

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of West Northamptonshire Council

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| Report Title | Northampton City Status Bid |
| Report Author | <p>Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive Rebecca.Peck@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Alexandra Paulley, National Management Trainee Alexandra.paulley@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Christopher Normington, National Management Trainee Christopher.normington@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> |

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

| | | |
|--|----------------|------------|
| Monitoring Officer | Cath Whitehead | 24/11/2021 |
| Chief Finance Officer/S.151 | Martin Henry | 24/11/2021 |
| Communications Lead/Head of Communications | Rebecca Peck | 24/11/2021 |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Northampton City Status: Benefits for West Northamptonshire

Appendix B - (To follow) Northampton City Status Bid

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To reach a decision on applying for city status for Northampton as part of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations there is an opportunity for towns to apply for city status. The deadline for applications is 8 December 2021 and the winners are expected to be announced in early 2022.
- 2.2 A successful City Status bid for Northampton will benefit the whole of West Northamptonshire including our many thriving villages and towns such as Brackley, Daventry and Towcester. City status would bring:
- Raised National and International Profile
 - Economic benefits
 - Opportunities to celebrate our History & Culture
 - Community Pride
- 2.3 Public engagement and consultation activity is taking place throughout November and the response from our communities has been overwhelmingly positive, including media coverage from the [Northampton Chronicle & Echo](#) and [BBC](#). We have had positive engagement through social media including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok with content reaching over 17,000 people, and number of accounts engaged has increased by over 14,000%. To enable all consultation feedback to be included in our bid, the final submission will be shared with council by 1 December.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that councillors endorse the bid for Northampton City Status.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- If successful in the Civic Honours Competition, West Northamptonshire will gain from the many benefits of attaining city status shown within Appendix 1.
- City status attracts inward investment, new businesses and skilled employees. Post-Diamond Jubilee (2012), Perth had £30 million invested into the cultural sector alone.
- Achieving city status for Northampton would raise the profile of West Northants nationally and internationally with 87.5% of the newly created cities outperforming their regional counterparts with neighbouring towns and villages also benefiting.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Her Majesty the Queen celebrates 70 years as Monarch and will become the first British Monarch to reach this milestone.
- 5.2 As part of the celebrations, there is a civic honours competition which includes competitions for City status and Lord Mayor or Provost status. Any local authority within the United Kingdom, a Crown Dependency or an Overseas Territory is welcome to submit a town for the competition.
- 5.3 Northampton was last put forward for City Status as part of the Millenium Civic Honours Competition in 2000.

- 5.4 This competition last took place to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and three places were awarded City Status: Chelmsford, St Asaph and Perth.
- 5.5 For the Diamond Jubilee 26 towns applied for City Status: Bolton, Bournemouth, Chelmsford, Colchester, Coleraine, Corby, Craigavon, Croydon, Doncaster, Dorchester, Dudley, Dumfries, Gateshead, Goole, Luton, Medway, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Perth, Reading, Southend, St Asaph, St Austell, Stockport, Tower Hamlets and Wrexham.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The city status bid has been developed in house and within existing budgets and there are no financial implications directly arising from submitting the bid.
- 6.1.2 Achieving city status would bring financial and economic benefits to Northampton and the wider West Northants Area as set out in appendix one.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. Achieving city status would not change the local governance arrangements for West Northants Council or town and parish councils in the area.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. One potential risk outlined is the failure to attain city status, should the bid go ahead leading to negative perceptions and disappointment amongst residents. This risk will be mitigated through an effective communications campaign to promote the many positive aspects of Northampton that have been highlighted through our consultation and engagement activity.
- 6.3.2 The national attention drawn to Northampton, and the community support demonstrated in the report, outweighs any potential negatives arising from a failed bid.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 The council has carried out engagement and consultation across Northampton and wider West Northamptonshire. This has involved workshops with community groups and community leaders. Discussions have taken place with community leaders, charities, businesses, the sports teams, MPs, the response has been widely supportive.
- 6.4.2 Residents have shared their photos of Northampton which have been included in the bid, have taken part in videos featuring in our social media campaign and shared statements of support.
- 6.4.3 Individual interviews have taken place with residents, demonstrating their passion for Northampton and support for the bid.

6.5 Climate Impact

6.5.1 Whilst there are no direct climate impact implications arising from the proposals, city status would increase our profile nationally and internationally and increase opportunities for investment in the green economy.

6.6 Community Impact

6.6.1 City Status has the potential to provide wider opportunities to the community and attract high-skilled workers. Cities in the UK comprise 9% of the land but provide 60% of national employment. Post-2012, Chelmsford (a Diamond Jubilee winner) witnessed a 29.4 % increase in NVQ Level 4+ qualified workers from 2012-2020.

6.6.2 Celebrating the many positive attributes of Northampton and engaging with our communities to understand their ambitions and aspirations for the future encourages community pride and helps to improve perceptions.

6.7 Communications

6.7.1 Communications activity will continue following submission of our bid and following the outcome to ensure we promote the many positive aspects of Northampton that have been highlighted through our consultation and engagement activity.

7. Background Papers

Appendix A – Northampton City Status: Appraisal of Benefits for West Northamptonshire

Appendix B - (To follow) Northampton City Status Bid