

# Leader's Update

29 December 2023

Issue: 66

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## Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans.
- Outcome of Recall Petition for Wellingborough constituency.
- Warning issued after 'non-compliant' Christmas toys seized by North Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards Officers.
- Dog control PSPO introduced for North Northamptonshire.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund update.
- Nene Valley Crematorium team receives 'Excellence Award'.
- Voi e-scooter riders in north Northamptonshire clock up almost half a million rides in 2023.
- Northampton Emergency Response Corps (NERC) is looking to recruit.
- Closure orders secured on two East Northamptonshire properties.

In addition, there is information about forthcoming meetings, our consultation and engagement hub, Your Voice Matters, the latest press releases and the top stories on social media.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

## Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans

The draft revenue budget for North Northamptonshire Council was approved for consultation by the Executive on Thursday 21 December and the council is now seeking views on its proposals for the next financial year.

You can take part in the consultation in a number of ways including:

- Completing the online survey: [North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2024/25 Consultation](#).
- Writing to: Budget Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering NN16 8TL.

Please see our [Your Voice Matters](#) web page for more ways on how to have your say on this consultation.

The council's draft budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2024/2025 as well as outlining the medium-term financial forecast for the following three years.

Protecting and investing in local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty is the focus of the council's budget proposals.

A commitment to maintain vital service provision has seen the council invest an additional £53.4million into services, including adult social care and children's services, to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and address a growing need for services.

These pressures are, in part, offset by savings, efficiencies and further income of £18.5m. Taken together with an improvement in funding expected from business rates, Council Tax and government grants the council has been able to set a balanced budget for 2024/2025.

The proposed net revenue budget for 2024/2025 is £371.5 million. This money provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children; education, leisure and cultural opportunities; the collection, recycling and disposal of waste; highways maintenance; economic development; and housing and support for those who are homeless.

The government has permitted local authorities to increase the Council Tax rate by 4.99% in recognition of the increasing demand and cost pressures faced by councils.

As such, the council is proposing an increase in council tax of 4.99%, which includes the 2% adult social care precept. There is no change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%.

### **Next steps**

The consultation on the proposals will run until midnight on Friday 26 January. The Executive will meet on Thursday 8 February to consider final budget proposals for recommendation to Full Council on Thursday 22 February.

## **Outcome of Recall Petition for Wellingborough constituency**

On Wednesday 25 October 2023, notice was received from the Speaker of the House of Commons that a Recall Petition under the Recall of MPs Act 2015 was to be opened in respect of Peter Bone MP.

The petition was started because Peter Bone MP had been suspended from sitting in the House of Commons for a period of six weeks for breaching the code of conduct for MPs.

The petition signing period started on Wednesday 8 November 2023 and closed at 5pm on Tuesday 19 December 2023.

### **The outcome**

As the total number of eligible registered electors who have validly signed the petition is 10,505, this means that the Petition was: Successful.

[More details of the results](#) are available on the Elections pages of our website.

### **Next steps**

A Motion will now need to be put before the House of Commons before a by-election can be officially triggered.

We await confirmation from the House when this will take place.

Details of when a by-election will be held, and information for residents in the Wellingborough area, will be made public once known and promoted on the council's channels.

## **Warning issued after 'non-compliant' Christmas toys seized by North Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards Officers**

North Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards Team is urging parents and carers to make sure toys bought for Christmas meet safety standards, following the discovery of a 'non-compliant' haul last week.

Officers from the council's Trading Standards Service seized a large quantity of 'non-compliant' toys from a seller in Kettering on Wednesday 20 December, just five days before Christmas. The toys were not labelled in accordance with the requirements of the Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011, and it is suspected that some may even be unsafe for small children.

They want to remind residents to be vigilant when buying toys and urge everybody to check the labels. There are a number of labelling requirements which should be adhered to: the name and address of the manufacturer / importer; the type, batch, model or serial number; the UKCA / CE mark; warnings and instructions.

The team at the council has issued the following advice to parents and carers who are buying toys or residents who are supervising over the festive period:

- Always read the warnings and instructions. Toys must be clearly marked with age restrictions which are based on risks such as choking hazards.
- Always follow the age recommendations.
- Avoid toys with small parts; they can be a choking hazard.
- Look out for strangulation hazards. Loose ribbons on toys and costumes can pose risks to young children.
- Check the toys are for kids. Magnets can look like toys. Keep them away from children.
- Compare the sellers. Bargains may be too good to be true. Compare the toy's price with other sellers. If it's a fraction of the cost, it's likely to be counterfeit.
- Check for button batteries. Ensure that any button batteries in a toy are safely behind a screwed down flap.
- Check for product recalls. See if the toy you're buying has been recalled at the [Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls](#) pages of the GOV.UK website.
- Check before you wrap. Toys must be clearly marked with age restrictions which are based on risks such as choking hazards.

There are also risks when buying from online platforms; you often can't see the label online so you should take extra care. Remember that not everything advertised on a platform will be sold by that platform, some items will be sold by overseas sellers and won't meet our strict safety laws.

If you feel you have purchased a non-compliant or unsafe toy, you can report it to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133.

## **Dog control PSPO introduced for North Northamptonshire**

A new area-wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for dog control has been introduced.

The new PSPO covers:

- Dog fouling on land.
- Dogs on leads in certain identified areas of public land.
- Dogs on leads upon request.
- Exclusion of dogs on certain areas of public land.

It does not include restricting the number of dogs that can be taken onto land.

Following two consultations and Executive approval, the new order introduced supersedes the legacy orders which were in place in Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northants areas. Until this point, there was no order in place in the Corby area.

The full [PSPO for dog control](#) is available online.

## **UK Shared Prosperity Fund update**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda. The fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK by investing in communities and place, supporting local businesses, as well as people and skills.

North Northamptonshire Council has successfully secured £4.8 million from the government's core Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), a further £1.1 million of funding for rural areas from the Rural England Prosperity

Fund (REPF), and £1.9 million of funding to support adult numeracy programmes as part of the Multiply scheme.

### **Community Grant programme update**

Round 1 of the Community Grant scheme saw 25 projects supported across North Northamptonshire. The total awarded was £99,900.

These projects include:

- Extended community transport for group trips.
- Social groups and arts clubs for people with disabilities in Burton Latimer and Higham Ferrers.
- A new community café in Grange Community Centre in Kettering.
- Drugs prevention sessions with 400+ students, targeted in deprived areas.
- New community garden in Rushden and renovated pocket park in Warmington.
- Enhanced skatepark and outdoor gym in Gretton.

The second round of funding saw the launch of youth community funding for areas termed as 'left behind', where groups could apply for up to £25,000 of funding to support community activities and help improve young lives in Avondale Grange (Kettering), Kingswood and Hazel Leys (Corby) and Queensway (Wellingborough).

Funding can be used for positive activities to boost youth (0 to 25 years old) engagement in the community and help them avoid crime or anti-social behaviour, with announcements on successful projects due early in 2024.

### **Three new capital schemes coming soon to Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough**

The council is delivering three new capital schemes designed to promote pride in place and enhanced wellbeing opportunities in the three identified 'left behind' communities.

These include new calisthenic equipment in Jubilee Park (Corby), improved access and car parking at Weekley Glebe Park (Kettering) and a new sensory dome in Queensway (Wellingborough).

Find out more in the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund in North Northamptonshire newsletter](#).

### **Nene Valley Crematorium team receives 'excellence award'**

The North Northamptonshire Council's Bereavement Service Care Team at Nene Valley Crematorium has received a top award from the Wellingborough and East Northants Chamber of Commerce for services of 'excellence'.

Nene Valley Crematorium is recognised as an inspiring business: "To recognise and celebrate a business that has gone above and beyond for its employees, customers and/or community".

The team is delighted to receive such a prestigious award and convey heartfelt thanks to the Chamber of Commerce judges for their recognition of the team's commitment towards responsibilities and the variety of facilities offered at the crematorium.

The award of excellence recognises areas of continuing professional development support for team members and improvements to their working conditions; a variety of enhancements towards customer experience and visitors; and donations to local charities.

The North Northamptonshire Council's company-operated crematorium serves the community of Wellingborough and beyond. For more information visit the [Nene Valley Crematorium](#) website.

## **Voi e-scooter riders in north Northamptonshire clock up almost half a million rides in 2023**

Nearly half a million rides have been taken on a Voi e-scooter in north Northamptonshire in 2023, replacing over 200,000 car journeys, the micromobility company reports.

Voi operates e-scooters in Corby, Kettering, Burton Latimer, Higham Ferrers, Rushden and Wellingborough.

The amount of CO2 saved by riders in these towns is the equivalent of that produced by six car trips around the world.

Together Voi riders across the UK clocked up 15 million miles in 2023.

In a recent user survey, 27% of UK users said they no longer use cars and 42% said they use cars less, in favour of e-scooters, showing good progress towards more sustainable urban transport.

## **Northampton Emergency Response Corps (NERC) is looking to recruit**

Northampton Emergency Response Corps (NERC) is looking to recruit new volunteers.

NERC brings together voluntary organisations and recruits individual volunteers from across the county to help where they can. NERC reservists are called upon in times of need to assist in all kinds of ways. It could be a flood, a disruption in the energy supply, a health crisis or any other emergency.

Part of the response to such events is always dependent on volunteers who help to keep their communities informed, distribute supplies and check on the vulnerable.

Specialist skills like dealing with flooding can also be used and even when the county is not having to respond to an emergency, NERC would love people to get involved helping to run the charity by working on the website, managing finances or helping with administration.

### **Great training opportunities**

NERC is now starting a new programme of training, offering a great chance for volunteers to learn new skills. You could become a flood warden, learn first aid or safeguarding skills, become part of the search and rescue team or be taught how to deal with those in distress using psycho-social support. Really valuable skills like home fire safety, neuro-diverse training and conflict management will also be available.

### **Get involved**

If you would like to find out more or share information about this volunteering opportunity with members of your local community, you can find out more online: [Northampton Emergency Response Corps](#).

## **Closure orders secured on two East Northamptonshire properties**

Members of the East Northants Neighbourhood Policing Team have successfully secured the closure of two residential properties following persistent complaints.

The properties in Nippendale (Rushden) and Milton Street (Higham Ferrers) have been the focus of ongoing reports of anti-social behaviour at both addresses which caused misery to other residents and the wider community.

Issues linked to the Nippendale address included intimidating and abusive behaviour by those associated with the property as well as disturbances, criminal damage, motorcycle, and other noise nuisance.

However, the Milton Street address was suspected of being used as a brothel and the ongoing issues and complaints centred around anti-social behaviour and associated crimes linked to such activities.

As a result of these issues, the neighbourhood policing team worked with council and housing association colleagues to secure three-month closure orders at both addresses, which were granted by Northampton Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 29 November.

These will be in place until Wednesday 28 February next year, and anyone who enters either property will be liable to arrest for breaching the closure order, and if convicted, could be jailed for up to 51 weeks, fined or both.

We are a listening council and will always work with partners to help make our communities safe places to live and work.

These results clearly show this partnership working in practice and the dedication of our teams, who have worked hard to secure this result.

Short term closures like this should, hopefully, have such a long-term impact on the two neighbourhoods and deter future anti-social behaviour.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in these cases. I would encourage residents to come forward and report anti-social behaviour.

Find out more about how Northamptonshire Police is preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour on their website: [Northamptonshire Police/Anti-social behaviour](#).

If you have any concerns about anti-social behaviour in your community, you can report non-emergency crime to 101, online at [Northamptonshire Police/Report online](#) or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111. In an emergency always call 999.

This article was originally published on the Northamptonshire Police website: [Closure orders secured on two East Northamptonshire properties](#).

## Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our current consultations and engagement activities. Please use the links below to provide your feedback and inform council decisions and share with family and friends who may be interested in shaping future plans.

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub, [Your Voice Matters](#).

- [Term dates for North Northamptonshire schools for the 2025-26 academic year](#). North Northamptonshire Council is now consulting on proposed term dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the 2025-26 academic year. Closes 31 December 2023.
- [Public Spaces Protection Order - Rushden Town Centre](#). North Northamptonshire Council is considering making a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to cover Rushden town centre. A PSPO is made under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Closes 31 December 2023.
- [Consultation on school admission arrangements for September 2025 intakes](#). North Northamptonshire Council co-ordinates an annual school admissions consultation on behalf of schools of all types in the council area, should they request to be included. The consultation aims to raise awareness of any proposed changes to school admission arrangements and invites comments from interested parties. Closes 31 December 2023.
- [North Northamptonshire Hackney Carriage de-zoning and byelaw review](#). On 14 September 2023, the council's Executive agreed to carry out a consultation process to inform the decision making in relation to the matter of the potential removal of hackney carriage administration and enforcement zones within the North Northamptonshire area. Closes 21 January 2024.
- [Application for Permit Variation under the Environmental Permitting \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2016 - Scotts of Thrapston Limited](#). The company known as Scotts of Thrapston Limited, 4 Bridge Street, Thrapston, Northamptonshire, NN14 4LR has applied to the council to vary their existing permit for the working of timber and manufacture of wood-based products, EPR/EN/9b, to include a biomass boiler as a directly associated activity. Closes 24 January 2024.



- [Are you Eastern/Central European and live in Northamptonshire?](#) If you were born in or originate from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Ukraine, please help us by completing this survey about you and your community. Closes 31 January 2024.

## Forthcoming meetings

- **Executive:** Thursday 18 January from 10am.
- **Full (Budget) Council:** Thursday 22 February from 10am.

The agenda and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

These meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube](#) channel.

## Press releases

To help you stay abreast of the key things the council has been doing, I have included some links to the latest press releases below (starting with the most recent):

- [Warning issued after 'non-compliant' Christmas toys seized by North Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards Officers](#)
- [Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans](#)
- [Outcome of Recall Petition for Wellingborough constituency](#)
- [More than £2 million towards maintaining North Northamptonshire's roads considered at this week's Executive meeting](#)
- [Dog control PSPO introduced for North Northants](#)
- [Nene Valley Crematorium team receives 'Excellence Award'](#)

## Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts and share our [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#) posts when you can.

### Top Facebook posts so far this week (25 to 27 December)

- Waste collections over the next two weeks will change, so make sure you are up-to-date on our services over Christmas <https://ow.ly/SaSI50Q70PH>  
(Reach 4,082, Link Clicks 270, Engagement 325)
- Had a few too many sprouts? Maybe that mince pie for breakfast tipped you over the edge. We've all been there. So get on the boots and go for a walk in one of our country parks <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/country-parks>  
(Reach 2,594, Link Clicks 11, Engagement 65)
- Fridge full of left-overs? Don't fancy a turkey curry? Check out Love Food Hate Waste's website for some inspiration <https://ow.ly/j0sM50QgxB>  
(Reach 2,093, Link Clicks 7, Engagement 40)

### Top Tweets so far this week (25 to 27 December)

- Floor covered in balls of wrapping paper and gift packaging? Please try and recycle as much as possible. Please watch out for glittery/foil paper (some areas can't accept them) and embellishments (ribbons).  
(Impressions 625, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 3)
- We'd like to take this opportunity to wish our residents and businesses a very Merry Christmas! Have a wonderful day.

(Impressions 482, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 3)

- Waste collections over the next two weeks will change, so make sure you are up to date on our services over Christmas <https://t.co/1TunUmNbE1>  
(Impressions 468, URL Clicks 31, Engagements 44)

## Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have any ideas for items to include in future updates, please email me at [executive@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:executive@northnorthants.gov.uk).

With Best Wishes,  
Jason