm Jeffery Room	24	22	21 (Thursday)	16	16
Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee	6pm Jeffery Room	10	8		2	9
Taxi and General Licensing Committee	6:30pm Jeffery Room	10	8		2	9
General Purposes Committee	6pm Jeffery Room		15			16
Scrutiny Panel 1	6pm Jeffery Room	16		6		
Scrutiny Panel 2	6pm Jeffery Room	26		25		
Scrutiny Panel 3	6pm Jeffery Room	30			1	
Northampton Disabled Peoples Forum	11:00am Holding Room	13				
Northampton LGBTQ Forum	7:00pm Holding Room		1			
Northampton Pensioners Forum	1:30pm Jeffery Room	26				
Northampton Diverse Communities Equalities Forum	11:00am Holding Room	19				
Northampton Womens Forum	11am Holding Room	24				

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