

# CORPORATE PLAN

2012-2015



PUTTING NORTHAMPTON  
BACK ON TRACK



NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# NORTHAMPTON STATION



# PUTTING NORTHAMPTON BACK ON TRACK

Welcome to Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2012-15. This plan sets out our priorities, explains what we want to achieve over the next three years and highlights what progress has already been made over the last year.

This plan has been developed acknowledging that the national economy remains in a period of downturn and instability and is likely to be so for the foreseeable future.

In order to mitigate the effects of the downturn, the Council is actively working with others to grow the local economy and regenerate the town with the aim of increasing the number of businesses in Northampton and bring new jobs to the area. The Government also awarded Northampton an Enterprise Zone which will help attract inward investment. The Council is now planning, along with partners, how the Zone can be created. It is vital to invest the right skills and resources in getting the Enterprise Zone off the ground so that we attract good quality businesses to invest in Northampton and bring with them jobs and other opportunities. We are also continuing to progress the delivery of other major regeneration projects that will positively shape the town's retail and cultural offer for residents and visitors.

The Council is also preparing to meet the challenges presented by changes announced nationally through housing and welfare reform proposals. We will continue to work with partners to support the most vulnerable in our communities and at the same time helping to prevent more people falling into difficulties.

Our plan will therefore focus on two themes;

**'Your Town'**, recognising the importance that investment and growth in local business and jobs will have on the long term prospects for the town and those people that choose to live and work here.

**'You'**, acknowledging the significant challenges that the current economic climate and future welfare and housing reforms will have on the lives of people impacted by the changes and the importance of the role the Council will have in supporting people through the change.

We have made significant progress over the last year in putting Northampton back on track and we will continue to deliver against our commitments.



**David Mackintosh**

Leader of Northampton Borough Council



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This information can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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# YOUR TOWN

## A town to be proud of

A successful vibrant town centre economy is an essential part of prompting growth and prosperity. Our focus is on regenerating the Town and raising its national profile. The Council recognises it cannot achieve this alone. It is actively working with others to keep the Town clean, safe, attract new investment, visitors and jobs, whilst enhancing the Town's heritage and cultural opportunities.

We recognise that our parks and open spaces and the facilities available within them contribute to our sense of wellbeing. We will work with local communities and groups, benefit from their experience and their contribution to improve our beautiful parks and open spaces across the Town. Having access to a wide variety of cultural, leisure and sport activities and events is also a key part of having a vibrant and successful Town. We will also work with partners to improve access to cultural opportunities such as our Museums, cultural events programme and through our support to the local Theatres.

As well as taking a leading role in the future development and growth of Northampton, the Council must ensure that Council Tax payer's money is spent wisely. The Council will continue to review how it is organised, to ensure it has the right skills and capacity and to identify the most effective methods of delivery. This will reduce our costs in order to prioritise spending to allow us to promote the Town's economic growth, regeneration and protect frontline services.



## Our key priorities are:

- Priority 1 - Northampton - on track  
A vibrant town
- Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods  
Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment
- Priority 3 - Celebrating our heritage and culture
- Priority 4 - Making every £ go further  
Provide Value for Money to protect local services



# Priority 1

## Northampton - on track

### A vibrant town

#### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- An economically prosperous, successful and vibrant Town
- The Town is nationally recognised as an economic hub and a place to do business
- Increased numbers of visitors
- Increased job opportunities and an improvement in the quality of jobs available
- A Borough Wide planning policy that will preserve the identity, history and heritage of the Town but that encompasses the development of the Borough as a whole;
- Delivery with partners of major town centre regeneration projects , such as the re-development of Grosvenor Greyfriars, a new bus interchange, and the re-design of the railway station
- The Town's history, heritage and culture is promoted and preserved

#### How we will do this.....

- Deliver the new Enterprise Zone to regenerate the Waterside area of the Town, by developing and introducing:
  - a) a strategy to dispose of public land
  - b) a marketing plan to attract new businesses
  - c) Local Development Orders to simplify the planning application process for new businesses
- Work to focus on reducing factors deterring people from visiting the Town, to stimulate the local economy by:-
  - Reviewing the Parking Strategy -
  - Conducting a review of parking charges
- Work with Northamptonshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to secure the delivery of the new bus interchange in 2012/13
- Work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships for Northamptonshire and the South East Midlands
- Support partners in the re-development and funding bids for Northampton's railway station
- Progress plans for Grosvenor Greyfriars Shopping Centre regeneration and secure a planning application
- Progress development plans for St Johns
- Work in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council to deliver regeneration projects within the Town Centre
- Identify ways of incorporating the Marina and the waterways into the life of the Town to exploit it to its full potential as a tourist attraction
- The independently chaired Market Square body will:-
  - oversee any proposed changes following the governance review and direction of the Market Square
  - assess Market Square events and give feedback for the future
- Actively support our sports clubs.



### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Successfully gained Enterprise Zone (EZ) status in the Waterside area of the Town. This will help to attract inward investment, new business and create new jobs for Northampton. EZ status provides Northampton with national recognition and allows us to market ourselves on the bigger stage
- The content of the Central Area Action Plan for Town Centre development has been reviewed. Agreement was reached in Spring 2011 to progress submission to examination with adoption later in 2012/13
- Successfully negotiated the return of full development control planning powers back to Northampton Borough Council from West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and provided extra resource to ensure an excellent service
- The review of the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy and the representations received has been undertaken. Housing growth targets have been revised downwards to take into account locally derived housing needs and a realistic, pragmatic approach to delivery based on infrastructure capacity. The approved submission version of the Joint Core Strategy will now be submitted to examination in autumn 2012
- Introduced reduced cost car parking when visiting the Town Centre to make it more convenient for local people to make short trips into the Town centre and £1.7m has been invested in improving the Grosvenor Greyfriars car park. Free Town Centre parking on weekends before Christmas, bank holidays and free Sunday parking for all premier car parks have been introduced. We will continue to review of parking charges focusing on reducing factors deterring people from visiting the Town
- Worked with partners to complete the new Marina and Riverside Walkway in Becket's Park to improve the connection between the Town Centre, park and waterway
- Conducted a review of the operation and future direction of the Market Square and established an independently chaired body to review the governance and direction of the Market Square so that it meets the needs of the whole Town
- Established a Business Improvement District (BID) working to create a vibrant and thriving town centre, focusing on promoting the town centre to shoppers and visitors, improving signage and in the longer term, improving the night time offer
- Substantial progress made to complete a development agreement for the redevelopment of the St John's surface car park and the 'Blueberry Diner' site. A planning application has now been submitted for the provision of new student accommodation for Northampton University and an application for the provision of a new hotel on the site, by a national hotel chain is expected
- Identified a preferred site for the new bus interchange, allocated capital funding to secure delivery, secured funding from WNDC and progressing a planning application.





# Priority 2

## Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods

### Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment

#### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- A clean Town with neighbourhoods that are tidy and well maintained
- A place where people want to visit and enjoy our parks and open spaces
- A place where visitors and residents from all communities feel safe, secure and protected with low levels of crime
- Less waste and increased recycling through education and waste reduction schemes

#### How we will do this.....

- Improve the appearance and cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and open space land across the Town by proactively removing fly-tipping, graffiti and litter and use enforcement, working towards a zero tolerance approach
- Improve standards and facilities within our parks to contribute to the achievement of green Flag status and 'Britain in Bloom' success. We will do this by working in partnership with local groups and Friends Associations, establishing local management committees for our premier parks, the development of local 'park plans', improving public conveniences and ensuring our trees are well maintained. We will also work in partnership with community groups to provide community events in our parks all year round and deliver high quality holiday sports and play programmes for young people
- Review and rationalise the land currently used for allotments seeking new sites, disposal of sites, investment in existing sites and provision in future developments through a review of the Allotment Strategy
- Deliver the Community Safety Strategy action plan to improve safety across the Town, in particular:
  - Work in partnership to deliver a programme of projects throughout the year to tackle local priority issues; alcohol related violent crime, anti-social behaviour and serious acquisitive crime
  - Review the Council's approach to licensing to ensure that it supports the Council's aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and making the Town centre safer
- Improve the mechanisms available for local people to report incidents of Hate Crime and support individuals to feel confident that the Council will act appropriately on the information provided
- Actively work with Northamptonshire Probation Trust and local communities to utilise the Community Payback Scheme
- Reduce waste and increase recycling and focus on fly posting and fly tipping removal and enforcement.







### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Entered into an innovative environmental services contract in partnership with the private sector and Daventry District Council, that will improve the level of cleanliness and maintenance of the Town, as well as saving council taxpayers money
- Significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill and made a step change in our recycling performance
- Established Northampton Borough Council as a recycling exemplar by implementing an extensive recycle service which provides for the fortnightly collection of green waste and the weekly collection of paper, card and glass
- Further enhanced the weekly recycle collection service with the addition of kitchen food waste and textiles collections
- Helped Northampton to become greener Town by reinstating fortnightly green waste collections and introducing weekly kitchen food waste collections to increase recycling and reduce the waste going into landfill
- Carried out targeted campaigns to address increasing incidents of fly posting across the town
- Recruited three Park Rangers in 2011-12 to work with local communities, the Police and other agencies to ensure our parks are enjoyable spaces for all
- Worked with Partners to make Northampton safer by delivering a programme of projects throughout the year to address crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of crime
- Adopted a byelaw for Good Rule and Government to tackle low level issues of anti-social behaviour such as people urinating in the street and skateboarders skating in prohibited areas. Council Public Protection Officers, Police officers and Police Community Support Officers have now been authorised to enforce these byelaws and to date, 35 warning letters have been issued
- Won the 'Gold' award for the East Midlands 'Britain in Bloom' working with community groups, partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District to improve the appearance of the Town
- Introduced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) zones where new HMOs are subject to planning permission
- Introduced fully accredited Neighbourhood Wardens and reviewed our approach on how we discuss and deliver services within our neighbourhoods.



# Priority 3

## Celebrating our heritage and culture

### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Increased tourism
- Promotion, protection and improvement of our heritage and other attractions
- Delapre Abbey restored and its future secured
- Delivery of events to celebrate and enjoy the Town's heritage and culture
- Celebration of national events in 2012 through a varied cultural programme

### How we will do this.....

- Work to promote tourism to increase the economic prosperity of the Town through the delivery of a varied programme of events
- Continue to support and promote Delapre Abbey and Delapre Park as part of wider heritage strategy and develop the funding bid for Stage 2, to be submitted for consideration by the Heritage Lottery Fund by October 2013
- Reinstate the historic walkways of the Town in emerging town centre regeneration plans
- Explore the creation of a 'Cultural Trust'
- Seek innovative ways to bringing the Town's cultural museum offer to a wider audience with a broader exhibition programme and to raise the regional profile
- Continue to seek funding opportunities to improve the offer at Abington Museum
- Work constructively with the management of the Royal & Derngate theatres to safeguard the work they undertake and enhance their vital contribution to wider cultural life of Northampton
- Provide continued support to the Arts Collective in their new home
- Celebrate London Olympics and The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 with a programme of events.

### What we have already done in 20011/12:

- Successfully bid for £250,000 Stage 1 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Delapre Abbey, re-established the Delapre Trust and allocated funding to support the project
- Invested £280k to upgrade the Central Northampton Museum and gallery facilities as part of an on-going improvement project to provide a quality facility
- Completed restoration of water gardens at Delapre Abbey and commenced a programme of structural repairs and minor restorations
- Designated a Boot and Shoe Conservation Area and Billing Road Conservation Area to protect the Town's buildings and heritage environment
- Worked together with Northamptonshire County Council to provide new premises for the Northampton Arts Collective and entered into a three year funding agreement to provide ongoing support
- Continued to work towards achieving national status for the Shoe Collection to improve Northampton's museum offer
- Reinvigorated the museum service through the launch of an exciting new brand and an extensive physical refurbishment to provide improved customer access, a better visitor experience and a higher quality cultural offer.



# Priority 4

## Making every £ go further

### Provide Value for Money to protect local services

#### The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Public money used to maximum benefit
- Cost savings achieved through the use of shared services, outsourcing opportunities and reduction in the use of consultants
- Delivery of value for money services in terms of service delivery and use of energy
- A continued freeze on Council Tax (where possible)
- A modern diverse workforce

#### How we will do this.....

- Continue to review Council services to identify the most efficient and effective methods of delivery and identify shared services and outsourcing opportunities to make savings and further improve services
- Continue to reduce the use of consultants to ensure that skills of existing staff are maximised and resources are targeted towards areas most in need
- Further reduce the Council's carbon footprint and energy costs by identifying and implementing energy saving initiatives and purchasing energy wisely. We will also continue to promote sustainable energy initiatives across the wider community
- Continue to freeze Council Tax if possible and lobby central Government to get the best for the Council in terms of funding.

#### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Frozen Councillor allowances for four years
- Delivered a number of shared services including; an innovative joint environmental services contract in partnership with Enterprise Managed Services LTD and Daventry District Council, delivering year on year savings for the 7 years of the contract, saving local taxpayers' money. Implemented a pilot to prepare for a full shared service with East Northamptonshire Council and delivered a chargeable Fraud Service for Daventry District Council
- Introduced a new Social Enterprise by transferring our sports, play and leisure facilities into a Trust, which saves local taxpayers' money and improves the quality and variety of services on offer
- Reduced the number of senior managers and introduced a Consultants Register
- Frozen the rate of Council Tax
- Reduced costs by selling one of our most energy inefficient buildings and remodeled remaining buildings to accommodate our staff. We minimised our energy usage and reduced our carbon footprint by investment in new technology and made improvements to our buildings through draft proofing, loft insulation and other initiatives
- Achieved a ranking of 354 out of more than 1,300 organisations in the UK for the work done to successfully cut our carbon emissions.







# YOU

## How your Council will support and empower you and your community

In order to have a successful vibrant town, Northampton needs to have the right number and types of homes, across both the private and public sectors, which address the needs of local people. The quality of these homes is also an important factor in determining how people feel about where they live, their sense of pride in their neighbourhoods and the Town overall.

Being able to stay in your home, when you want to, is also important to personal wellbeing and the Council will support people with advice and guidance to make the right choices for them and support vulnerable people to be able to live independently, when they want to.

Homelessness is increasing due to economic climate. We need to manage the increasing demand, prevent homelessness, where ever possible and support people in housing crisis by working in partnership with other key agencies. The Council is also proactively working to anticipate the impact of emerging central government Social Housing Reform on local people.

The Council recognises the important work undertaken by voluntary and community groups across Northampton and how this work supports the Government's aspirations to build a Big Society, where people can play an active role in their neighbourhoods and communities. We will continue to work with voluntary and community groups to build capacity and encourage wider community management of our Community Centres. We will also continue to develop our approach to neighbourhood management to ensure we provide support to frontline councillors in their community leadership role.

We provide services to ensure that the community has access to a variety of leisure and sport facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and a sense of wellbeing. The Council will continue to improve such facilities and opportunities, by supporting the Northampton Leisure Trust and improving facilities and opportunities to be physically active, across the Town.

Delivering high quality, cost effective services in a way that local people want them is a key focus for the Council. We are committed to delivering excellent customer service, treating our customers fairly and listening to them to develop and improve services and put things right when our standards have not been met.

### Our key priorities are:

- Priority 5 - Better homes for the future  
Helping you to have a home
- Priority 6 - Creating empowered communities
- Priority 7- Promoting health and well-being
- Priority 8 - Responding to your needs



# Priority 5

## Better homes for the future

### Helping you to have a home

#### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

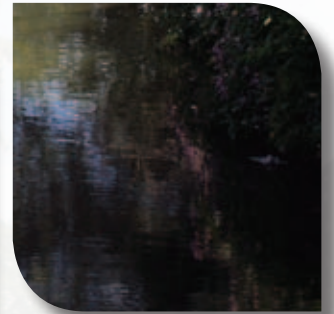
- People provided with timely advice and information to enable them to make informed choices
- Local housing needs provided for
- The Decent Homes standard met
- Vulnerable people supported with their housing needs
- Future developments informed by the views of all local people

#### How we will do this.....

- Respond to the emerging Social Housing Reform agenda by reviewing housing policies and writing and implementing the Tenancy Strategy
- Understand the impact of Welfare Reform plans on housing provision regarding universal credit payments and new housing occupation rules and review policies to reflect necessary changes
- Consider changes to legislation and look at options for a large scale stock transfer, including consultation with tenants
- Deliver a Decent Homes programme to improve more Council tenanted properties
- Undertake a review of sheltered housing and identify a solution to the changes to sheltered housing
- Develop an Independent Living Strategy for Older People
- Continue to work with partners to reduce causes of homelessness and support the Homeless Forum, Oasis House and other organisations tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Town
- Secure an ongoing supply of new homes through planning policy to meet local housing needs
- Continue to support the work of the Countywide Traveller Unit
- Introduce a register of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) inspected within Northampton
- Consult on any changes that may affect local residents' homes or communities on any future developments.







### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Achieved ISO9001 quality standard for our Housing Solutions Service in October 2011
- Selected as one of only nine authorities to receive funding to run a social mobility pilot project, supporting people to move out of social housing into private rented accommodation where their circumstances allow, and to assist those living in health institutions to live independently and move into social housing
- Commenced development of a Tenancy Strategy to respond to Social Housing Reform agenda. The strategy has included a review of Council housing policy on allocations, under occupations and who can go on the housing register. This includes supporting members of the Armed Forces (via our local connection criteria)
- Obtained £300,000 of government funding to run a 'No Second Night Out' pilot project to eliminate rough Sleeping in the Town
- Implemented a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme enabling people to move within the social housing market between Daventry and Northampton
- Successfully bid for government money to improve the quality of Council homes
- Commenced a review of Sheltered Housing and Call Care in order to identify a solution to the changes to sheltered housing wardens
- Received a 'Good Communications Award' in 2011 for our web site and Young Voices work to reduce youth homelessness
- Completed a business plan for the reform of the Housing Revenue Account to enable us to self finance and manage our Council homes
- Implemented de-pooling of rent and service charges following consultation with Council tenants



# Priority 6

## Creating empowered communities

### The outcomes we want to achieve:

- Empowered local communities with a greater capacity to become involved in community life
- Increased capacity of our partners in the voluntary sector to better support communities
- Community managed community centres

### How we will do this.....

- Encourage individuals, communities and groups to get involved and contribute to activities within their local neighbourhoods in order to promote integration and cohesion within communities and foster a sense of pride across the Town
- Work with others to support and develop the capacity of the voluntary sector for the benefit of NBC and local people
- Support councillors in their community leadership role by continuing to improve our neighbourhood management approach by:-
  - developing and delivering a partnership action plan for each ward within the Borough-
  - maintaining a rolling programme of consultation with residents in all parts of the borough-
  - project managing key initiatives to meet local needs-
- securing the expansion of the Change of Scene project to priority areas across the Borough
- Progress the review of Community Governance arrangements in order to support those areas wishing to establish new Parish Councils
- Support localism plans for neighbourhood planning to increase community involvement in the planning process
- Develop a Referendum Plan following the end of the review so that those areas that wish to be parished can hold a referendum vote on the same basis as Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- Adopt an open door policy to allow our parish Councils, resident associations, community groups and other organisations to take over the management and running of community centres still within the council's full or partial control, where they have the capacity

### What we have already done in 20011/12:

- Transferred the running of fifteen out of twenty one Community Centres over to local community and voluntary organisations to run
- Developed an approach to neighbourhood working that supports Councillors in their leadership role to better understand local priorities and deliver against them
- Agreed to introduce a Councillor Empowerment Fund, (subject to consultation results and budget decision)
- Work with partners to support people to take up volunteering through the implementation of a County-wide recruitment portal
- Established a borough wide 'Friends' network to share best practice amongst our parks and open spaces volunteers
- Obtained 'Front Runner' status from the Government for Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.



# Priority 7

## Promoting health and well-being

### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Work with the new local 'Health & Well-being' Board to improve the health of local people
- Promote the health and well-being of residents through continued support of leisure and sporting opportunities in local clubs and the Leisure Trust
- Improved public health

### How we will do this.....

- Respond to the emerging Health & Wellbeing Board strategy
- Work with the new GP consortia and develop locality plans to influence spend to deliver local priorities
- Actively support our sports clubs
- Plan and complete the development of a skate board park on Midsummer Meadow
- Support the Leisure Trust to deliver healthy living and Children and Young People outcomes and widen participation in leisure activities across all sections of the community
- Work with businesses and individuals to promote responsible drinking
- Work to influence our partners to improve air quality and meet Government minimum targets
- Implement the Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Work with external energy providers to implement the Community Energy Savings Programme to improve energy efficiency standards and reduce fuel bills in some of the Borough's most vulnerable communities

### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Entered into an innovative social enterprise by transferring our sports, play and leisure services into a Trust in order to improve services and access to facilities locally, at a price that people can afford as well as protecting services for the future
- Installed gym equipment in some of our parks and open spaces that is suitable for all ages and abilities to enjoy a free workout outdoors
- Delivered the 'Mend' project on behalf of the NHS, through the Northampton Leisure Trust. MEND is a healthy lifestyle programme designed for children 7-13 yrs and 2-4 yrs who are above a healthy weight. Parents and carers join their children in each session to learn about how to choose healthier foods, portion sizes and how to spend more time about play and being active
- Launched a Junior Direct Debit gym membership scheme as an initiative to ease cash flow issues for parents and also to grow the business, retain customers and generate higher levels of income for the new Northampton Leisure Trust
- Organised the UK's first dedicated family friendly 3km night run in Northampton as part of last year's Cultural Olympiad Igniting Ambition Festival, in the lead up to London 2012
- Worked with a number of partners to deliver a Disability Sports Open Day at Danes Camp Leisure Centre in February 2012 celebrating 200 days to the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games.



# Priority 8

## Responding to your needs

### The long-term outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Appropriate support provided to those in most need
- All services are fair, accessible and responsive to individual needs
- Residents and customers feel informed and engaged in service quality and design

### How we will do this.....

- Further develop the Gateway Service to support those in most need
- Implement the Council's Equality Strategy, "Our Approach to Equalities" and continue to work towards achieving 'Excellent' within the Equality Framework for local government
- Expansion of the range of partners providing services in the One Stop Shop and focus on channel shift through the self-service area
- Provide consistency of customer service and "one point of contact" for customers by migrating the remaining service areas into the telephone contact centre and one stop shop
- Continue to create effective dialogue with people so that they can feel involved in the decision making process and ensure developing policy and service delivery takes into account different needs
- Support individuals affected by Social Welfare and Housing Reforms through effective communications of the changes and impacts upon them.

### What we have already done in 2011/12:

- Increased the range of partner services available in the One Stop Shop to include a Pharmacist service, Access to Employment service and charities providing support to vulnerable young mothers and Children leaving care
- Implemented the shared contact centre telephony and workforce management systems with Northamptonshire County Council enabling overflow of calls during peak periods
- Re-launched a jointly managed residents panel with Northamptonshire County Council supporting both organisations to consult and listen to the views of local people
- Achieved the 'Louder Than Words' accreditation for ensuring that our website and letters relating to our Housing Solutions service are accessible to deaf people and the Albert Kennedy Trust accreditation for ensuring that our Housing Solutions working practices are not homophobic
- Introduced a single 0300 telephone number to get through to all of the borough council's services, making it easier to remember and cheaper to call for many of our customers
- Hosted a disability multi sports club at Danes Camp Leisure Centre through the Northampton Leisure Trust to improve access to sport
- Developed and refurbished a shared One Stop Shop service with Northamptonshire County Council, Police, Fire and voluntary sector partners to improve customer access to services
- Introduced an appointment system, which includes emergency appointments for those in urgent need
- Achieved re-accreditation of the Cabinet Office 'Customer Service Excellence Award' for the services within the Finance and Support Directorate and our Housing Solutions Service.







