

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee



## Evaluation of OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS MAY 2019



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Index

Chair's Foreword	2
Executive Summary	4
Final Report including recommendations	6

## APPENDICES

Appendix A	Scope of the Review
------------	---------------------

## Foreword

The objective of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

### Key Lines of Enquiry

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton
- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

The Working Group was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: myself, Councillors Aziz, Alan Bottwood, Sam Kilby-Shaw, Dennis Meredith and Zoe Smith.

The Review took place between May 2018 and May 2019.

This was a very interesting and informative Review; with clear evidence received. I thank all those who gave up their time to attend a meeting of the Working to provide this information and all those who provided comprehensive written evidence on the impact of the recommendations of previous Overview and Scrutiny reports.

The result is a piece of work which has recognised the good work that Overview and Scrutiny has undertaken over the past fourteen years. Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton works very well. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement and the report – Management of Community Centres was shortlisted for a good Scrutiny award by the CfPS.

I would like to thank everyone who participated and contributed to this very important piece of work.



**Councillor Jamie Lane**

Chair, O&S Evaluation of O&S Reports Working Group

**Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -**

- Councillors Aziz, Alan Bottwood, Sam Kilby-Shaw, Dennis Meredith and Zoe Smith who sat with me on this Review.
- Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety, Vicki Rockall, Community Engagement and Safety Manager, Peter Baguley, Head of Planning, Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager, Mick Tyrrell, Contracts Manager, Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, and Mike Kay, Chief Executive, NPH, for providing information about the impact of accepted recommendations contained in O&S

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton
- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

Following approval of its work programme for 2018/2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in April 2018 commissioned the Working Group to undertake this Scrutiny activity. An in-depth piece of Scrutiny activity commenced in May 2018 and concluded in March 2019.

A Working Group was established comprising Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Kilby-Shaw, Meredith and Smith.

This Scrutiny activity links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Exceptional services to be proud of.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS**

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

- 4.1.1 In reviewing the evidence received regarding the impact of the Scrutiny Reviews since 2006, it was concluded that they had all made a positive review, some examples as detailed below:
- 4.1.2 The Working Group was pleased to note that the Scrutiny review around Community Centres had been shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a video was produced. The Working Group noted that the judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level. This was felt to be an example of good Scrutiny at Northampton.
- 4.1.3 Regarding the Planning Scrutiny Review, the Working Group queried whether Parish Councillors could also automatically have speaking rights; often when they register, it is too late and the speaker list for the planning application is full. Parish Councils are statutory consultees and their views are given due consideration and by permitting Parish Councillors to have

automatic speaking rights could extend the length of Planning Committee meetings. It was emphasised that the general impact of the planning report (2005/06) had been good.

- 4.1.4 In reviewing the impact of the Street Scene Scrutiny Review, the Working Group felt that there was a need to educate residents regarding recycling. It was realised that that some of the recommendations had been superseded by Law. However that the general impact of this report was good.
- 4.1.5 It was welcomed that the majority of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Report – Community had been implemented and made a real difference.
- 4.1.6 The Working Group, in reviewing the progress on the accepted recommendations contained within the Hate Crime Reporting Scrutiny report was pleased to note that the Authority won, in 2016, a national award for its work on hate crime. The Working Group agreed that it would be useful if the Community Forums could undertake any work around hate crime towards rough sleepers and perhaps lobby Government. It further suggested that it would be useful for Parish Councils to be briefed on hate crime awareness.
- 4.1.7 In reviewing the progress made on the accepted recommendations contained with the Scrutiny report – Keep Northampton Tidy, it was noted that praise from the public had been received regarding the work of Veolia. There is a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of the town and the town has been awarded Purple Flag, it lasts for one year and an application has to be submitted annually.
- 4.1.8 Evidence received highlighted that this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) at is good at NBC and works very well. In any new Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement. This information should be included O&S Annual Report 2018/2019.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

The purpose of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton

- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

The Working Group recommends to Cabinet that:

- 5.1.1 Cabinet is informed that the outcome from this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny at NBC is good and works very well. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement and the report – Management of Community Centres was shortlisted for a good Scrutiny award by the CfPS.
- 5.1.2 In any new Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny process. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority.

# Northampton Borough Council

## Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny Reports Working Group

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

##### Key Lines of Enquiry

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton
  - To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
  - To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
  - To highlight any potential barriers to improvement
- 1.2 A copy of the scope of the Scrutiny activity is attached at Appendix A.

#### 2 Context and Background

- 2.1 Following approval of its work programme for 2018/2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in April 2018 commissioned the Working Group to undertake this Scrutiny activity. An in-depth piece of Scrutiny activity commenced in May 2018 and concluded in March 2019.
- 2.2 A Working Group was established comprising Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Kilby-Shaw, Meredith and Smith.
- 2.3 This Scrutiny activity links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Exceptional services to be proud of.
- 2.4 The Working Group established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

- Background data, including:
  - Previous Scrutiny Review Reports, including:
    - 2005/2006
- **Planning**
  - 2006/2007
- **Public engagement and communications**

- Best value review
- Tree policy
- Allotments (water charges)
- Street scene
- Leisure services
- Homelessness (rough sleepers) task and finish group
- Community safety (evaluation of dispersal orders)

2007/2008

- Community engagement
- Voluntary sector

2008/2009

- Councillor Call for Action
- Billing Waste Water Working Group
- Historic Buildings Task and Finish Group
- Contaminated Water task and finish group - phase one
- Contaminated Water task and finish group - phase two
- West Northants Development Corporation (WNDC) and partnership working with Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
  - Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny
  - Proposed Post Office Closures
  - Customer Services

2009/2010

- West Northants Emergent Joint Core Strategy
- Concessionary Fares
- More Facilities for Older Children
- **Community Centres** This scrutiny review was shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a **video** was produced. The judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level.

2010/2011

- Cost of Consultants
- Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People

- Absence Management
- Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy
- Pre-Scrutiny of Environmental Services Procurement
- Leisure Trust Implementation
- Neighbourhood Model
- Lease that Northampton Borough Council has With Northampton Town Football Club, the Contractual Arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club
- Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector

2011/2012

- Councillor Empowerment Fund
- Hate Crime
- Independent Living Strategy

2012/2013

- Customer Services
- Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny (2012)
- Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety

2013/2014

- Retail Experience
- Section 106 Agreements and Infrastructure Requirements
- Improving the Town's Parks

2014/2015

- Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (including HIMOs)
- Impact of the Welfare Reform Act
- Interpersonal Violence
- Poverty in the Town
- Keep Northampton Tidy
- Parking
- Tree Maintenance

2015/2016

- Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town

- Health Check of the Local Economy
- Effectiveness of the Enforcement Policies in respect of Taxis and Private Hire

- NBC Owned Street Lighting

2016/2017

- Museum Trust (pre decision scrutiny)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Homelessness (Pre-Decision Scrutiny)
- Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

Ø Monitoring Action Plans for previous Scrutiny Reviews and information regarding the number of accepted recommendations :

- Internal expert advisors:

Relevant Cabinet Members and Senior officers in respect of the success of each Scrutiny Review being evaluated

### 3 Evidence Collection

3.1 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Planning (2005/06)**

**Recommendation 1** – Councillors should be allowed to speak without giving a for or against reason when registering to speak (they may wish to just make a comment)

This recommendation was not taken on board; Councillors are asked to state whether they are speaking for or against. It is more transparent.

**Recommendation 2** – MPs and County Councillors given the same rights to speak as Ward Councillors MPs can speak automatically but this was not extended to County Councillors; they need to register as a third party. It was felt that Ward Councillors are better placed to speak.

**Recommendation 3** – Items on the Agenda where no one wishes to speak or make a comment or where Officers do not have an update be taken on block at the start of the meeting.

This recommendation was not taken on board as it was better to take such items at the end of the meeting. The Working Group agreed that this was a sensible approach.

**Recommendation 4** - Chairperson to sum up each item on the agenda once a decision has been reached so that the members of the public are clear as to what has been agreed.

**Recommendation 5** - An Officer to employed as an usher to help the public know what's happening and to assist them during the meeting and to advise them if items are withdrawn at short notice.

When a number of public attendees are expected for specific applications, Officers do guide the public and good practice has emerged. An usher is not required for every meeting.

**Recommendation 6** - Microphones are available to the public so that all members of the Committee can hear what they are saying as well as the public who sit behind them.

This recommendation is fully implemented and works well.

**Recommendation 7** – Agenda to be bound in a more professional manner with advertising on the back cover of forthcoming meetings.

This recommendation is fully implemented; list of forthcoming meetings and Protocol detailed too.

**Recommendation 8** - Protocol for the meeting to be on the inside front cover, outlining who can speak and for how long and how business is conducted.

This recommendation is fully implemented; list of forthcoming meetings and Protocol detailed too.

**Recommendation 9** - Protocol for the meeting to be sent out to all those registering to speak so that they are aware of what to expect. The Protocol should also be published on the Website.

This recommendation is fully implemented.

**Recommendation 10** – NBC Website be updated so that public speaking is no longer a 6 month trial.

Public speaking is in place at each meeting.

**Recommendation 11** - NBC Website to index applications in alphabetical order by street name so that finding an application is easier.

Technology has developed since 2005 and search facilities are more advanced that they were in 2005. The Website has good search facilities.

**Recommendation 12** – The letter that is issued to consultees to include information that planning applications are now available on the NBC Website.

This recommendation is fully implemented.

**Recommendation 13** - Phone numbers on NBC website be changed so that the numbers are for departments rather than individuals to ensure good customer service.

This recommendation is fully implemented.

**Recommendation 14** - It is reiterated to Councillors that they can ask for any planning application to be presented to the Committee if they feel that the Committee should look at it

This is now included within the Constitution; Members must give a valid planning reason.

**Recommendation 15** – Following its submission to full Council, this report be submitted to WNDC.

WNDC no longer exists.

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Allotments (water charges) (2005/06)**

The recommendations of the report had been taken to the Allotment Holders who were not in favour of the water charges and therefore a Water Charging Policy had not been introduced.

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Street scene (2005/06)**

There has been significant changes over the past 12 years, since this report was finalised. This includes changes in Legislation.

**Abandoned Vehicles**

**Recommendation 1** - That the Council uses its powers, within legislation, to reduce the problems of extensive use of vehicles put up for sale on the highway are dealt with before they become a major nuisance.

The Council uses its powers before they become a nuisance. Parking restrictions have been put in place along the Wellingborough Road. Wardens also use their powers.

**Recommendation 2** - That the Council ensures that resources are directed to the hotspots for abandoned cars: Blackthorn, Ecton Brook, Eastfield Park and side streets around the Kettering and Wellingborough roads.

Hotspots tend to move around; intensive work is done and checks undertaken. There are still a small number of untaxed vehicles and abandoned vehicles; but there are a lot less around than there were 12 years ago.

**Recommendation 3** - That action is taken, where it continues to be a problem to prevent vehicles being driven onto public parks and burnt out, in particular Hunsbury Park.

In the wider context, a lot of work is done regarding unauthorised access to parks. Burnt out vehicles are less of a problem now than they were 12 years ago.

### **Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005**

**Recommendation 4** - That, in accordance with the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, retailers who allow litter within 100 yards of their premises be fined.

Offenders are fined; there has also been further changes in Legislation, such as the introduction of the Community Protection Notice which is not extensively used for this purpose but can be used.

Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued and Licensing have done some work too with businesses.

**Recommendation 5** - That Cabinet supports the gating of alleyways as a measure to reduce fly-tipping.

Some alleyway gating has taken place but Legislation has changed since 2006.

Alleyways can be gated using Public Spaces Protection Orders for example Marble Arch has been gated; evidence of problems is required. The best gated schemes work when the local community takes ownership. There needs to be a strong majority for an alleyway to be gated.

### **Fly-tipping and Littering**

**Recommendation 6** - That the Council's legal department seeks an agreement with the Magistrates Court on the evidence required for the Council to achieve successful prosecution against fly-tipping and littering.

Again, there have been Legislative changes since 2006. The Authority has reasonable FPN powers. If these are ineffective then legal action is taken.

Veolia uses the echo system which has mapping capacity; there will be the facility to produce hot spot maps.

**Recommendation 7** - That Cabinet considers adopting the Westminster model of prosecuting for fly-tipping and littering and that a presentation be given to Northamptonshire Magistrates on the Council's intentions to adopt a similar process.

This recommendation has been superseded by FPNs.

**Recommendation 8** - That Cabinet monitors the impact of the anti-littering campaign after six months.

This took place and time has now elapsed.

**Recommendation 9** - That it be recommended to supermarkets that they all introduce a deposit system for the removal of supermarket trolleys from their premises.

Most supermarkets do have a deposit scheme on the trolleys. Some are very good. Occasionally the supermarkets are written to. It often depends on individual store management; some stores are members of the Trooleywise and similar "Trolley Management Schemes."

It is important to let all Councillors know that the Community Protection Notices covers supermarkets too.

**Recommendation 10** - That leaflets in appropriate languages regarding recycling and refuse collection be distributed to households where the Council knows that there are people in the household who use that language. Leaflets in ethnic minority languages should be available through community organisations and made available to landlords.

Much more is available on the Website than it was 12 years ago. A small budget is available for translation.

**Recommendation 11** - That the availability of nets to put on recycling boxes be widely publicised and consideration be given to providing them free of charge when new boxes are issued.

This has been superseded. Wheeled bins for recycling will be introduced for most households later in 2018.

**Recommendation 12** - That, in the proposed evaluation of the recycling system currently used, Cabinet considers the use of a different type of receptacle that can be closed at the top.

This has been superseded.

**Recommendation 13** - That a high priority is given to the employment of additional Enforcement Officers when finances permit.

In January 2018 the Enforcement Service commenced; focussing initially on littering. Neighbourhood Wardens also enforce.

**Recommendation 14** - That landlords be encouraged to inform their tenants on the proper disposal of rubbish and that landlords be requested to provide proper places for tenants to store rubbish prior to collection by the Council, in particular, Landlords should take responsibility for informing new tenants of the collection date. The Council seeks to lead by example, as a landlord, by the way that it informs its tenants on the proper disposal of rubbish.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, there are wide ranging powers that make use of CPNs for both landlords and occupiers. They are effective. Officers also attend the Landlords Forum.

**Recommendation 15** - That planning permission for new developments and conversions of properties for multi-occupation include a condition

concerning the provision of facilities for tenants to store rubbish before collection.

Environmental Health makes recommendations for adequate waste storage on site

**Recommendation 16** – That the Council works with the Landlords Forum to ensure that recommendation is promoted.

This has been superseded.

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Tree policy 2006/2007**

- The draft Tree Policy was adopted as the Council's Tree Policy and was used as a reference source until the introduction of the latest Tree Policy. As much of the policy was still relevant, it formed the base from which the new Tree Policy was developed.
- The tree budget was increased in the following years and there is a £100k per year enhancement program. This is currently in year three.
- A dedicated Tree Administration Officer was recruited and is still in post with idverde.
- The specification for the Highway Trees maintenance, carried out by NBC, as part of the Highways Agreement we have with NCC, has remained the same.
- An FAQ sheet was produced, dealing with the most common trees issues and the Tree Policy was included on the Council's website, and available to download.
- Hedgerows can vary in size and by the type of tree or shrub growing in them. As such, they are not specifically described in the new tree policy, as both tree maintenance and grounds maintenance are required for the management of hedgerows.

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Homelessness (rough sleepers) task and Finish Group 2006/2007**

As the Homelessness (Rough Sleepers) Task & Finish Group completed its review more than 11 years ago, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the review and the improvements made as a result of the review and its recommendations.

A lot has changed since the Task & Finish Group published its report in 2007:

- Since 2010, austerity measures have resulted in a substantial reduction in the amount of Government funding for public services

- The Government is no longer providing Northampton Borough Council with any extra funding to support its work with rough sleepers
- A significant number of EU nationals (especially from Eastern Europe) have migrated to the UK to find work. In common with many other areas, they now account for the majority of the people sleeping rough in Northampton
- Welfare reform (which started in 2010) has placed new limits on the amount of Housing Benefit that can be paid to tenants. Local Housing Allowance rates – based on the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of rents in the area and frozen in recent years – have not kept pace with the steady increase in private sector rents
- As the shared accommodation rate is insufficient to cover the rent in most shared housing, most single people under the age of 35 find it very difficult to meet their housing needs if they are reliant on Housing Benefit
- The severe shortage of affordable rented housing in Northampton has worsened since 2007 and, with so much private rented accommodation out of reach, this has exacerbated the problems facing homeless people.
- The ‘Pocket Guide for anyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness’ (the ‘Green Book’) – described as being useful to agencies and rough sleepers during the 2006/07 review – was not kept up to date and is no longer in use.

There have also been a lot of changes in the services operating in Northampton since the Task & Finish Group published its report in 2007:

- Oasis House (comprising 48 flats for homeless people) opened in 2012
- The Hope Centre moved into Oasis House in 2012 and has since expanded its services to include social enterprises and training and employment.
- The Street Outreach Service is provided by the Council and is at the heart of the borough’s efforts to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping.
- A comprehensive, multi-agency strategy – ‘TOGETHER we change lives’ – was published in July 2016 and supported by 30 services and organisations that pledged to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton.
- Since 2016, the Council has robust and effective hospital discharge arrangements with Northampton General Hospital and Berrywood Hospital.

- Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter opened in February 2017 to provide up to 20 men with somewhere safe, warm and dry to stay. Alternative arrangements are in place to assist female rough sleepers.
- In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect and this extended the duties of local housing authorities to relieve and prevent homelessness. In order to improve the service provided for single homeless people, the Council appointed a Single Homelessness Adviser who works very closely with the Street Outreach Workers and Nightshelter Team.

Irrespective of whether or not all 20 recommendations were implemented 11 years ago, the 2006/07 scrutiny has highlighted the following in 2018/19:

- (1) The importance of Northampton Borough Council taking the lead, with all agencies working together on rough sleeper initiatives
- (2) The merits of holding a Rough Sleepers Forum (which could include representation from local businesses, faith groups and support providers) to co-ordinate initiatives and share information.
- (3) The need for a pocket guide that contains key information about the services available to people who are sleeping rough in Northampton. The guide would ensure that the role of the Nightshelter and Street Outreach Workers is fully understood. It could include a flow chart.
- (4) The need to make representations to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding to support everyone's efforts to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in Northampton.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Community Safety (Evaluation of Dispersal Orders) 2006/2007**

### **Evaluation of Dispersal Orders**

The recommendations relate to the use of dispersal orders, which no longer exist, they have been replaced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A power giving the police the authority to disperse individuals or groups was introduced under Part 3 of the Act. This power replaced two older powers contained within section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

Under the previous legislation the police were only able to require people to leave an area if it had been designated as a dispersal zone after consultation with the local authority. The process was thought of as to slow and delayed the ability of the police to respond quickly to reports of anti-social behaviour.

The power can be exercised by a police officer (or designated PCSO), and allows the officer to disperse individuals or groups causing or likely to cause anti-social behaviour in public places or common areas of private land, such as shopping centres or parks, for example.

A police officer of at least the rank of Inspector must have authorised the use of these powers within a specified area. Such an authorisation is valid for up to 48 hours and there is no longer a need to consult with the local authority prior to giving authorisation.

The power to disperse persons from a specified area:

<p><b>To disperse persons from a specified area:</b> enables a PCSO (once authorised by a police inspector) to require a person committing or likely to commit antisocial behaviour, crime or disorder to leave an area for up to 48 hours. A PCSO may also confiscate any item that could be used to commit antisocial behaviour, crime or disorder. A person under 16 can be taken home or to a place of safety. A direction cannot be given to someone under 10 years old.</p>	<p>Schedule 4 of the Police Reform Act 2002 as inserted by paragraph 2 of section 40 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.</p>
---	--

### **The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) allows councils to place restrictions or impose conditions on activities which people can carry out in a designated area. They are designed to deal with issues identified in problem areas which are having a detrimental impact on the quality of life in a community.

A PSPO is issued by a local authority on consultation with the police and the owner or occupier of the land, if appropriate. A PSPO can apply over any public place and can prohibit any activity if the council is satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that the activities:

- have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- are likely to be persistent in nature;
- are unreasonable; and
- justify the restrictions imposed.

The local authority issuing the order must also consult with any relevant community representatives, such as a residents association, and should try to seek the views of those living or working nearby who may be affected by the order.

Powers relating to public spaces protection orders (PSPO):

<p><b>To require a person not to consume alcohol and/or to surrender alcohol where a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is in place:</b> designated PCSOs have the power to require a person reasonably believed to have been consuming alcohol in breach of a PSPO: 1. Not to consume alcohol or anything reasonably believed to be alcohol. 2. To surrender any alcohol or alcohol container.</p>	<p>Schedule 4 of the Police Reform Act 2002 as amended by paragraph 2 of section 69 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.</p>
<p><b>To issue a fixed penalty notice for failure to comply with a Public Spaces Protection Order:</b> following the implementation of a PSPO by the local authority, a designated PCSO can issue a fixed penalty notice to an individual who fails to comply with a PSPO. Under this power, PCSOs can also issue a fixed penalty notice for failure to comply with a request to cease drinking or surrender alcohol or an alcohol container.</p>	<p>Schedule 4 Police Reform Act 2002 as amended by sections 63, 68 and 69 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.</p>

The introduction of The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 changed how anti-social behaviour can be tackled in open spaces. Police officers and PCSOs currently have the power to take and dispose of any open alcohol container(s) in a Public Spaces Protection Order area (PSPO).

The changes in legislation has seen a significant improvement in how quickly the police and PSCOs are able to deal with anti-social behaviour. The powers are utilised to tackle alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour within the night-time economy and also to deal with street drinking within the town centre.

## Overview and Scrutiny Report: Community Engagement 2007/2008

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### Recommendations

**5.1 That reports to all Committees contain an implications paragraph on Community Engagement and Consultation. Meetings Services should act as the gatekeeper to ensure that all reports contain these details and reject any reports that do not contain the relevant information.**

Reports to all committees include a Community Engagement and Consultation section.

**5.2 That, once published, the web-based resource of information on community engagement that is being produced by the organisation 'Involve', be used by all departments when carrying out consultation.** A comprehensive, 27 page consultation toolkit is available on the internet providing a step by step guide.

<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/7327/consultation-toolkit>

**5.3 That a Strategy for Community Engagement be devised which reflects organisational priorities and increased partnership working in accordance with the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)'s devolved structures. It should be recognised that this is an evolving area.**

The Local Area Agreement and the Local Strategic Partnership are structures which no longer exist. However, the Council has a robust

approach to community engagement and has built up a strong network, which is both geographically representative and diversely reflective of the community, (see mind map attached).

**5.4 That as Portsmouth City Council's Consultation Toolkit has been recognised as an example of best practice (this document be considered as a template for a Consultation Toolkit for borough Council staff.**

Unable to confirm whether or not Portsmouth City Council's Toolkit was used to inform Northampton Borough Council's Toolkit. It is evident that many of the necessary principles are included. Whilst Portsmouth recognise four stages of the consultation process, Northampton Borough Councils details eight stages, providing a step by step guide through each stage.

**5.5 That for the public to be more trusting of the Council, it has to be open and transparent in reporting all of its activities. All public information should therefore be widely available and published.**

The Community Safety and Engagement Team works very closely with the Communications Team to promote key messages, provide feedback and share good news stories. This is achieved through various channels, including; our community engagement networks, social media, including Facebook and Twitter, the website and community events.

**5.6 That the mechanisms for receiving public feedback be examined and a policy produced. The mechanisms for reporting back from Neighbourhood Management need to ensure that information received is reported to the relevant Council departments and Councillors.**

Neighbourhood Management is no longer in place.

Revised structure, consisting of three Community Safety and Engagement Officers, working conterminously to the ward boundaries, with Northamptonshire Police. Furthermore, Neighbourhood Wardens are working to specific wards.

Information is shared regularly between team members as a multi-agency, problem solving approach, is adopted at neighbourhood level.

**5.7 That the philosophy of Neighbourhood Management is extended across the whole town. Each area should have its own Communication/Participation Plan that is resourced by the Council. Within this there should be a feedback mechanism.**

Alternative structure in place as mentioned in 5.6. Neighbourhood Management no longer exists.

**5.8 That Neighbourhood Partnerships be fully resourced in order that their role can be enhanced and that they form part of each area's plan (as described in recommendation 5.7) should this be appropriate for that area.**

Alternative structure in place as mentioned in 5.6. Neighbourhood Management no longer exists.

**5.9 That Parish Councils be contacted and provided with details of the plans for Neighbourhood Management. It should be stated that where the Council is aware of any overlap of duties and in that area there is an active Parish Council that the Parish Council complies, for example by hosting public meetings. The Council would not wish to be involved but it would need to ensure that Parish Councils sign up to its Protocol if a particular Parish Council, after public consultation, did not want a Neighbourhood Partnership within their area. This will form part of the area's plan as described in recommendation 5.7.**

A Parish Clerks Forum, consisting of the ten Parish Councils in the Borough has been established. The meetings are facilitated by the Community Safety and Engagement Team and are held quarterly. The purpose of the Forum is for Parish representatives and Borough Council representatives to put forward issues for discussion on matters of common interest and for a means of community engagement.

**5.10 That it be recognised that the Neighbourhood boundaries are not fixed and may need to be reviewed once sufficient evidence for change is established.**

Officers are working within specific boundaries/wards.

**5.11 That the Council recognises that in order to consult with hard to reach groups it will have to consider how best to inform those in the community whose contact with the Council is minimal. These will include passive members of the community who have limited social engagement, members of the community for whom English is not their first language, members of the community who take a disinterest in the administration of Local Government. In order to reach these groups the Council should consider how to ensure that information written in clear, concise language can be delivered beyond people's front doors and/or is communicated to them via the social networks they are engaged in.**

Forums, which are working across five of the protected characteristics. In addition we are working at neighbourhood level, engaging with the community, through our weeks of action, community events and through social media.

**5.12 That a consultation budget be implemented. Analysis should take place to ascertain the amount of resource required.**

**5.13 That consideration be given to internal and external mediums for the consultation process to ensure that cost effective and modern forms of communication are considered.**

Modern forms of engagement are regularly used by the team, including survey monkey and social media, which we have found to be very effective, two recent examples include; the work that was completed in relation to the environmental services contract (8,000 respondents) and Rectory Farm play equipment (more than 100 respondents).

## Overview and Scrutiny Report: Voluntary Sector 2007/2008

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### Recommendations

**5.1 That a Senior Officer, minimum of Corporate Manager level, is explicitly identified as being responsible for the relationship with the Voluntary Sector.**

Community Safety and Engagement Manager identified as the lead officer. A funding agreement is in place with Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN), who provide the local infrastructure contract for Northampton's community and voluntary sector, monitoring meetings take place quarterly with the Chief Executive of VIN.

**5.2 That a minimum of £700,000 is ring-fenced in the budget for 2008/2009 for Voluntary Sector grants ahead of the full budget process so that the grant application process can proceed between now and March 2008 £50,000 of this sum be allocated to the Small Grants pot.**

£800,000 is allocated to the community and voluntary sector through the grants process per annum.

£50,000 is allocated to the small grants programme per annum.

£135,000 is made available to elected members to spend in their wards.

**5.3 That funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector under the Partnership Fund be on a minimum three-yearly basis.**

Funding has been allocated to a number of community and voluntary organisations for a term of either two or three years.

**5.4 That only Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations should be funded from the Voluntary and Community Sector grants pot.**

Only community and voluntary sector organisations are funded from the £800,000 grant allocation pot.

**5.5 That interim arrangements for those organisations currently funded for one year (to end 31 March 2008) should be put in place and clearly communicated to organisations concerned no later than 30 November 2007.**

All organisations that are grant funded by Northampton Borough Council have signed a service level agreement, which clearly defines the terms of the funding, including the length of the agreement and outcomes that are expected to be delivered.

**5.6 That the Administration decides which of the currently funded organisations will be mainstream funded with funding linked to the Corporate objectives and Council departments.**

Funding has been allocated to a number of community and voluntary organisations for a term of either two or three years.

## **Medium Term Recommendations**

### **5.7 That a feasibility study be carried out to ascertain whether the administrative function for grant applications should be outsourced.**

The administration of the small grants fund was outsourced for a period of time, to Northampton Community Foundation. The decision was made recently, to avoid the administrative costs and to establish greater control, the administration of the funding has been brought back in house.

### **5.8 That the Council develops a Commissioning Strategy for the provision of services to meet the Council's corporate objectives.**

As part of the grant application process, all organisations are asked to evidence how their project/activity contributes to one or more of the following priorities and outcomes;

#### Northampton Alive

- A vibrant successful town for now and the future

#### Safer Communities

- Making you feel safe and secure

#### Housing for Everyone

- Helping those that need it to have a safe and secure home

#### Protecting Our Environment

- A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors

#### Love Northampton

- Enhancing leisure activities for local people and encouraging participation

#### Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely

- Delivering quality modern services

## **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Community Centres ) 2009/2010**

This scrutiny review was shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a **video** was produced. The judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level.

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### **Recommendations**

**All leases for self-managed Community Centres are reviewed to ensure that they meet consistent standards; based on a common core document. Leases be on a term of at least 25 years.**

The 21 community centres previously run by the council are now being operated by voluntary and community organisations.

The majority of the centres have a 30 year lease and have signed up to a management agreement, which is consistent across the centres.

**In assessing the business cases, Management Committees must be able to demonstrate they are maintaining a local focus and provide evidence to support it can manage a number of Community Centres fitting the set criteria.**

Prior to the signing of the lease and management agreements, each community organisation provided a robust business case, detailing a longer term plan on how they would engage with local residents, to ensure that the services provided reflected the needs of the local community.

**Northampton Borough Council provides information, such as building surveys, details of running costs to Self-Managed Community Centres to aid business planning.**

This information was provided to each of the centres during the hand over process.

**Management Committees are charged with ensuring that Community Centres are kept in a good state of repair. Northampton Borough Council provides an allocated sum of money to the Management Committees for general maintenance and repair of the Community Centres. Northampton Borough Council remains the budget holder for major repairs.**

A five year transition grant was allocated to each of the centres as part of the handover process, this was a tapering grant. Which involved depletion over the five year handover period. Northampton Borough Council retains responsibility for all external repairs. Internal repairs are the responsibility of the management organisation.

**Suitable Community Groups are given the opportunity to submit an application for the management of a Community Centre(s). Existing Management Committees are given first refusal for Community Centre(s) that they currently manage.**

This process was adopted. All of the community centres are managed by local community/management organisations.

**Where appropriate, Community Groups taking on the management role of the Community Centres, the Council or other partners provide a grant towards running costs, with the proviso that the Groups work in partnership with the Council to achieve community outcomes.**

In addition to the tapering grant, highlighted in section 6.1.4, the community centre management organisations have been extremely successful in securing funding from external funding providers to deliver community outcomes, including the Big Lottery and the Home Office.

The centres have also secured funding from Northampton Borough Council pots, including the partnership grant, small grants and Cllr community funding.

**Northampton Borough Council works with Community Groups that take on the management of a Community Centre regarding the employment of a Centre Coordinator and/or Centre Manager.**

The Community Safety and Engagement Team facilitate a community centre forum, which brings the management organisations together on a quarterly basis.

The terms of reference for the group include:

- To encourage the active participation of the local community in the involvement of the community centres,
- Ensure that the community centre facilities are promoted and their use is encouraged,
- To meet a minimum of four times a year to discuss the issues that face the community centres,
- To provide an active line of communication for the community centre management organisations, amongst each other and between Northampton Borough Council and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire
- Co-ordinate activities and maximise opportunities to work in partnership
- To Identify and pursue sources of funding for community centres, where appropriate completing funding applications.

**The Council works with Management Committees to ensure that the Community Centres meet the needs of the Community.**

The Community Safety and Engagement Team work with the community centre management organisations. In 2015 we applied for Home Office funding to be part the 'Our Place' programme. Our Place was a national initiative launched by the Department of Communities and Local Government, which aimed to empower local people within their neighbourhoods to have a role in decision making and in shaping local services and facilities. For Northampton, Our Place involved a series of consultation and engagement activities and events which were focused around 7 of Northampton's community centres. This involved us working closely with the centres to carry out consultation with local residents, businesses and partners, to identify what the community wanted from the centres. We were able to use the feedback to identify gaps in service and recruit a number of volunteers. Further information can be found within the operational plan;

<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/7955/our-place-operational-plan>

**A Policy, containing particular components such as an Equality Impact Assessment, Health and Safety issues, Terms of Access, booking and contact details to be clearly visible from the outside of the building, details of the condition in which the Community Centre should be left when the hirer has concluded its session, be introduced and issued to all Community Centres. The Policy is renewed on an annual basis.**

All of the above are requirements within the lease and management agreement, which each of the community centre management organisations have signed up to.

**Monitoring of the management of Community Centres is introduced, using management tools.**

An annual review with each of the centres is carried out, there is a robust template which all the centres have completed, which identifies any areas for improvement/gaps and the opportunities to share best practice across the centres.

**Cabinet considers, within appropriate resources, a method of promoting and marketing Community Centres.**

Contact details for each of the centres, including links to their own websites is available on Northampton Borough Councils website.

**Centre Coordinators are responsible for a particular Community Centre/clusters of Community Centres to encourage ownership.**

The management of the centres has been handed over completely to the community centre management organisations.

**Community Centres are available for hire seven days a week.**

The usage of the community centres varies, where there is the demand for use, the community centres are open seven days a week.

**A review of the fees and charges for Northampton Borough Council managed Community Centres is undertaken.**

The fees and charges for the community centres varies in accordance with geographical boundaries and the facilities on offer.

**New builds for Community Centres achieve the same standard, or better, of the design of the floor space, accessibility and layout of Parklands and Pastures Community Centres.**

St Crispins Community Centre is an exemplar, the building provides a multi-purpose space, with a high technical specification, it's very accessible and comprises of all the facilities and more, that are available at both Parklands and the Pastures.

The market leading nature of the programme was recognised in 2013 by being shortlisted for three awards – from LGC, APSE and CfPS. In addition, the programme continues to be used as an exemplar case study by Locality/Asset Transfer Unit, NCVO and by Community Matters.

**Overview and Scrutiny Report: Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy (2010/2011)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

**Recommendations**

## **Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy 2010-11**

- Data from the Health Survey for England shows that 10.6% of adults in Northamptonshire (ages 18+) abstain from drinking alcohol (2011-14). This is significantly below the England average of 15.5%.
- 19.6% of adults in Northamptonshire reported binge drinking (i.e. 6 or more units for women or 8 or more units for men) on their heaviest drinking day, which was statistically similar to the national average of 16.5%.
- 27.9% of adults in Northamptonshire reported drinking over 14 units of alcohol a week, which was statistically similar to the national average of 25.7%.
- Public Health England estimates of dependent drinkers published in 2017 show that Northamptonshire is expected to have an alcohol dependent population of 6,535 people, or 1.18% of the total adult population (95% confidence interval 5,004-8,850 individuals, 0.9% to 1.6% of the population).
- National survey results show that the prevalence of harmful and dependent alcohol use in men is greater than that amongst women.
- A 2016 national study of smoking, drinking and drug use in secondary school pupils aged 11 to 15 found that 5.8% of respondents were drinking at least once a week. This would be equivalent to 2,457 young people aged 11 to 15 in Northamptonshire, based on mid-2016 population estimates. A total of 18%, equivalent to 7,625 young people locally, were drinking alcohol at least once per month.
- In Northamptonshire, an average of 6.5 litres of alcohol were sold per adult aged 18 and over through the off licence trade in 2014. This was significantly higher than the national average of 5.5 litres per adult and the East Midlands average of 5.6 litres per adult.
- Adjusting for the estimated proportion of abstainers in the population, Northamptonshire's sales volume is equivalent to roughly 14 units per week; in other words, local off-trade purchases alone are enough to account for each drinker on average consuming the recommended weekly limit of alcohol.
- At district level, Northampton and Wellingborough had the highest sales volumes at 7.6 litres per adult, which was significantly higher than the national average. Daventry had the lowest at 4.2 litres per adult, which was significantly below the national average.
- The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report and formed an action plan, the actions are highlighted in bold and the updates are provided below:

### **1. Increased Involvement of Schools in Raising Awareness of Alcohol**

- 50.3% of assaults took place on the street and 10.8% took place in licenced premises. While the majority of assaults were unarmed, there were 78 cases involving glass/bottle weapons, of which 64 (82.1%) involved alcohol and 33 (42.3%) took place in licensed premises. There were also 88 assaults with knives, of which 33 (37.5%) involved alcohol. Knife crime training/awareness, being delivered in all our secondary

schools, colleges and university in the borough, the use of alcohol and connection to violence is highlighted.

- Northampton Community Safety Partnership is also holding regular primary school conferences, to educate our year 6's about the Town's community safety priorities, there could be an opportunity to consider alcohol harm and substance misuse as part of this, Community Safety & Engagement Manager will explore this further.

## **2. Increase alcohol treatment referrals, and advice provided by GPs**

NBC have established a closer working partnership with Public Health. Through NCC the following services are commissioned in relation to treatment:

- In 2017/18, substance misuse treatment services were recommissioned, with the new contracts commencing on 1 April 2018. The recommissioning process did not result in any changes to the service providers, which are as follows:
  1. Structured treatment provided by Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
  2. Adult recovery support services provided by the Bridge Substance Misuse Programme (Bridge)
  3. Young people's services provided by Aquarius YP
- As part of the new contracts, CGL will provide all structured treatment for substance misuse, including young people with severe addictions (previously, CGL were an adults only service). CGL will also have oversight of treatment provided by the Youth Offending Service. Aquarius YP will be moving towards a community based early intervention approach for young people who require long term support but are not severely addicted or offending.
- In 2017/18, CGL provided structured treatment for 863 adults for whom alcohol was their only problem substance, a decrease of 15.6% from 1,023 in 2016/17.
- For the reporting period up to the end of March 2018, the PHOF indicator for successful completion of alcohol treatment shows that 38.1% of Northamptonshire clients receiving structured treatment for alcohol misuse successfully completed treatment and did not return to services within 6 months. This is similar to the national average of 38.6%.
- In 2017/18, Bridge provided recovery support for 581 adults for whom alcohol was their only problem substance, a decrease of 10.5% from 649 in 2016/17. Of these, 363 did not access structured treatment at CGL during the year.
- The majority of clients treated by Aquarius YP for problematic alcohol use have concurrent drug misuse issues, with cannabis and alcohol being the predominant combination of substances. Out of 173 young people who accessed services in 2017/18 citing alcohol misuse, only 32 (18.5%) had alcohol as their only problem substance.

## **3. More effective use of licensing powers to promote education, awareness and sensible consumption**

- Best Bar None Awards relaunched, awards event to take place November 2018

- Positive promotion of successful enforcement activities continues – Northants Police and NBC licensing, continue to work together and are co-located.
- Although there is no licensing objective around Public Health, it is still possible to use health data to inform licensing decisions. Since mid-2016, Northamptonshire Public Health & Wellbeing have been working more closely with Licensing Authorities and other Responsible Authorities to monitor and respond to alcohol licensing applications in the county in order to try and mitigate the potential risks to communities that may arise from introducing new outlets in areas with high levels of existing alcohol related harms.
- In 2017/18, there were 94 applications for licences for the sale of alcohol in Northamptonshire. Public Health conditions were placed on 15 of these licences through informal discussion with the applicant and subsequent agreement from the Licensing Authority. Public Health have also provided evidence to support two licence reviews requested by the Police.
- Northampton Borough Council are considering the possibility of establishing a Cumulative Impact Policy in central Northampton, which would allow the Licensing Authority to limit the growth of licensed premises in a specific area where the night-time economy places a high burden on public services. Public Health data has been included in the evidence base for choosing the area for the proposed Cumulative Impact Policy and Public Health will be involved in any reviews of local licensing policies that follow.

#### **4. Support discretionary industry schemes which promote positive culture towards sensible drinking**

- Continue to promote Pubwatch and encourage members to join and engage with the Best Bar none initiative.
- Town Centre Task Group – which feeds into the Community Safety Partnership – meeting six weekly, focus is on the Town Centre, includes all partners that have an interest in improving the Town, both during the day and evening. Includes, Northants Police, Licensing Teams, ASB Team, Town Centre BID, CCTV, Street Pastors and the University of Northampton

#### **5. Broaden the scope of health and non-specialist agencies in raising awareness of alcohol related health and harm**

- Northamptonshire Public Health & Wellbeing have data sharing agreements with Corby Urgent Care Centre and the Accident and Emergency departments at Northampton and Kettering General Hospitals relating to assault presentations as per national information standards. In 2017/18, a total of 1,709 assaults were recorded across the three sites. This was a decrease of 5.0% compared to 2016/17, when there were 1,799 assaults recorded. The data collected and used to inform training and awareness raising.
- Frontline officers across NBC and the partnership have received training, provided by Aquarius, specific to alcohol and substance misuse.

## **6. Raise awareness of alcohol consumption and harm across the town**

- Messages communicated as part of other campaigns, including; Town Centre six week operation – 24 November – 4 January and our ‘Night’s Out Campaign’.
- Amplitude Media campaign has been widened to include newest projects, including the Safer Routes home initiative and the Taxi-Marshalling scheme. Road side boards have been updated with campaign material, contact cards have been given to the taxi’s and taxi marshals to disseminate. University have mirror frames and materials for the student union.

## **7. Build on and develop partnership approaches to addressing alcohol related crime and disorder**

- Taxi-Marshalling scheme pilot running. Two taxi marshals, working on Fri and Sat evenings, during bank holidays and pay weekends. Encouraging and supporting people to get home quickly and safely.
- Safer routes home initiative launched in September, the identified route can be seen at <https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/10521/safer-route-home>
- WASH (Welfare and Safety Hub) based at the Platform (student union), a safe space for people that find themselves vulnerable on a Fri/Sat eve or during the week on student nights.

## **8. Reduce incidents of alcohol related crime and disorder within the night time economy**

- Northampton General Hospital saw the vast majority of assault patients (82.4%) and the data identifies areas and premises in Northampton town centre that are linked to the night-time economy as assault hot-spots. The peak time for assaults was Sunday mornings between 0:00 and 3:00. The data is used by officers to direct projects and initiatives that are working to tackle alcohol related crime and disorder in the night time economy, including community safety initiatives and licensing enforcement.
- Enforcement of the PSPO – confiscation of alcohol
- Funding provided to continue the support to the Street Pastor project, volunteers continue to work pay weekends and bank holidays in the Town Centre

## **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Hate Crime Reporting (2010/2011)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### **Recommendations**

#### **Hate Crime 2011-12**

The purpose of the Review was to ensure that the approach to dealing with hate crime is embedded and responded to within Northampton Borough Council (NBC).

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

**That details of intervention be incorporated into the case management of the hate crime process.**

NBC has a very clear reporting process, including a standard form, which collates the relevant information required to investigate a reported incident. This can be accessed via our website, which also provides a clear definition of what hate crime is

<https://selfserve.northampton.gov.uk/Ef3/General.jsp?form=JaduSSHateCrime&page=pageInstructions>

NBC has signed up to a County wide set of Hate Reduction Service Standards, to not only ensure a consistent response, but to ensure that victims are at the centre to our response to hate crime, these include:

- Each complaint will be investigated and taken seriously.
  - All information you give us will be treated in confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation.
  - Our staff will be trained to give you the correct advice.
  - A risk assessment will be completed to help identify vulnerable and repeat victims.
  - We will respond to high risk incidents within one working day.
  - We will respond to non-high risk incidents within 5 day working days.
  - You will be informed who the lead organisation will be and be provided with appropriate support. The lead organisation will work with partners and other service providers where necessary.
- 
- You will have a single point of contact (SPOC) within the lead organisation dealing with your hate incident and be provided with their contact details.
  - We will ideally resolve the complaint to your satisfaction, through the compliance of an agreed action plan produced with consideration of the full range of actions available.
  - We will support you in collecting evidence to enable positive action to be taken. We will regularly review this information and explain what action is to be taken and why.
  - We will keep you informed about your case and provide updates within timescales agreed with you.
  - We will contact you via telephone, text, e-mail, and letter or in person as agreed with you.
  - We will monitor your satisfaction with the way we have dealt with your case.
  - The lead agency will ask the court for special measures for vulnerable or intimidated victims and witnesses where appropriate.
  - We will make a referral to the witness service if appropriate during criminal proceedings.
  - Where appropriate, we will keep communities informed of what is happening within their neighbourhood through a range of means including street briefings, newsletters and leaflet distribution.
  - We will promote another route if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

**That Cabinet instructs Officers to publish an Annual Report of Hate Crime Reporting. The Annual Report should include:**

- **Overview of reported hate crime over the 12 month period**
- **Information and statistics around the incidents of hate crime.**
- **Map of hot spots of incidents of hate crime**

Reduction of Hate Crime is a priority for Northampton Community Safety partnership, specifically the focus is on:

- Preventing incidents of Hate Crime
- Delivering targeted interventions to raise awareness of Hate Crime, encouraging reporting

There has been seen a 12.9% reduction in hate crime reports in the last 12 months. The Community Safety & Engagement Manager receives a statistical report every month. This report helps to shape activity of the CSP.

**That the Council's Awareness Training on the reporting of Hate Crime be an integral part of the Councillor Induction Programme and refresher training be programmed into Councillor Development Programme on an annual basis.**

Regular training programmed in for Cllrs, specific refresher training for Cllrs who need additional training as part of their Cllr role, i.e. training for CEFAP grant panel members.

**That the Council's Awareness Training on the reporting of Hate Crime be an integral part of the Staff Induction Programme. Cabinet instructs that annual refresher training is held for all relevant front line staff.**

Hate Crime Training is mandatory for all staff

**That Northampton Borough Council appoints a Councillor as a Hate Crime Reporting Champion.**

Councillor Anna King has the portfolio for Hate Crime and is the Councillor Champion.

**That the Leader of the Council, together with the Councillor Hate Crime Reporting Champion, approaches Partners regarding the most effective way of ensuring hate crime reporting across Agencies.**

There is a countywide hate crime and anti-social behaviour strategy, which all the statutory partners are signed up to. Actions are taken collectively to ensure we give out a consistent message, with regards to how and where people can report incidents. The below is consistent with other local authorities and the police (this is in addition to reporting directly to NBC):

Call 101 to report directly to the police, or 999 if a crime is in progress:

- True Vision

- VOICE by calling 0300 303 1965 or sending them an email at info@voicenorthants.org
- Crimestoppers anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 or visit their website
- Northampton Inter-Faith Forum (Crane Project): 07757 020346 or email contact@niff.org.uk
- Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council: 01604 400808 or 01604 400809.

The Police's Hate Crime Officer and Community Engagement Officers are based at the Guildhall, they work very closely with NBC's Community Safety & Engagement Team.

The Community Safety & Engagement Manager attends the Hate Crime Panel Review meetings, which take place bi-monthly, looking at individual cases and partner's responses, they are designed to be learning review exercises.

**That the Councillor Champion contacts the Keep Safe Group regarding potential opportunities where the Key Safe Group could work with the Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The Police Crime Commissioners Office has funded a project worker to promote the Keep Safe Scheme, NBC are signed up to the scheme and working closely with the project officer. We recently used our Hate Crime Week of Action – held between 13-21 October to promote the scheme.

**That to increase awareness in communities of hate crime/incidents and how to report, alternative methods of publicising reporting of hate crime mechanisms be introduced, such as, being included at events held at public locations, information provided to various community groups and organisations, details in the local media.**

Through the community forums, we have made great attempts to encourage the reporting of hate crime, the youth forum completed a lot of work in promoting the initiative 'stamp out hate crime' and more recently we funded the Crane Project, which involved Northampton Inter Faith Forum providing awareness around reporting, promoting and encouraging third party reporting centres (including the community forums and other local community spaces) and signing up community champions.

Officers have worked with the taxi drivers to encourage reporting and sent messages out through Pubwatch in the night-time economy. Held a schools conference on 9 October, 180 year 7 students attended and received training on various subjects, one of which was hate crime. Officers use National Hate Crime week, training and awareness programmes for frontline staff and nominated co-ordinators, posters, display items on notice boards and put messages out through team briefings on how and where to report hate crime.

The Council has recently launched our Equality Allies project and we use events such as IDAHO, Holocaust Memorial Day, Srebrenica, International Men's Day, International Women's Day and International Day for Person's with a Disability, held throughout the year to bring our communities together, there is always an underlying theme to improve community cohesion, our aim

is to promote understanding and to celebrate difference amongst our communities.

**That in May 2013 a case study be prepared on the process and effectiveness of the changes that have been made to Hate Crime reporting.**

It could not be confirmed whether this recommendation was completed, however the evidence presented within this report, hopefully reassures the panel, that there has been and continues to be a huge commitment to improving the reporting pathways for hate crime. NBC was commended for its efforts towards tackling hate crime and raising awareness amongst our communities in 2016, when it won the National Hate Crime Award.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Serious Acquisitive Crime and Community Safety (2010/2011)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

#### **Recommendations**

The purpose of the Review was to;

- To investigate, as a benchmark, Northampton's crime statistics in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify 'hotspots' in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify the impact that serious acquisitive crime and violent crime has on the residents of Northampton
- To identify the serious acquisitive crime and violent crime issues that Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other Agencies, can have an impact upon

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

#### **Northampton Borough Council (NBC)**

**A funding pot is identified to provide target hardening for properties that are located within hot spot areas.**

A target hardening budget has been identified every year since the report was written. This year £10,000 has been allocated to support vulnerable victims, referrals for assessment are filtered through the Crime Prevention Team, to ensure a full assessment is carried out on the property.

**Northampton Borough Council ensures active engagement with the Troubled Families Agenda.**

The Troubled Families programme has been absorbed into the Early Help provision, within NCC. Through our multi-agency case management meetings (HASBAG and Cuckooing meetings) we are regularly engaging with the Early Help Team.

NBC have just signed an agreement with the Home Office, to work with Free2Talk to deliver a youth based, mentoring project in the Town, to support young people 10-17 who are involved in youth violence and gangs.

**Prior to any physical works being undertaken, consideration to long-term maintenance is given and resources identified.**

During the weeks of action, warden patrols and through the neighbourhood policing teams, various environmental improvements are picked up, thought is always given to any wider or ongoing cost implications before carrying out works. The new contract is facilitating some of these discussions.

**Councillors are issued with regular updated information on the demographics of their wards.**

The Community Safety & Engagement Team work closely with the ward Cllrs in their areas. There are a couple of websites that are promoted to Cllrs regularly, these include:

<https://www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk/> and <https://www.police.uk/>

## **Housing**

**Obsolete signs in place around the Council's housing stock are removed and all relevant signage is in situ and is clearly visible.**

Completed

**An enhanced and responsive maintenance service is implemented in "hotspot" areas.**

During the weeks of action, warden patrols and through the neighbourhood policing teams, various maintenance issues are picked up, these are fed through to NPH.

**A funding pot is identified to provide target hardening on Council properties that are located within hot spot areas.**

All referrals for target hardening, where vulnerable victims have been identified are fed through to NPH or social housing providers (if identified), in most cases the full recommended works are completed.

## **Planning/Regeneration**

**It is ensured that when land or buildings is transferred, it is stipulated that the land must be cleared and properly secured.**

Ongoing process

**Consideration is given to utilising unused open spaces in residential areas across the town for public use.**

Various examples of additional play equipment installed and community spaces/buildings being taken on by community and voluntary organisations.

**Planning continues to work with and seek advice and guidance from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer to ensure new developments meet 'Design out Crime' standards.**

Police's Crime Prevention Officer (for Planning) is based at the Guildhall for a day a week, providing ongoing advice, i.e. involvement with the new NIA School and the relocation of the University of Northampton.

### **Neighbourhood Wardens**

**Clarification is given on the role of the Neighbourhood Wardens. This information is disseminated to ward Councillors.**

Completed

**Neighbourhood Wardens undertake annual refresher training on crime prevention matters.**

Neighbourhood Wardens are kept up to speed with emerging community safety priorities and crime prevention. They work closely with the Community safety & Engagement Team and the Manager of the Wardens attends the CSP meetings.

**An on-going professional training and development plan, with specific focus on crime prevention and community safety, for Neighbourhood Wardens is produced and implemented**

The wardens have a full training programme.

### **Partners and Agencies**

**Following completion of projects in hotspot locations, an exit plan is developed outlining support and maintenance post project, in order that the positive results are maintained.**

As part of the exit strategy for the weeks of action, a multi-agency partner meeting and an associated action plan are developed (this includes activities and issues that have risen during the week and the lead up to the week of action). The merge of the community safety & engagement team has allowed for a wider geographical coverage throughout the whole year.

**On-going maintenance budgets are included with any environmental improvements such as fencing.**

During the completion of funding requests, whether this is for internal capital pots or external funding pots, ongoing maintenance is considered and budgeted for. We do have examples where other community and voluntary groups have taken on the ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

**A directory for young people is developed that provides information on services and facilities available to young people.**

Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire has a directory of services that are searchable on their website, this provides universal coverage. In addition we have a more targeted approach, a standard letter which is sent out to parents that may have come to the attention of the Anti-Social Behaviour Case Managers, which includes the services that are available for young people to access or engage with.

**There is timelier sharing of data from Accident and Emergency with the Community Safety Partnership. This means weekly highlight reports and full details on a monthly basis.**

A & E data is shared with the CSP quarterly.

**A mechanism is introduced to ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board can provide information and feedback to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).**

The Board is chaired by NBC

**Membership of the CSP be revisited to ensure that it includes all relevant Agencies and service areas, including the Voluntary Sector.**

The CSP has all the statutory representatives attending, including Health, Probation, the Police, PCC's Office and Fire Service, plus EMAS, YOS, VIN, Free2Talk, Care and Repair and many other organisations.

**When training/education around crime prevention issues is undertaken, consideration is always be given to the audience and the trainer is mindful to use appropriate language that is universally understood.**

Informal training offered regularly by the community safety & engagement team, including pop up stalls, bike marking, personal safety sessions, delivered to one stop shop staff and Northampton university students.

**Information systems between the Police and local Councillors are reviewed and further developed.**

Established relationships across the Borough.

**Support is given to the Intensive Community Engagement programme hosted by Northamptonshire Police.**

The initiative has been superseded by the Integrated Offender Management programme (IOM), work closely with the police with regards to intensive engagement.

**Formal links between Enterprise Management Services (EMS) and Northampton Borough Council are developed around situational crime to ensure faster information sharing and faster responses to dealing with service issues, therefore resulting in a positive outcome for the community.**

Two community engagement officer roles have been recruited to, as part of the new contract. Relationships are being established with the community safety & engagement team to understand how we can best support one another.

### **Community Forums**

**Residents Associations, Community Groups and Forums are encouraged to use open spaces which in turn will assist in community development and ownership of their local areas.**

Park Management Committees, encouraging partners to share information and work collectively

### **Northants Probation Service**

**Northampton Borough Council is built into the Community Pay Back Initiative.**

Continue to utilise Pay Back in our priority areas.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire**

**A copy of this report is provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire.**

Completed

### **Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the inclusion of a Scrutiny Review of Interpersonal Violence in its Work Programme for 2013/2014.**

Carried forward and completed.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Keep Northampton Tidy (2014/2015)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

#### **Recommendations**

The Scrutiny Panel report in March 2015 contained a total of twenty five recommendations.

Three recommendations were made regarding the promotion of the use of the NBC "Report It" app. The app is now widely used and it is currently being updated to integrate with the functionality of the new website and enhance the reporting capability. The app is to be relaunched with increased publicity and residents and members are strongly encouraged to use this as their main channel to report issues when out and about.

Recommendations around fly posting have been implemented, Neighbourhood Wardens have access to stickers which can be used to indicate cancellation of posters. Extensive use is being made of new powers available under antisocial behaviour legislation to require the removal of posters and an updated graffiti and fly posting policy is currently being drafted which will further clarify responsibility for removal.

Recommendations were made about the provision of portable ashtrays, signage about pigeons and chewing gum boards. Some portable ashtrays have been provided funded by the bid. Some signage has been provided at specific locations and chewing gum boards are not considered to be a practical solution.

The recommendation about the use of highway planters has been implemented. A motion was presented to Council this month about steps to remove shopping trolleys and it is proposed to bring a scheme to recover trolleys and recharge supermarkets into place early in 2019.

New powers under anti-social behaviour legislation are being used to deal with waste from commercial and domestic properties.

The new environmental services and environmental enforcement contracts have a key part to play working alongside the people of Northampton to make the town a more pleasant place to live and work.

Consideration has been given to the gating of alleyways and jettys in the town. One alleyway at Marble Arch has been gated using a Public Spaces Protection Order and investigations in relation to other alleys have demonstrated that gating is not a practical solution in certain specific cases

Information on community clean ups is included on the Council's website and will be included on the new updated site.

Investigations of the effectiveness of kangaroo runs have been carried out. These initiatives have been used in specific operations. The new environmental services contract includes enhanced arrangements for the collection of fly tipping and this together with increased enforcement is beginning to have a noticeable impact.

Junior Warden Schemes continue in a range of schools around the town and have communicated positive environmental messages to a large number of children. Community clean up initiatives have involved a wide range of young people in making a measurable difference to their areas.

Contact has been made with the Highway authority and Highways Agency to facilitate improved coordination of grass cutting, clean ups and road closures. Dialogue is ongoing in relation to gateways to the town.

Purple Flag accreditation was achieved in 2018.

There is an enhanced understanding of the importance of the three aspects of contract, community and enforcement to ensure the delivery of a cleaner Northampton. Coordination of budget planning is undertaken to ensure effective spending on the cleanliness of the town.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Report: Public Engagement and Communications (2006/2007)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### **Recommendations**

Following a referral from Northampton Borough Council's Improvement Board, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was asked to review the way that the Council consulted with and engaged its citizens.

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

### **Recommendations:**

For ease of delivery, the following series of recommendations are grouped in specific areas: -

#### **Management and Resources**

**Northampton Borough Council identifies a member of staff, from the Communication or Community Development Service Area, with specific responsibility for consultation for the Council.**

Community Safety and Community Engagement Team work very closely with the Communications Team.

**There is a need for a budget for providing advice on consultation. Each service area must provide for consultation in its own budgets. The relevant budgetary measures should be allocated in the next budget process.**

Support has been provided to services, utilising both internal and external support with consultation. A good recent example includes the environmental services contract, more than 9,000 residents consulted.

**All consultation exercises should be planned to include feedback to the participants.**

The feedback from consultation and engagement is captured in a number of ways, utilising various channels, including the council's social media platforms and community forums.

**The costs and benefits of these exercises should be calculated in full before the process starts.**

Inclusive within project/budget manager costs.

#### **Information and Co-Ordination**

**All consultation data and the results of analysis should be accessible from a central source**

Available on Northampton Borough Council's website:

<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200024/consultations>

**The outcomes of all consultations should be made available to all services.**

Available on Northampton Borough Council's website:  
<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200024/consultations>

## **Systems and Protocols**

**Appropriate corporate consultation mechanisms should be in place by the autumn to give the Council meaningful results. A baseline should be established in order that progress can be monitored.**

Consultations are monitored corporately.

**Northampton Borough Council should adopt an effective consultation protocol to circulate internally and externally within the Council. A starting draft has been produced by this Task and Finish Group.**

Protocol adopted and on the intranet.

**A Corporate Policy and implementation process on consultation and engagement should be produced.**

Consultation and engagement policy was produced.

**The proforma used at the Focus Group sessions should be adapted so that it can be used generically within the Council.**

This may have been used initially, cannot find any evidence to suggest it is still being used, twelve years later.

**The results of consultations need to be built in to decision making, service planning and priority setting processes in the Council.**

Good examples of consultations that are built into service planning, including environmental services contract, budget consultation and the local area plan.

**Northampton Borough Council should make use of neighbourhood working for consultation processes and wider working potential.**

Community Safety and Engagement Team and the Neighbourhood Wardens are able to support community engagement and consultation, working at a neighbourhood level, ensuring services are influenced by the community. For example, consultations with regards to play equipment.

**Plain language should be used in all Council documents in order that any member of the public is able to access Council material.**

House style guide has been produced, to make sure that everything we write is clear and easy to understand. Whether it is a letter to a member of the public, a committee report for members or a leaflet for all, clarity and consistency can be ensured.

**It would be helpful for a guidance to be produced on Council and Local Authority terminology.**

House style guide has been produced, to make sure that everything we write is clear and easy to understand. Whether it is a letter to a member of the public, a committee report for members or a leaflet for all, clarity and consistency can be ensured.

**Councillors should be supported in their role liaising between the Council and the community and be provided with appropriate means and methods for feeding back the outcomes of consultations in their communities.**

As suggested previously all current and closed consultations are available on the internet, regular press releases are issued and ward Cllrs will work closely with the officers from the Community Safety and Engagement Team and Neighbourhood Wardens, often getting involved in the shaping of the consultation and engagement.

### **Engagement with Diverse Communities**

**Current methods of consultation should be supplemented with other mechanisms to reach a larger and more diverse population allowing citizens to initiate or add to the debate. For example – Community Groups could be encouraged and supported to bring issues, concerns and ideas directly to the Council.**

Northampton Borough Council supports and administers six community forums, representing the following protected characteristics, young people, older people, LGBT, faith/ethnic background, disability and gender. The forums are well represented and attended not only by members of the community, but by organisations that are representing larger service users. Services within the Council attend the forums as means to consult, as well as partners, such as NHFT, Northants Police and Northamptonshire County Council.

**A corporate brand that helps Northampton Borough Council to bring consistency and inspire confidence should be developed.**

Northampton Borough Council has a well-recognised brand, corporately, the same templates, logo, colours, format etc are all utilised when communicating with the community and stakeholders. Social media platforms and various media channels all utilised.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Reports: Customer Services 2008/2009 and 2012/2013**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

#### **Recommendations**

**To evaluate the success of investments made in Customer Services since 2005**

The purpose of the Review was to:

- To review Customer Services throughout Northampton Borough Council between November 2008 and April 2009.
- To look at our Call Centre, One Stop Shop and Housing Offices with the aim of improving Customer Services.

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

## **Northampton Borough Council (NBC)**

**In order to ascertain whether a good Customer Service Facility is being provided by Northampton Borough Council, benchmarking against the family group be undertaken.**

Northampton Borough Council are a member of the LACCF (Local Authority Council Forums) Benchmarking group. This enables us to benchmark against other authorities of similar size. We are currently looking into a survey for customers to complete and upon receiving feedback these will be submitted and these results produced identifying averages and trends. The LACCF have over 35 members and these include Kettering borough, Derbyshire, Coventry, Corby, Warrington, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

**A cost saving exercise regarding the number of leaflets produced be undertaken and consideration given to alternatives such as information made available electronically and the installation of plasma screens in the One Stop Shop to display relevant information.**

Information displayed on the screens in the One Stop Shop is relevant to services provided.

**A higher promotion of customer focus throughout the whole Authority be introduced by promoting the Customer Excellence Strategy 2009-2012.**

This was implemented and promoted.

**The complaints Policy Procedure be updated.**

The complaints procedure has been updated.

**The Customer Services Leaflets and Customer Feedback forms be updated and contain Officers' posts rather than the inclusion of Officers' names.**

These were all updated and the majority of our feedback and forms are now electronic due to changes in customer demand.

**In depth training for all Customer Services Staff be strengthened, in particular training for staff on how to deal with job related stresses.**

Customer Services Training is completed each year. A specialised trainer has spent time with the team identifying the training needs and listening to calls to enable the delivery of bespoke training. Last year it was a half day training but due to the feedback this year we have arranged a whole day enabling staff to put the learning into practice. The four days training took place over November and December 2018. This training is designed to give and enhance skills to identify and resolve conflict reducing stresses for both the customer and employees. In addition, there is an escalation process where difficult contacts can be escalated to a Manager to deal with, this again helps reduce the pressure on the frontline staff. As part of the Mental Health Concordat, we are looking at additional training and partnership working to help increase resilience.

**The front desk based in the One Stop Shop deals with simple queries such as receiving customer's additional paperwork and completed forms.**

The front desk can direct customer enquiries to the relevant department and advise further. In addition, they are now supported by floor walkers.

**A Health and Safety report for Clintonville House be produced for environmental issues such as the lighting, heating and air conditioning systems, along with the cleanliness of the premise.**

The customer services team are no longer situated in Clintonville House - We are currently completing Health and Safety assessments for each Service area of the Council. This includes reviewing risk assessments where environmental concerns would be highlighted. Our Health and Safety, safety and wellbeing assistant is looking at Environmental solutions which include possible alternative light bulbs and blinds.

**The Task and Finish Group informs Cabinet of its support for the introduction of an automated queuing system at the One Stop Shop at Northampton Borough Council.**

This system was implemented following the recommendation.

**A team from Customer Services be set up to work with managers to draw up Service Level Agreements around customer focus.**

SLAs were drawn up accordingly.

**The provision of Council documents are translated into formats suitable for a range of disabled customers be strengthened, by offering the facility of tapes or compact discs of requested Council documents being provided to those such customers.**

Translation services are provided utilising free online services.

**Customer Services Officers be allocated sufficient time to keep up to date with 'Regulatory changes' using the new computer trainer system.**

Time continues to be allocated to staff to keep up to date with online training courses.

**A questionnaire be sent to customers after complaint resolution, all Services be sent a copy on which to comment.**

Surveys are sent to customers using the online system to gain feedback.

**All Councillors be reminded to use the Councillor Contact Centre rather than contacting individual departments/services. This is necessary to ensure that accurate information about the service provision is provided.**

Customer Services Staff are trained to remind Councillors to use the Councillor Contact Centre when reporting or making enquiries. On a regular basis, the Customer Services Manager sends a reminder and will spend time with any councillors who need support.

**Training for Councillors on how to use Councillor Contact Centre and the whole Customer Services Process be given.**

This is ongoing as above.

**It be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee that a Review of all Council core documents and leaflets be added to the Work Programme for 2009/2010. The purpose of the Review would be to ensure that all documents are produced in plain English and follow the same corporate style.**

This was actioned and a further review of communications and a communications plan was completed in November 2018.

**That resources be allocated for the provision of uniforms for frontline Customer Services Officers, identifying a corporate image. Staff be consulted on the style of the uniform.**

Customer Services uniforms have been provided for front line staff, this identifies the corporate image. Ever since this recommendation, staff continue to be provided annually with uniforms and feedback is very positive

### **Evaluation of O&S Reports Customer Services (2012 report)**

The purpose of the Review was to;

To evaluate all customer services with a review of the Customer Contact Centre, customer satisfaction and the refurbished and extended One Stop Shop.

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

#### **Northampton Borough Council (NBC)**

**That funding for improved signage both outside and inside the Guildhall be made available, particularly in relation to signs for housing and registrars; with a particular focus on the improvement of signage around the old building of the Guildhall.**

Signage has been improved both inside and outside the Guildhall.

**That floor walkers, located in the One Stop Shop, be provided with a uniform that makes them and their role clearly identifiable to customers.**  
Floor walkers have been provided with uniforms that make them identifiable to customers.

**That funding for additional uniforms for front line Customer Services Officers be investigated.**

Uniforms have been provided for front line Customer Services Officers and continues to be included in the annual budget.

**That the uniforms provided for front line Customer Services Officers identify the corporate image of the Council.**

The uniforms that have been provided do identify the corporate image of the Council. Customer and staff feedback is exceptionally positive.

**That the plasma screens in situ in the One Stop Shop be utilised to broadcast news channels which can be done at no extra cost to the Council.**

The screens are used for a wide range of advertising of supporting partner services as well as public service announcements.

**That those departments not currently delivered through Customer Services, such as Planning, Building Control and Licensing be brought into Customer Services for “first contact”, to apply customer services skills, to enable the channel shift strategy to be fully applied to calls/visits in relation to these departments.**

Licensing services have been shifted to online only, therefore Customer Services provide support to customers to access. Planning and building control are dealt with directly by those services areas with support for online and face to face access provided by Customer Services staff.

**That, with a particular focus on the entrances and exits, the layout of the One Stop Shop be altered to improve customer flow and further support channel shift.**

The One Stop Shop has been improved over the years and now incorporates a Police Desk, Partners surgeries and telephone and computer access. The flooring was all replaced during 2018 and channel shift continues to increase.

**That funding is identified for a further automatic ticketing machine to support the improved layout and increase the number of floor walkers.**

Ticketing machines are in place to maintain the ongoing Customer Services system. The Floor walkers are assisted with handheld devices to record, support and direct customers.

**That in order to reduce the time the process takes, the volume of evidence requested from customers in relation to housing applications is reduced and evidence is only sought upon offer of accommodation to validate the information given.**

Following feedback from the Housing Service, this was not possible as the team require that all housing applicants provide as much information as possible to start with to ensure that they are eligible. This is an area which could possibly be improved by reviewing the current processes again.

**That a project be undertaken to assess the feasibility and cost implications of extending hours of the Contact Centre and One Stop Shop from 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.**

This was trialled however it was not cost effective as the majority of customers accessed during the traditional opening times although on-line access has now increased. The Call Care Team take Out of Hours calls when the Contact Centre are closed.

**That the mystery shopping exercise is repeated, including the Centres under the management of the Northampton Leisure Trust, and that in order to achieve consistency the same questions should be used and repeated on a regular basis.**

The Northampton Leisure Trust undertake customer feedback and mystery shopping independently although they do share this with customer services and the Head of Customers and Communities is invited to NLT board meetings as an observer and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for customer services sits on the Board.

**That further methods of communication both to and from the Council, such as social media sites and short messaging services be investigated; with a special focus to pre-empting messaging regarding local issues.**

Social media sites are updated regularly and monitored to ensure relevant information is being given.

**That in recognising that more customers may seek assistance due to the current economic climate and a number of changes to the benefits system a priority queuing system be introduced.**

Customer Services work very closely with partners including the DWP, Community Law and Citizens Advice to ensure that customers requiring support are seen in a timely and co-ordinated manner

**That the area of the One Stop Shop located around the Planning reception desk be better utilised for use by customers.**

This area is now fully utilised for partners supporting a wide range of customers.

**That it be ensured that Neighbourhood Wardens share all relevant data and information with EMS.**

Neighbourhood Wardens have access to relevant data from Waste Contractors through the Partnership Unit. The sharing of information with the new contractors, Veolia is ongoing and regularly reviewed.

**That a tour of the EMS site be incorporated into the Councillor Induction Package so that Councillors are aware of all the processes and procedures in place.**

This is yet to be arranged for the new Contractors Veolia and will be implemented if this is required.

**That tours of the EMS site be arranged for all front line Customer Services Officers to further aid them in answering queries and providing information to the public.**

Tours are organised for West Bridge Site for Contact Centre and One Stop Shop staff that are trained in services relating to the depot.

**That Equality and Multi-cultural Awareness continues to have a high priority for Induction and on-going training of Customer Services Advisors, recognising the skills and knowledge required of Advisors dealing with a very diverse range of customers.**

Full training on Equality and Multi-cultural awareness is given for all services to ensure staff are dealing correctly with all customers. Training was provided for all teams in October 2018.

**That a Protocol be produced for all NBC staff to follow that details clear guidelines, including the wearing the appropriate PPE, when visiting the site at EMS.**

Appropriate PPE is worn when in the yard and in relevant areas.

**That improvements be made to the signage at West Bridge Depot, with a particular focus regarding signage for the EMS site.**

New signage was put in place when Veolia took over the waste contract in June.

**That, where budgets permit, the GPS in-cab system is extended more widely to appropriate departments.**

Currently this is shared with Customer Services and the Partnership Unit and will continue to be monitored.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Reports: More Facilities for Older Children 2008/2009**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this Review was to investigate the facilities and activities (recreational, social and cultural) available for 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25 and to evaluate whether such facilities and activities are on a paid for or free of charge basis.

The following recommendations were specifically detailed within the report, updates are provided for each of the recommendations:

#### ***Northamptonshire County Council:***

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recommends to Cabinet that the following recommendations be forwarded to Northamptonshire County Council for consideration:

- 1. The database of known available activities and facilities for older children, aged 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25, be published on the Council's website.**
  - Information is available on Northamptonshire County Council's website, including what support and help is available for young people in the County - <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/Pages/default.aspx>
  - General youth provision is covered by a database, put together by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire - <http://www.voluntaryimpact.org.uk/directory/>
  - There is a directory of services for children and young people in Northamptonshire (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities on the website also - <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/send/local-offer/Pages/default.aspx>
- 2. Contact be made with Faith Communities to confirm the accommodation that they have available for activities for young people. This information be published on the database of known activities.**
  - Unable to clarify implementation of the recommendation
  -

3. **A youth website be set up, catering for this age group. The website should detail youth facilities and activities and be attractive and engaging to youth to encourage them to use it. The Website should include details such as league football, popular music hits, Chat with a Councillor, which would give young people further reason to use the site**
  - Unable to clarify implementation of the recommendation
4. **Research has indicated that there appears to be a lack of provision of the following facilities and it be recommended that this information be forwarded to Northamptonshire County Council requesting that it investigates this and be asked to ascertain whether resources are available for further such facilities: -**
  - There are a lot of activities and facilities available but research has indicated that there is a lack of provision of youth clubs and youth cafes within the borough.
  - Research has indicated that there is a lack of adult supervision for young people's activities.
  - There is a lack of facilities for LGB youth, in particular a safe meeting place.
  -
5. **It be recommended to Extended Services, Northamptonshire County Council, that there needs to be a comprehensive collection of information detailing after school activities and the use of school sites outside of the curriculum.**
  - There has been a noticeable gap in youth provision within the County, this has been an issue for a while.

***Northampton Borough Council:***

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recommends to Cabinet that the following recommendations be forwarded to Northampton Borough Council for consideration:

6. **Other effective communication methods such as leaflets and notice boards be investigated to promote Council led activities and facilities for young people.**
  - Northampton Borough Council has utilised social media platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat to engage young people and promote activities. The Council also has a strong Youth Forum, more than 15 young people, representing our secondary schools in the Borough and for the past two years held a youth event in the summer, coinciding with International Youth Day.
7. **Cabinet informs Sports Development and Neighbourhood Partnership Services, Northampton Borough Council, that it is Central Government's drive to increase weekend facilities for young people. The appropriate Officers be notified that there is a need for**

**the Council to increase the provision of facilities for young people during weekends.**

- Northampton Borough Council were recently successful in securing more than £800,000, over four years, to work with young people 8-20 years old who are involved in youth/gang violence. A key objective of the project is about providing additional youth provision in the Town, a safe youth space for young people to regularly attend.
- 
- In addition to the above Northampton Borough Council funds Free2Talk and NAYC, both supporting and providing youth services in the Town, as well as the Street Sports programme (formerly Street Football) delivered by the Leisure Trust.
- 

**8. Details of the database of known available activities and facilities for older children, aged 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25.**

- General youth provision is covered by a database, put together by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire - <http://www.voluntaryimpact.org.uk/directory/>
- There is a directory of services for children and young people in Northamptonshire (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities on the website also - <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/send/local-offer/Pages/default.aspx>
- 

**9. That Cabinet notes the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's concerns regarding recent events around the need for a skateboard park and the threatened cut to funding for music and performing arts.**

- Northampton Borough Council funded the development of the Skate Park at Midsummer Meadow, a fantastic facility for young people in the Town to access, which is utilised all year round.

**Overview and Scrutiny Reports: O&S Sheltered housing and housing option for older people and independent living strategy reports 2010/2011 and 2011/2012)**

Progress and actions on the recommendations contained within the report:

**Recommendations**

During the setting up of NPH in the summer of 2014 all "supporting people" funding was cut by central government and a decision was reached at that time to consider what services would be adopted by NPH on transfer and which would remain with the local authority.

The team which provided the service known as the Independent Living team was made up of the Call Care service and the officers providing housing related support

to older people. It was decided by NBC, that NBC would retain the call care service with the Independent living team moving to NPH with effect of th January 2015. The cut in supporting people meant that NPH had to consider what services could be delivered through the HRA, as although Northampton County Council had indicated that they would be offering for tender a housing related support service the time lines were not clear, although NBC did express that they would tender for this contract. NPH took the decision that the newly transferred service must be both affordable and deliverable even if there was no external funding .

At this time it was decided to review the service and the following issues raised:

- Of the 1777 designated 'sheltered housing' units support was only being provided to 510 tenants. 1267 had no support provided.
- There were 24 Independent Officers and Support Officers and a large period of their time was being spent completing equipment checks. The Hardwire system Tunstall system was failing in many blocks, which was not cost effective to replace and industry was moving to displaced GSM units.
- Many support plans had no end date which did not promote Independent Living
- People wanted the sheltered housing properties (mainly bungalows) but they did not want or need the support.
- The Sheltered Housing property review commenced by NBC had not been completed, and there remained in the stock a lot of properties designated as 'Sheltered Housing' that were not fit for purpose
- Many tenants had shown a willingness to test their own equipment
- Many more general needs tenants and applicants were demonstrating a need for support but did not qualify for 'sheltered housing', nor did they need that type of housing and the reduction in floating housing related support meant that more tenancies were failing.

It was agreed with NBC that the service needed to be modernised and provide:

- Support to all tenants regardless of what type of property they lived in.
- Housing for people in the type of property that was appropriate for them
- A reformatting and re-start of the Sheltered Housing property review
- A service where complete welfare checks to the most vulnerable older people are provided. 3.6 In September 2014 NBC had appointed an interim project manager to review Housing For Older People as following the 2010 scrutiny report a further report had been commissioned in 2012 and completed by CIH consultancy.

A new Rehousing and Support team was created by NBC and transferred into the ALMO in January 2015.

## Older Persons Housing Strategy

Following transfer NPH redefined the sheltered housing review and developed a brief for an older persons housing strategy. NPH appointed a specialist older persons housing consultant and subsequently developed and approved an Older Persons Housing Strategy in May 2016

In September 2016 a report was presented to NBC Cabinet who approved the new strategy.

The key recommendations included:

1. The cabinet approves the rebranding of the council's 'sheltered housing' as 'older persons housing' and changed the allocations policy to define those properties as being suitable for persons 55 or over.
2. The cabinet approves the reclassification of its 'general needs' bungalows to 'older persons' housing when they become vacant and are assessed as suitable for older people.
3. The cabinet approves in principle the reclassification to general needs housing of up to 600 flats that are currently designated as 'sheltered housing' but are assessed as being unsuitable for older people and authorises NPH to consult with affected residents in three phases.

These recommendations were approved and NPH continues to implement the outcome and recommendations of the review.

NPH has most notably completed a full refurbishment of Eleonore House and completed a new build traditional 'older persons' scheme at Lakeview House providing 45 units of accommodation with community facilities.

Demand for specialist older person's accommodation continues to be significant. As of March 2019, there are 493 applicants over 55 on NBC's housing register seeking accommodation.

As part of the wider redevelopment of garage sites, NPH is delivering a number of new build fully adapted bungalows; such as three at Nene Drive (Kings Heath) which are located and will be fully integrated into the sheltered housing scheme in that location. There are also a number of other wheelchair accessible bungalows and apartments in NPH's development pipeline.

NPH are also delighted to record that the Support Service has recently received accreditation. The NPH Housing Support Team were assessed for the level and quality of service that they provide. The assessment and accreditation come in 3 levels: Developing, Achieving and Outstanding.

The team have been awarded "Outstanding". They are the only team across the whole of Northamptonshire to be awarded this level. The accreditors could not speak any higher of the service. They reported that they were "blown away by the passion the staff have", and the response from tenants interviewed that "they honestly believed that without the officers being in support they would not be here today due to suicide".

- 4.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
- 4.1.1 In reviewing the evidence received regarding the impact of the Scrutiny Reviews since 2006, it was concluded that they had all made a positive review, some examples as detailed below:
- 4.1.2 The Working Group was pleased to note that the Scrutiny review around Community Centres had been shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a video was produced. The Working Group noted that the judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level. This was felt to be an example of good Scrutiny at Northampton.
- 4.1.3 Regarding the Planning Scrutiny Review, the Working Group queried whether Parish Councillors could also automatically have speaking rights; often when they register, it is too late and the speaker list for the planning application is full. Parish Councils are statutory consultees and their views are given due consideration and by permitting Parish Councillors to have automatic speaking rights could extend the length of Planning Committee meetings. It was emphasised that the general impact of the planning report (2005/06) had been good.
- 4.1.4 In reviewing the impact of the Street Scene Scrutiny Review, the Working Group felt that there was a need to educate residents regarding recycling. It was realised that that some of the recommendations had been superseded by Law. However that the general impact of this report was good.
- 4.1.5 It was welcomed that the majority of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Report – Community had been implemented and made a real difference.
- 4.1.6 The Working Group, in reviewing the progress on the accepted recommendations contained within the Hate Crime Reporting Scrutiny report was pleased to note that the Authority won, in 2016, a national award for its work on hate crime. The Working Group agreed that it would be useful if the Community Forums could undertake any work around hate crime towards rough sleepers and perhaps lobby Government. It further suggested that it would be useful for Parish Councils to be briefed on hate crime awareness.
- 4.1.7 In reviewing the progress made on the accepted recommendations contained with the Scrutiny report – Keep Northampton Tidy, it was noted that praise from the public had been received regarding the work of Veolia. There is a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of the town and the town has been awarded Purple Flag, it lasts for one year and an application has to be submitted annually.
- 4.1.8 Evidence received highlighted that this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) at is good at NBC and works very well. In any new

Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement. This information should be included O&S Annual Report 2018/2019.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 The purpose of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton
- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

The Working Group recommends to Cabinet that:

- 5.1.1 Cabinet is informed that the outcome from this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny at NBC is good and works very well. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement and the report – Management of Community Centres was shortlisted for a good Scrutiny award by the CfPS.
- 5.1.2 In any new Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny process. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority.

## **Appendices**



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### Appendix A

## O&S Evaluation of O&S Reports Working Group

### 1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

To evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews completed to date.

#### Key Lines of Enquiry

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny reviews at Northampton
- To identify areas and means for further developing Overview and Scrutiny review process at Northampton Borough Council
- To provide objectivity by identifying evidence from the questions posed in the framework
- To highlight any potential barriers to improvement

### 2. Outcomes Required

- To report on the effectiveness of Scrutiny Reviews undertaken to date and produce an Action Plan for any required improvement in the Review process.

### 3. Information Required

- Background data
- Background reports (previous Scrutiny Review reports)
- Best practice data (if applicable)
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses

### 4. Format of Information

- Background data, including:
  - Previous Scrutiny Review Reports, including:

### **2005/2006**

- [Planning](#)

### **2006/2007**

- [Public engagement and communications](#)
- [Best value review](#)
- [Tree policy](#)
- [Allotments \(water charges\)](#)
- [Street scene](#)
- [Leisure services](#)
- [Homelessness \(rough sleepers\) task and finish group](#)
- [Community safety \(evaluation of dispersal orders\)](#)

### **2007/2008**

- [Community engagement](#)
- [Voluntary sector](#)

### **2008/2009**

- [Councillor Call for Action](#)
- [Billing Waste Water Working Group](#)
- [Historic Buildings Task and Finish Group](#)
- [Contaminated Water task and finish group - phase one](#)
- [Contaminated Water task and finish group - phase two](#)
- [West Northants Development Corporation \(WNDC\) and partnership working with Northampton Borough Council \(NBC\)](#)
- [Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny](#)
- [Proposed Post Office Closures](#)
- [Customer Services](#)

### **2009/2010**

- [West Northants Emergent Joint Core Strategy](#)
- [Concessionary Fares](#)
- [More Facilities for Older Children](#)

- [Community Centres](#) This scrutiny review was shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a [video](#) was produced. The judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level.

### **2010/2011**

- [Cost of Consultants](#)
- [Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People](#)
- [Absence Management](#)
- [Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy](#)
- [Pre-Scrutiny of Environmental Services Procurement](#)
- [Leisure Trust Implementation](#)
- [Neighbourhood Model](#)
- [Lease that Northampton Borough Council has With Northampton Town Football Club, the Contractual Arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club](#)
- [Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector](#)

### **2011/2012**

- [Councillor Empowerment Fund](#)
- [Hate Crime](#)
- [Independent Living Strategy](#)

### **2012/2013**

- [Customer Services](#)
- [Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny \(2012\)](#)
- [Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety](#)

### **2013/2014**

- [Retail Experience](#)
- [Section 106 Agreements and Infrastructure Requirements](#)
- [Improving the Town's Parks](#)

## 2014/2015

- [Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing \(including HMOs\)](#)
- [Impact of the Welfare Reform Act](#)
- [Interpersonal Violence](#)
- [Poverty in the Town](#)
- [Keep Northampton Tidy](#)
- [Parking](#)
- [Tree Maintenance](#)

## 2015/2016

- [Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town](#)
- [Health Check of the Local Economy](#)
- [Effectiveness of the Enforcement Policies in respect of Taxis and Private Hire](#)
- [NBC Owned Street Lighting](#)

## 2016/2017

- [Museum Trust \(pre decision scrutiny\)](#)
  - [Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
  - [Homelessness \(Pre-Decision Scrutiny\)](#)
  - [Emissions Strategy \(Action Plan\)](#)
- Monitoring Action Plans for previous Scrutiny Reviews and information regarding the number of accepted recommendations :
- Internal expert advisors:

Relevant Cabinet Members and Senior officers in respect of the success of each Scrutiny Review being evaluated

## 5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site visits (if applicable)

- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice/case studies
- Witness Evidence:-

➤ Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

## **6. Co-Options to the Review**

None.

## **7. Community Impact Screening Assessment**

- A Community Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

## **8. Evidence gathering Timetable**

June 2018 – March 2019

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| • 11 June 2018     | - Scoping meeting       |
| • 2 July           | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 17 September     | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 19 November      | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 26 February 2019 | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 26 March         | - Approval final report |

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

## **9. Responsible Officers**

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

## **10. Final report presented by:**

Completed by March 2019. Presented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

## **11. Monitoring procedure:**

Review the impact of the report after six months (December 2019/January 2020)