

# LGR: Lessons from North Northamptonshire

Cllr Mark Pengelly

---

North Northamptonshire Council

Chair, APSE Central Region

# A little history!

- Northamptonshire County Council effectively went bankrupt in 2018, becoming the first English council in 20 years to file a section 114 notice due to massive debts of nearly £1 billion.
- Following severe financial mismanagement and failed outsourcing, it was abolished in 2021 and replaced by two new unitary authorities:
- [West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council.](#)



# Corby 1930 – 1980



1930: Corby small village a few thousand people



1934-1939: Massive expansion with new integrated steelworks.



1939: Became a rural council (under Kettering )then an urban district.



1950: Became a new town 75 years ago.



1979: Steelworks closed – thousands out of work – regeneration began.

# REGENERATION HOUSING!

1960s Rayburn  
estates demolished





**Modern housing build  
most council owned.**

# TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

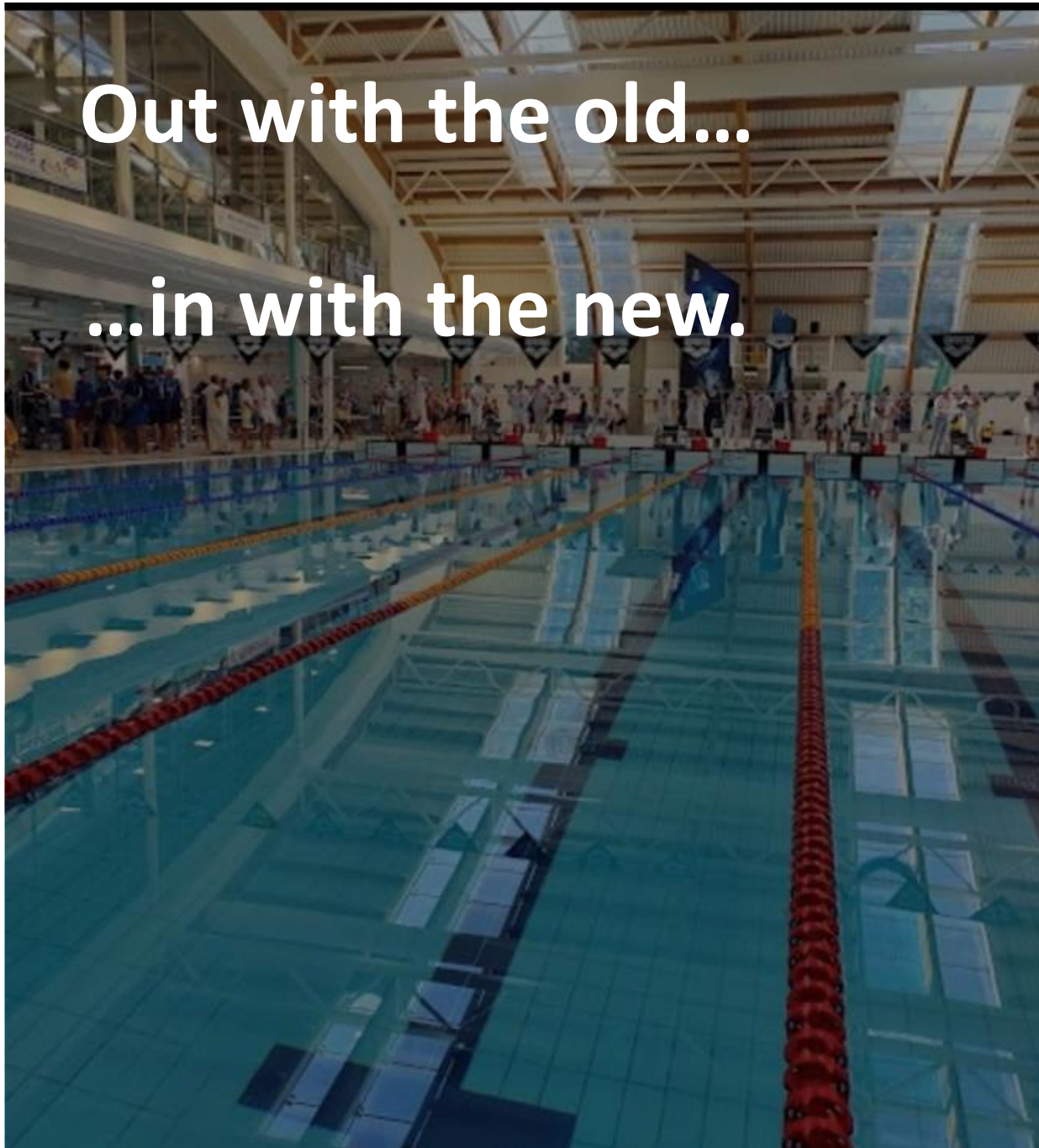
## Stage 1

© Copyright Fro

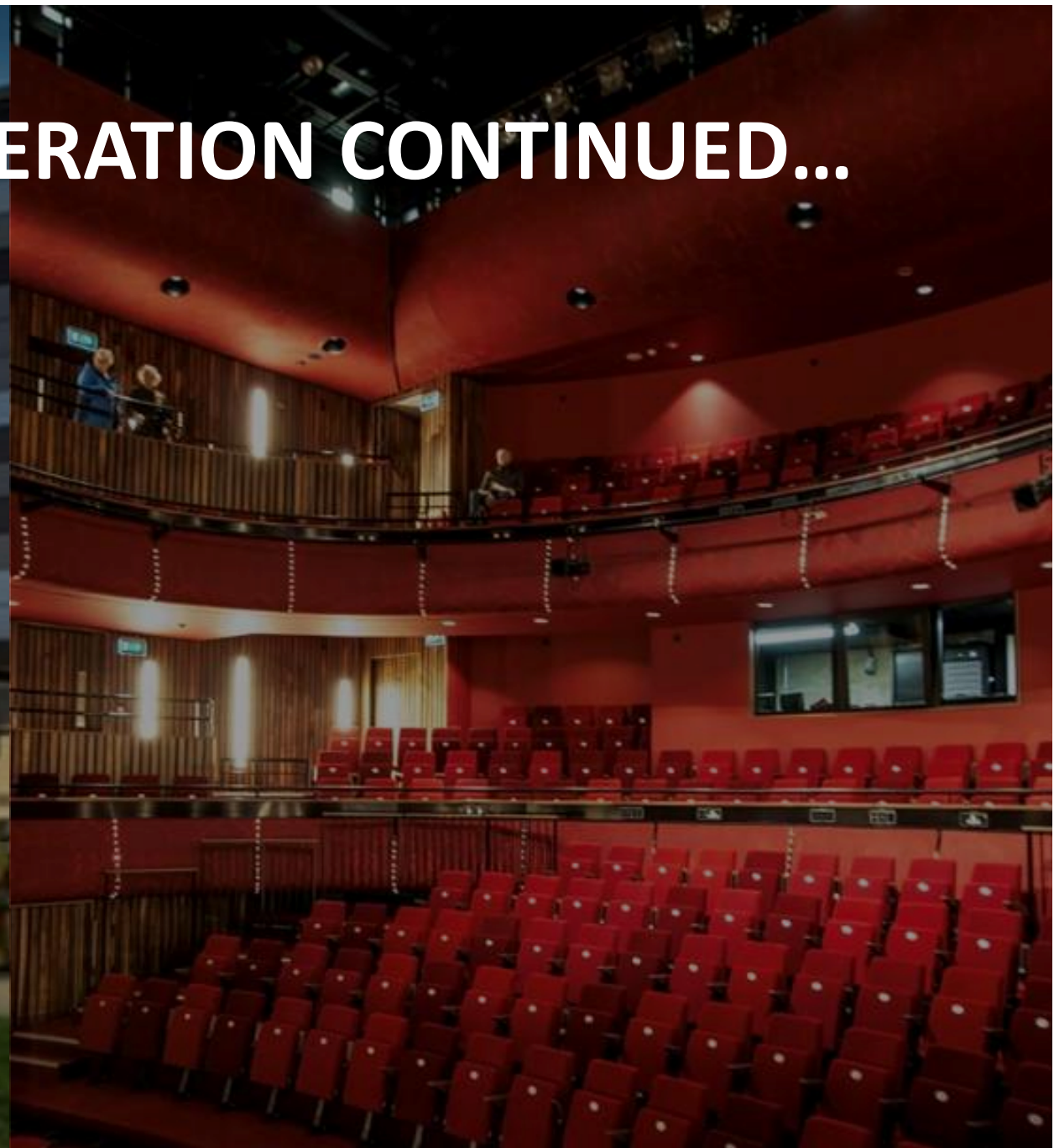


Out with the old...

...in with the new.




# TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION CONTINUED...



The three members of parliament call for unitary - shadow board put in place .

### **Key Aspects of the Northants Council Collapse:**

- **The Breakdown:** The county council was branded a "car crash" after needing to cut in 2018, leading to a government-ordered inspector's report.
  - **Unitary Call:** Seven local Tory MPs demanded the council be abolished "while the iron is hot" in March 2018, calling for two new unitary councils to replace the existing structure.
  - **Final Outcome:** The old County Council and seven district councils were abolished, replaced in April 2021 by two new councils: North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.
- 

# Referendum and Shadow Authority

- **Opposition:** Corby council voted against the dissolution of existing councils and proposed, a position described as "shouting against the tide" by others.
- **Public Voice:** A local survey found overwhelming opposition to the move among residents, according to campaigners.
- **Concerns:** Key arguments centered on the loss of local control for the town and concerns that the new North Northamptonshire Council would focus less on local needs.
- **Result:** Despite this, the government moved ahead, and North Northamptonshire Council was formed, with recent debates highlighting ongoing tension regarding local representation.

Instead of being made up of newly elected councillors, they will combine the membership of the existing district, borough and county councils.

The existing councillors will sit on the shadow authorities until 1 April 2021. The elections to the new unitary councils will then place on 6 May 2021.

This is the procedure that MHCLG adopted for the creation of new unitary councils in Buckinghamshire, Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, electing councillors directly to the shadow authority is more unusual when creating new councils.

The Shadow North Northamptonshire Council will comprise of 152 members, and the Shadow West Northamptonshire Council will comprise of 134 members.

\*At present, the Local Government Reform programme is overseen by two groups, a Leaders' Oversight Board, comprising all eight leaders and two Joint Committees, one for the north and one for the west.

MHCLG has decided to use these governance arrangements to select Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the two shadow authorities with a term of office from now until May 2021.

# Last Year of Corby Borough Council



The last year went quick...

- Setting up town council – lessons learned!
- No time for final legacy but spent money on run down shopping areas .
- Working with officers – many wanting to leave.

# The New Council

From a small council where everyone was on first name terms where housing , leisure and street cleaning were priority to:

- Adult Social Care.
- Children's Services (the TRUST).
- Highways.

Everything changed quickly .

...And NO NEW MONEY!



# Lessons

After five years all is still not settled at North Northants – but loads of progress with staff and members working together.

- From day one try to take staff and public with you!
- Look at consequences of those wanting to leave!
- Ensure new senior management team have experience of managing a SUPER council.
- Argue for extra government funding!
- Try to get a legacy project in place!
- Get you town council funding and premises in place



Questions?

Contact:

[mark.pengelly@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pengelly@northnorthants.gov.uk)

