
Corby City Bid!

SYNOPSIS

This report seeks cross-party Member support for a bid to seek city status for Corby during The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012.

1. Relevant Background Details

Her Majesty The Queen has agreed that a competition may be held for a grant of city status to mark Her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Any local authority in the United Kingdom which considers that its area deserves to be granted city status is welcome to enter the competition. Only one new city is expected to be chosen and it is expected that the Government will announce the results of the city status competition in early 2012.

There are a number of commonly held myths or truisms – that a city must have a cathedral or university or that it must be above a certain size. The reality is that cities come in all shapes and sizes. St David's in Wales is the smallest, based on its huge historical significance. Ely is another very small city whose historical significance completely outweighs any current significance. The most recent city designations in the UK have been Preston, Stirling, Newport, Lisburn and Newry, all granted in 2002.

Recent research by the Centre for Cities has found that small cities are among the very best when it comes to driving private sector jobs growth. Smaller cities also offer a productive climate for arts and culture to flourish because they are easy to share ideas and network in. The ten cities with the lowest percentage carbon emissions in the UK are smaller cities. All of these are attractive characteristics for Corby and complement the Council's corporate priorities.

In these and many other ways, city status is a logical next step for Corby which has, by UK standards, had an almost meteoric rate of development and growth since the mid 1930's. It was designated an Urban District in 1939, a New Town in 1950; in 1974 it was upgraded to become a Shire District and in 1992 became a Borough with the right to elect a mayor. Twenty years on, a bid for city status would be a clear sign of the Borough's unwavering ambition and aspiration.

2. Report

Corby is the country's fastest growing Borough, with an unprecedented recent track record of regeneration and growth. It has an ambition to double its population from just over 53,000 at the turn of the millennium to 100,000 by 2030 and is well on target to achieve it. In 2003, Corby published a regeneration framework, with the aim of attracting £400 million of public and £4 billion of private investment. Already over £2 billion of investment has been spent / committed.

Corby's vision for the future has been forged in its faith in high quality, contemporary architecture and urban design to deliver a dynamic town to live and work, that will sustain its revival and continue to attract the investment and population that has made it the fastest growing borough in England and Wales.

These aspirations have culminated in the Parkland Gateway project, which has radically transformed the town centre to create a vibrant new civic and community heart that provides focus and stimulus for the town's regeneration.

The results of this investment and leadership are tangible and can be seen today not only in the delivery of the Corby Cube, theatre, library and civic centre, but also the provision of a new international 50 metre sized swimming pool, the development of a new shopping centre, improvement works to the town's public realm, construction of new academies and enterprise centres and the creation of a new station that now links Corby to London in just over an hour. This move has been instrumental in enabling Corby to continue to attract further growth and the implementation of a tongue-in-cheek marketing campaign describing it as 'North Londonshire,' exemplifying the aspirations of the Borough.

With further projects such as a cinema, new healthcare facilities and additional housing regeneration, Corby and its people can be justifiably proud of their stewardship of their fast growing town, which would be fully deserving of the award of city status.

3. Options to be considered (if any)

- i. The Committee decides not to undertake any activity associated with the civic honours competitions in 2011/12 and all work currently undertaken on this project can be re-used as opportunities arise.
- ii. The Committee agrees to the composition of an application for city status under the "More in Corby" branding, whereby the focus of the application would be "You get "More" in Corby", for example "You get more..."
 - space to grow
 - housing choice
 - sport and leisure opportunities
 - state of the art educational facilities...
- iii. The Committee agrees to the composition of an application for city status under a more light-hearted "Corblimey! – who'd have believed it?" branding with an emphasis on creating publicity for Corby, for example "Who'd have believed Corby would..."
 - be the fastest growing place in the Country
 - have a crater on Mars named after it
 - be the real home of Robin Hood
 - have the largest indoor skatepark in Europe...

4. Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities

Whilst Corby achieving city status is not critical to achieving our identified corporate priorities, it will impact favourably on our national and international profile, with both direct and indirect benefits to Regeneration and Growth, Economic Development, Jobs and Skills, Safer, Stronger Communities and Health and Well-being objectives and priorities.

Financial

There are limited financial implications associated with undertaking this project; in fact, the Government has stated it does not want local authorities to incur any undue expense entering the competition.

Whilst the granting of city status is honorific and does not confer any extra powers, functions or funding, there are a number of potential considerations to take account of in the event we are successful which may have financial implications, such as the cost associated with re-branding the Council. This may have an impact on partners, who

would also have to re-brand, for example Land Securities re-branding the Town Centre, North Northants Development Company advertising etc.

In reality most of the cost could be absorbed by initiating changes only when absolutely necessary, for example, when renewing stationery or signage.

Legal

There are no direct implications arising from this proposal either in terms of application or in change of status should the Council be successful. Numerous district councils like Corby have historically held or more recently received city status and remain district councils and so governance arrangements for Corby would not automatically change as a direct result of achieving city status, although the Borough charter may be revised.

In light of the new local authority code on publicity, the Council must be very careful in terms of promoting its application directly as this may lead to the code being breached.

Performance Information / Value for Money

The publicity boost and increased profile generated from being granted city status would potentially bring benefits into the borough through avenues such as those identified below.

- National and International recognition
- The area may be more attractive for large International businesses looking for UK headquarters or public services relocating out of London
- Potential for increased investment in facilities and infrastructure
- Potential for increase in the number of jobs in the area
- Make investment in social venues seem more attractive and viable
- Potential for increased opportunities for development in Art, Music, Sport and Culture in the area

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights issues for consideration regarding the application and subsequent awarding of city status.

Equalities

As city status is solely honorific and will not affect the way in which we deliver our services to the community, there are no negative equality impacts identified.

An essential aspect of the application is to demonstrate our ability to welcome communities, this gives Corby Borough Council the opportunity to celebrate the growing diverse communities within the borough and showcase our ability to respond positively to a changing community and our successes within the equality agenda.

The regeneration of the town, including new facilities, housing and infrastructure have all promoted the equality of opportunity for people with disabilities which also demonstrates the council's community focus.

Winning the bid can only build on the positive aspirations already growing within the young people of Corby and with the potential of attracting more regeneration and large international business this will have a positive impact on the socio-economic future of the borough and its young people.

Sustainability

The prestige of city status may make Corby more attractive to investment, through energy company obligations, for example, such as the Carbon Emissions Reduction

Target, proving the potential for a better deal on more 'run of the mill' funding opportunities.

5. Conclusion

Although it may be considered a relatively early stage in Corby's development to be seeking city status, successful application will help ensure that Corby's growth and momentum continues apace, which is beneficial for the entire sub-region and also nationally, particularly in terms of housing provision. Granting Corby city status will increase the marketability of its new housing which will reduce associated housing pressures in London and the South East.

6. Recommendation

The Committee:-

- i. Discusses and approves the proposal to submit a bid for city status for Corby borough; and
- ii. Agrees which of the proposed thematic options to pursue in relation to the application.

Background Papers

Details of the Civic Honours competitions can be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport at http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/honours/7610.aspx, which includes:

- Civic Honours questions and answers
- List of current UK cities
- List of UK cities with Lord Mayors / Provosts

References

- Private Sector Cities: A new geography of Opportunity – Centre for Cities, June 2010 – Centre for Cities, Outlook – January 2009
- Bigger Thinking For Smaller Cities – Regional Cities East – September 2010

External Consultations

Subject to Committee approval, it is intended to initiate a major campaign to tap into the energy and enthusiasm of local people in support of the bid as we did in the campaign for the Railway Station and more recently the People's Millions competition for Adrenaline Alley.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Guidelines on the format and content of entries

Appendix 2: Potential information for inclusion in Corby's city status submission

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DIAMOND JUBILEE CIVIC HONOURS COMPETITIONS GUIDELINES ON THE FORMAT AND CONTENT OF ENTRIES

Her Majesty The Queen has agreed that competitions may be held for a grant of city status and a grant of Lord Mayoralty (called a Lord Provostship in Scotland) to mark Her Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

1. Any local authority (district, borough, parish/town/community or unitary council) in any part of the United Kingdom which considers that its area deserves to be granted the rare honour of city status on this very special occasion is welcome to enter the competition by the closing date of 27 May 2011.
2. Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship is an exceptional distinction conferred on the Mayoralties or Provostships of a few – usually long-established and important – cities. Her Majesty has agreed on this occasion that applications from cities of less than 15 years' standing are unlikely to succeed. Local authorities for existing cities, other than those honoured with city status for the Millennium or The Queen's Golden Jubilee, are welcome to enter the parallel competition for a Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship by the same closing date, 27 May 2011.
3. Applications may only be made by an elected local authority – normally, in respect of the entire local authority area. In recognition of the fact that the legislation underpinning local authorities is different in Scotland, however, applications may be submitted by Scottish local authorities on behalf of distinct areas within the unitary local authority boundary.
4. Although there are no specific criteria either for city status or for Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship, the Government is asking local authorities to submit their entries in a standard size and format, as described in Part 1 of the attached Annex. This is intended to help local authorities minimise the expense of entering the competitions and to provide the Government with a fair basis for comparison and assessment of the entries received. Local authorities are asked to keep their entries within the bounds of the standard size and format; the Government reserves the right to disregard entries or parts of entries that exceed these.
5. The Annex also provides suggestions (mainly in Part 2) as to information local authorities may wish to include and/or to highlight; these reflect Ministers' view that the places to be honoured for the Diamond Jubilee should be vibrant, welcoming communities with interesting histories and distinct identities. Local authorities are free to include additional or different information if they so wish but are strongly advised not to exceed the limits of the standard size and format as described in Part 1 of the Annex. Part 3 of the Annex provides answers to some possible questions on the entry process.

Answers to other frequently asked questions, along with a list of cities and a list of cities holding a Lord Mayoralty or Lord Provostship, are to be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport -

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/honours/diamondjubilee.aspx

The decisions made by Her Majesty, under the Royal prerogative and on Ministerial advice, will be final and no reasons will be given. No details can be given of the assessment process but local authorities may be assured that each entry will be considered 'in the round', on the merits of its contents rather than on the standard of presentation. Each local authority will be sent brief comments on its entry when the results of the competitions are announced in 2012.

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6. Two hard copies of each application are requested to be submitted (by post or courier) to reach the Cabinet Office by 4pm on the closing date, Friday, 27 May 2011. The address to be used is:

Constitutional Policy Branch
c/o Strategic Communications
Cabinet Office
3rd Floor
22 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH.

7. Entrants are asked to notify the Constitutional Policy team separately when their entries are dispatched, by sending an email to the following address, giving the date of dispatch of the hard copies; the civic honour applied for (i.e. city status or Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship); the name of the local authority submitting the application, and its full contact details: diamondjubilee@culture.gsi.gov.uk.
8. Acknowledgements will be sent by email when the hard copies have been received. If no acknowledgement is received within 6 working days of the closing date (or of dispatch, if earlier), please send a further email to the above address with either 'City status entry enquiry' or 'Lord Mayoralty entry enquiry' (or 'Lord Provostship entry enquiry' for entries from Scottish cities) and the name of the local authority area in the heading.

ANNEX 1 ENTRY GUIDELINES

1. FORMAT

Entrants are asked to confine their entries to the following limits:

An **introduction** comprising no more than five A4 pages of text, highlighting why the area deserves city status (or Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship, as appropriate), with particular reference to its age, distinct identity, history, traditions, famous residents, any associations with Royalty and any other particularly distinctive features.

A **profile** of the area, including statistics, to assist understanding of the area and its bid in comparison to the bids of other applicants. Information it would be helpful to include is outlined in Part 2 below. The profile should comprise no more than 20 A4 pages (including numbers, any tables and graphics).

Up to 50 **photographs** of permanent features of the area (rather than events or people), with brief captions describing what is shown. The emphasis should be on giving a representative and reasonably comprehensive impression of the area - especially the part that constitutes (for Lord Mayoralty/ Lord Provostship applicants) or would constitute (for city status applicants) 'the city centre' - rather than photographic artistry. The photographs, with their captions, should be submitted two to a page of A4 paper and may be computer-printed rather than photographic prints.

Two **maps**: an outline map (maximum A3 size) showing how the part that constitutes or would constitute 'the city centre' sits within the local authority area as a whole, together with a more detailed map of the area (maximum A2 size) showing the main tourist / leisure / entertainment sites and green spaces accessible to the public. The main transport routes serving these, with an indication of services' frequency, should either be shown on the detailed map or listed in an accompanying document (no more than two A4 pages long).

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2. PROFILE

Ministers take the view that the places to be honoured with city status and with Lord Mayoralty / Lord Provostship for Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee should have supplied convincing evidence of their ability to welcome people into their areas and to provide, promote or facilitate access to a wide variety of places, activities and events.

It would therefore be helpful if local authorities could include statistical information on the resident population of their area, breaking this down between the main towns if the area includes more than one, and on economic activity, including the number of people who work (but do not reside) in the area. Information on the numbers attending schools and other educational institutions in the area would also be helpful.

In addition, local authorities are invited to include within the profile:

- brief details of the local governance arrangements for the area, and
- an account of the range, variety and appeal of community and 'interest' groups based in the area. Where readily available, statistical information (e.g. as to membership or attendance) is welcome, but local authorities are not expected to carry out extensive research.

Examples of other matters on which any information (both qualitative and, especially, quantitative information) would be of particular interest include:

- tourist attractions and places of interest (including museums, art galleries etc)
- visitor accommodation
- public green spaces
- major events – please state if any are supported by the local authority in any way (e.g. with publicity)
- sport and leisure facilities – again, please state if any are supported by the local authority in any way (e.g. with publicity)
- local authority support (of any kind) for the voluntary sector
- shopping centres

Detailed information and statistical breakdowns – particularly statistics that indicate levels of use / popularity, such as 'footfall' at key sites, attendance at events and so forth - are welcome, if available.

Local authorities are asked to specify the sources of any data and whether the figures are actual or estimated. Where possible it would be appreciated if statistics could be provided for a 12-month period (no earlier than 2009), e.g. for 2010 or for the latest 12 months for which figures are available.

Local authorities are reminded that the profile should not exceed 20 A4 pages, including any figures, tables and graphics.

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ENTRY GUIDELINES

Q1: Can we submit our entry online instead of sending hard copies?

A1: No. Local authorities are welcome to send us an additional copy of their application by email if they wish, but the two hard copies stipulated in the guidelines are essential to the assessment process.

Q2: Can we involve the public in the compilation of our entry?

A2: Yes, by all means, so long as you do not exceed the standard size and format.

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Q3: Can we publish our entry on our website?

A3: Yes, local authorities are welcome to publish their entries if they wish to do so.

Q4: Will the Government keep our entry confidential?

A4: Not necessarily. Requests for disclosure will be considered in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If a local authority wishes any part of its application to remain confidential it is asked to flag this up with a clear indication for us to take into account in deciding whether the information should be released. Wherever possible we would then alert the local authority before releasing such information.

Q5: Can we submit a DVD / CD / video instead of photographs?

A5: No, please do not do this as it would hinder the assessment of applications.

Q6: Will we be penalised for sending computer print-outs rather than photographic prints?

A6: No; local authorities are welcome to send computer print-outs of their photographs rather than actual prints.

Q7: Can we submit our application in the form of a booklet?

A7: Yes, local authorities are welcome to do this.

Q8: We cannot afford a glossy booklet/ external publishers/ research; is it still worth our entering?

A8: Yes. The Government does not want local authorities to incur any undue expense entering the competition. It is the quality of the contents of the application, taken as a whole, that will be assessed, rather than the standards of presentation.

Q9: We do not have data on all the points suggested in Part 2; does this matter?

A9: No; please simply provide whatever you have or can readily obtain. The Government does not want local authorities to incur any undue expense by entering the competition.

Q10: Will late entries be accepted?

A10: No. If an entry is received late, evidence that it was dispatched in time to reach us by 4pm on Friday, 27 May 2011 will be requested.

CITY STATUS BID 2011/12

Early settlement in the Corby area probably began in the Bronze Age, and had developed significantly by the Iron Age, by which time the area was being farmed and exploited for its natural mineral resources. Archaeological excavations at Priors Hall carried out in anticipation of the recent housing development uncovered examples of Iron Age furnaces over 2,000 years old. When the Romans arrived they built a road linking Leicester with the Roman town at Huntingdon which passed through what is now modern Corby. One section of this road is a Scheduled Ancient Monument where it crosses Hazel Woods. Another ancient road, Jurassic Way, crosses the Roman road between Kingswood and Cottingham. These roads were probably a focus for settlement, possibly a small Roman town. The Roman villas at Little Weldon and East Stanion show that people of wealth and high status lived in the Corby area for hundreds of years. The Little Weldon main villa and stables were excavated between 1953 and 1956.

The Anglo Saxons were responsible for the names and form of many of the villages in the Borough today, with the exception of Corby, which is thought to have been given its name by a Viking king called 'Kori' who established his kingdom in the area after 865AD.

The first documented record of Corby was its entry in the Domesday Book 1086 valuing Corby village at £10 and is translated as "The king holds Corbei. There are one and a half hides. There is land for 9 ploughs. In demesne there is 1 (plough) and 7 villeins with the priest, and 3 bordars have 4 ploughs. Woodland 18 furlongs in breadth. In King Edward's time it was and is worth £10. Many things are wanting in this manor which in King Edward's time belonged to it in wood and ironworks and other matters."

William the Conqueror founded the castle at Rockingham, soon after the conquest. The current castle and house is a Grade 1 Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. At about the same time Deene Park was established to the east of the Borough by the Brudenell family, and East Carlton Park, to the west, by the Palmer family. During the Medieval period the district featured a typical feudal landscape of open fields and common land, until the Black Death which decimated the population and caused some villages, such as Kirby, East Carlton and Rockingham to be deserted.

In the Post-Medieval period one of the finest early Elizabethan mansions in the country was built at Kirby Hall by Sir Humphrey Stafford. Kirby Hall, now a ruin, is a Grade 1 Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Part of the estate lies within the parish of Gretton.

Henry III granted Corby Village the right to hold two annual fairs and markets in 1226, the first documented occurrence of which was in 1862, Queen Elizabeth I issued Corby with the Royal Charter in 1575, which was later ratified by Charles II in 1670 after the restoration of the monarchy.

Sir Christopher Hatton a major political figure, purchased the newly built and very grand Kirby Hall near Corby, with the intention of entertaining royalty in one of England's finest Tudor Houses. He became a Gentleman of the Privy Council in 1577 and finally Lord Chancellor in 1587; Hatton was also involved with the trial of Mary Queen of Scots who was imprisoned at nearby Fotheringhay Castle.

In 1576 Queen Elizabeth gave the manor of Corby to Sir Christopher Hatton, one of her favourite courtiers. Either Christopher 1st Baron Hatton or his son, Christopher Hatton, gave Corby Manor to the Brudenell family through an exchange of land with Thomas Brudenell in 1670. The Brudenell's, who had gained the Earldom of Cardigan in a ceremony at Carisbrooke Castle in 1648, have a prominent family member in the seventh Earl of Cardigan

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who was involved in the attack known as the charge of the Light Brigade in October 1854 during the Crimean War. The charge was initially viewed as a disaster and an example of incompetent leadership but over the years it took on the heroic status of men making a stand against all the odds. The Brudenell's remained owners of the manor until the last of the land was sold to Corby Development Corporation after 1950.

Corby St John the Baptist Church dates back to the thirteenth Century with the South aisle dating from c. 1200, the tower c. 1300 and the chancel early 1400's all of high quality. By the early twentieth century the church required attention to some areas which were suffering from years of neglect. Fortunately the rector, Thomas Clarke, and his wife, Jessie Clarke (a Cadbury family heiress), were able to contribute £2,500 toward the £4,400 cost of restoration work in 1901, which saw the addition of a north aisle, new oak roof for the Chancel and tiled mosaic flooring. It is believed one of the new stained glass windows came from the workshop of William Morris and Company, a renowned Arts and Crafts company. With the church, came the residence of the Rectory described in 1849 as a neat substantial building.

Corby's oldest residential building dates back to 1609. Corby Manor House was originally partitioned, one part was a home with garage business and the other part was an outlet of Barclays bank, this building is now the site of Corby's new Heritage Centre, which is due to open in 2011 after extensive refurbishment which includes re-thatching and re-plastering.

With the coming of the railway in 1879, employment returned to the area in the form of ironstone mining, operated by the Lloyds Ironstone Company. The first iron was made at Corby blast furnaces in 1910. Over the next five decades the steelworks were to develop dramatically until their nationalisation in 1967. During the D-Day landings and invasion of Europe, tugs would tow huge conundrums which held mile after mile of hollow pipe produced at Corby Steelworks for the purpose of pipe laying in the English Channel which became the fuel line to the Allied forces known as the PLUTO project (Pipe Line Under The Ocean). The steelworks continued to operate as the British Steel Corporation until 1980. At one point, Stewarts and Lloyds steelworks at Corby was the largest combined steel making plant in Europe. Photographs from this time tell the story that iron and steelmaking took place around Corby at various times over a period of two millennia.

Sundew, a W1400 Drag Line excavator named, as was tradition, after the Grand National Winner of the year of its manufacture, walked thirteen miles from its home in a quarry owned by Stewarts and Lloyds at Exton Park, Rutland to its new home at Harringworth Quarry to the north of Corby. An amazing feat by a machine that weighed in Excess of 1,400 tons and propelled itself by lifting and dragging its huge bulk across the earth, Sundew also built its own roads and bridges to assist in crossing existing roads and rivers without causing damage.

Corby has a history of migration; waves of migrant workers have come to Corby since the founding of the Steel Works. During the 1930's, Stuarts and Lloyds Limited offered employment and housing to their existing employees in Lanarkshire, Scotland, if they relocated to Corby to work in the newly built steelworks. There is a very distinctive Scottish and Irish enclave that upholds Scottish and Irish traditions and culture in Corby today; the most obvious of these is the Highland Gathering, which attracted a record 6,000 people to the show in 2009. Pin and Candle Auctions were also associated with the steel workers. This was a way of limiting bidding at an auction by putting a pin in a candle. When it burned down and the pin fell out, bidding stopped. More recently, migrants from the Balkans, Portugal and Central and Eastern Europe have brought their cultures and religions to the town.

Corby's residents are community spirited and there are a number of neighbourhood and community associations, eleven of which are supported by the local Borough Council. In return for signing up to the Council's service level agreement, they are provided with £500 to

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help with costs, publicity and events. Of the eleven associations supported by the Borough Council, average attendance for the year is approximately 12 delegates per meeting and together they represent over 16,500 households.

At the time Stuarts and Lloyds came to Corby, large areas of the Borough were developed as low-cost housing for the steelworkers; of particular note is the Lloyds Estate, an early example of planned social housing which is now a Conservation Area.

During the construction of the iron steel and tube works in Corby, the directors realised the need for a massive house building programme to accommodate future employees. The company purchased 102 acre estates at East Carlton with a view to developing it for housing senior staff. Following the conversion of the hall and acquisition of the park, Stuarts and Lloyds built fifty-nine houses during 1934 and 1935, making up East Carlton as it is known today.

It is thought that Carlton was first occupied by the Danes; it is referred to in the Domesday Book of 1087 as Carlintone. The Parish is situated on the edge of The Welland Valley, a glacial valley which covers 665 hectares and occupies a long strip of land south of the River Welland which forms part of its North Boundary.

A number of families owned land and estates throughout the centuries, including the Hotot's, De Kirkeby's and the Palmer's. The village of East Carlton is situated within the parkland of Carlton Hall and until 1660, the settlement of Carlton was divided into two manors, East Hall and West Hall. East Hall is thought to have stood where the present hall stands. There is now no trace of the West Hall, and it is presumed that the stone was used as building material for later structures. In 1776, Sir John Palmer (fifth Baronet) commissioned John Johnson, a Leicester Architect, to design a new hall which still stands today. The house was built on the foundations of the previous hall and was enlarged by Sir John Henry Palmer (seventh Baronet) in 1817. The hall was leased to several notable tenants until the early 20th Century, when Stuarts and Lloyds purchased the Hall and the park from Sir Geoffrey Palmer at a price of £5,000. By 1936, the Hall had been converted into a hostel for unmarried bachelor staff. East Carlton Country Park is 100 acres of parkland with nature trails, overlooking the Welland Valley; with splendid views across the Valley, the park offers country walks through mature woodland and grasslands.

The picturesque Welland Valley is also home to the village of Rockingham, situated in the English Midlands, on the border of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. The parish of Rockingham contains 890 acres, and the population has varied marginally from 213 people in 1801, 296 people in 1831 and 291 people in 1841. Presently, the number of inhabitants is around 110. Considering the fact that the village has undergone little physical change over the past century, this amply emphasizes the drift from the countryside during this period.

Even though there has been a settlement at Rockingham in ancient, Roman and Saxon, times, the first real village probably housed labourers employed by the Crown to build and maintain the Norman Castle. This collection of huts was situated below the entrance towers. As the Castle grew in importance, so did the village; being designated a Borough in the twelfth Century and a "Towne" by Royal Charter of Elizabeth I.

Much of the Tudor village was destroyed during the Civil War and the village was later reconstructed out of stone on the hill below the Castle. This is essentially the village as it stands today, the earliest house being dated as built in 1670. Rockingham was a former market town, but the market has long since fallen into disuse, as has the fair, which for a long time was held on 25 September. A portion of the old market cross is still standing, and is now surmounted by a memorial to the Watson family who still live in the Castle. This is located just above the one inn in the village, "The Sondes Arms", which gets its name from the Lords

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Sondes, who succeeded the Earls and Lords Rockingham to the manor. There was also in recent years another inn, namely "The Three Horse Shoes", the landlord of which also carried on the trade of blacksmith. The dwelling now provides a much needed amenity as a guesthouse. The village was modernised by Richard Watson in the 19th century, when several new houses were built and the older cottages enlarged. Further improvements were carried out in the 1950's. Up until the late 1990's, the village had one old established store, which until recent years was also the Post Office. As a Post Office it transacted every kind of business and at one time housed a manual telephone exchange; a far cry from the present automatic STD exchange. During the greater part of the 19th Century, the Post Office was responsible for mail deliveries to neighbouring villages.

The Castle, Park and Gardens at Rockingham are an award winning visitor attraction that features a castle set in formal gardens and pleasure grounds dating to the 17th century. Its Great Park stretches over 300 acres of spectacular countryside. The castle has been home to a number of famous guests; before he found fame, Charles Dickens used to stay at Rockingham Castle and it is alleged that whilst there he conceived the idea for his novel "Bleak House". It is also known that a Robyn Hode (Hood) was imprisoned at the Castle in 1356 for poaching. William of Drayton was a local poacher who wore green clothes and a hood.

As well as its Castle, Rockingham was for centuries also famous for its forest which covered much of what is now Northamptonshire and was once one of the largest and richest in the Kingdom. Vast inroads have been made into the forest since those days, but even so, large portions still remain, two first class examples being on the outskirts of Wakerley (eight miles northeast of Corby) and between Duddington and Wansford. Kings Wood in the centre of Corby was formally part of Rockingham Forest, which is the first Local Nature Reserve in the county and has 250 species of plants recorded in the ancient woodland. The forest is also home to local legends, one of which tells of money and jewellery stolen from Queen Mary in 1576, which was buried by thieves in Rockingham Forest near Geddington. It has never been recorded as recovered, and may still be there today.

Other woodland areas of significance in Corby include Geddington Chase and Weldon Park, which are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In 2001 Weldon Park was heavily replanted with the intention that it should become more attractive for wildlife. Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods, in the heart of Corby town, are a mixture of ancient, semi-natural and replanted woodland. Close to the town centre, the woods feature a boating lake which boasts a healthy population of fish and waterfowl and Great Oakley nature reserve, which is one of the best surviving fragments of the medieval ridge and furrow field system.

In 1939 Corby was accorded the status of an Urban District Council, and during the Local Government reorganisation of 1974 it became a District Council. In March 1993 Corby was granted Borough status. Following the Local Government Act 2000, Corby decided to retain the traditional committee-style system rather than move to one with an Executive structure. A streamlined committee-style system was introduced in September 2001. The last local government elections were conducted in May 2007. The current political composition of the Borough Council is 16 Labour Group, 8 Conservative Group and 5 Liberal Democrat Group. Corby Borough Council and its community have in more recent times shown and continues to show, throughout the current economic climate, a strong resiliency, undergoing a significant period of regeneration and growth and currently boasts some of the best sporting facilities in the region and a range of cultural assets dating back to Norman times. As a result of investment since the millennium, sports facilities include:

- Europe's fastest motor racing track at Rockingham Motor Speedway, capable of averaging speeds of 215.397 miles per hour

Appendix 2

- The East Midlands' only 50 metre international swimming pool, opened in 2009. Former world record holder, at which Olympic star Marc Foster holds the short course record.
- Europe's largest indoor skatepark at Adrenaline Alley, next to the Priors Hall Park Urban Housing extension
- Two Olympic training camp facilities at the Rockingham Triangle Athletics Stadium and the Corby East Midlands International Pool

Rockingham Triangle is also the home of Corby Town Football Club, *the Steelmen*, for whom Professional Footballer Eddie McGoldrick (born in London on 30th April 1965) started his playing career. McGoldrick also played for Northampton, Crystal Palace, Arsenal and Manchester City and was capped for Ireland when he took part in a 1994 World Cup game in the USA. Lee Glover, who had previously played for Nottingham Forest Football Club in the 1991 League Cup Final, ended his playing career at *the Steelmen* in 2003, and became manager of the club before moving to higher league Grantham Town.

Satisfaction with sports facilities in Corby at 79% is nearly 10 points above the County average of 68.1% and national average of 69%.

Gold Medal winning gymnast Daniel Keatings began his gymnastics career when his parents enrolled him into a local gym club in Corby. Keatings won the All-Around Silver Medal in the European Gymnastics Championships in Milan and also won the Bronze Medal in the Pommel Horse final. In October 2009, Daniel made history when he became the first British gymnast to win a medal in the All-Around event at the Artistic World Championships. The event at the O2 Arena in London, saw Keatings score 88.925, taking the silver medal. In 2010, Daniel made history again when he won Great Britain's first ever Senior European Championship Gold Medal on the pommel horse the day after he helped Great Britain to win a historic Silver Medal in the team competition

Corby's cultural and heritage assets include:

- Grade 1 listed Rockingham Castle which dates back to soon after the conquest in 1066.
- Kirby Hall
- The ancient Rockingham Forest, including three major areas of woodland in Urban Corby, Hazel, Kings and Thoroughsale Woods
- The Corby East Midlands International Pool, a stunning piece of modern architecture, which won the coveted title of East Midlands Public Building of the Year in 2009
- The iconic Corby Cube, theatre, library and civic centre; opened in November 2010, which has already been described by one magazine as "The last word in multi-use public buildings".

Corby has a rich history and with it comes a number of traditions, one of which dates back as far as 1882. The Pole Fair is a long-held tradition in Corby and has taken place in Corby Old Village for many centuries, which is still celebrated today, with photographs existing from 1902, 1922, 1947, 1962, 1982 and 2002.

Corby Pole Fair is celebrated every twenty years on Whit Monday, with its next incarnation to be held in 2022 and its origins contain elements of other traditions. Perhaps the earliest Pole Fair tradition is its association with the right to hold two fairs each year, granted by Henry III in 1226. This was later added to by the Royal Charter given by Queen Elizabeth I in 1575, supposedly in repayment for help shown her by locals who guided the Queen safely back to Rockingham Castle after she found herself lost in the forest which surrounded the village.

The Pole Fair also has elements of ancient Viking traditions such as "riding the Pole", a form of punishment for not paying the toll exacted on any person wishing to enter the Pole Fair. Those not paying the toll would find themselves astride a pole and being carried through the village streets.

Appendix 2

Aside from the fairs, Corby has a reputation locally for its free Guy Fawkes Night celebrations; the local Council has been offering a safe and fun environment in which to celebrate and enjoy Guy Fawkes Night and the associated fireworks by providing a spectacular display at the town's Boating Lake for several decades with attendance crowds in excess of 30,000 people.

Corby is twinned with Velbert in Germany, and each year, Corby's Carnival Court represents the town on the official Twinning Trip to Velbert during their Carnival time. The Court experiences the life and culture of our German counterparts; Carnival in Germany is very different to England and there are some very old customs which Corby's Court are told about and shown whilst they are there. Then each July, our German friends come to Corby to experience our own Carnival.

The Court does a lot of travelling throughout their year of office to other cities and towns, often attending other selection and crowning ceremonies to offer support. Apart from Corby's own Carnival Parade the Court will travel to Dover, Faversham, Sheppey, St. Neots, Nuneaton, Hoddesden, as well as supporting local towns. At each of these Carnival events, the Court competes against these other Courts for Trophies such as Best Princess pairs, Princess of the Day, Queen of Queens and Court of Courts or Best Court of the Day, all of which Corby Carnival Court has won over the last couple of years. Some Carnivals even have a Best Chaperone Trophy and this has been won by Corby three times now. 2010 saw the Court win Trophies at Nuneaton, Kettering, Faversham in Kent and Hoddesdon & Broxbourne in Hertfordshire.

CorBlimey! – A miscellany of interesting things you probably didn't know about Corby

- Corby is possibly the only UK town to have a crater named after it on Mars
- The outlaw Robin Hode (Hood) really originates not from Nottingham or Whitby, but from Corby
- Rockingham Speedway in Corby is Europe's fastest motor racetrack
- Adrenaline Ally, Europe's largest skatepark is housed in a converted chicken factory
- Corby steelworks were once the largest in Europe and still produce over 500,000 tonnes a year of high grade tube for engineering, vehicles and construction. Steel is arguably the world's most ubiquitous man-made product.