

# Leader's Update

9 February 2024

Issue: 69

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## Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- BIG50 Future Vision
- Final budget proposals for 2024-2025 discussed by North Northamptonshire Council's Executive
- Love your local businesses this Valentine's Day
- The Chester House Estate and Creating Tomorrow Trust commit to new 5-year partnership
- New strategy sets out vision to boost visitor economy, support local businesses and enhance tourism in Northamptonshire
- Update on Kettering Library roof project
- Northamptonshire students take part in Children's Mental Health Week
- February half term activities for children
- Traffic enforcement measures to be introduced on George Street, Corby
- Survey feedback on activities and respite for children with disabilities

In addition, you will find below some useful information about forthcoming meetings, Your Voice Matters (our consultation and engagement hub), all the latest press releases and our top social media posts.

Whatever your plans are, I hope you have a great weekend!

## BIG50 Future Vision

A wide range of partner organisations, including those from the voluntary and community sector, business, health, police, town and parish councils as well as North Northamptonshire Council, got together for a BIG50 Future Vision gathering this week.

The BIG50 Vision is a shared vision for North Northamptonshire. It focuses on delivering the best life for all in North Northamptonshire and is supported by three pillars:

- a proud place,
- a prosperous place and
- a proactive place.

Those at the gathering heard from guest speakers from a number of organisations and, through workshops, considered how momentum in the delivery of the vision can be accelerated. Attendees also considered how public engagement can be built through a public campaign in the near future.

The event was compered by Robin Webber-Jones from Tresham College and the Corby Sixth Form, and attendees also heard from students from Tresham College on what the BIG50 Vision means to them.

Although the BIG50 Vision focuses on the vision for 2050, it is equally about what can be achieved in the short-term too - it is very much about how everyone can work together from across organisations and communities to achieve a bigger common aim for the area.

The BIG50 Vision is overseen by a Steering Group from across a range of different sectors.

## **Final budget proposals for 2024-2025 discussed by North Northamptonshire Council's Executive**

Final budget proposals for North Northamptonshire Council for the next financial year were presented to the authority's Executive yesterday (Thursday 8 February).

Draft proposals were initially approved by the Executive on Thursday 21 December, and these have been subject to a detailed consultation process and scrutiny.

A report discussed at Executive presented a balanced revenue budget for 2024-2025 and outlined the medium-term financial plan for the following three years.

A commitment to maintain vital service provision has seen the council invest an additional £62.6 million into services to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and address a growing need for services.

Overall, the net revenue budget for 2024-2025 is £375.3 million. This money provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the disposal and collection of waste, highways maintenance, economic development, housing and support for those who are homeless.

The council will also be proposing a programme of capital investment totalling £170.1m over the four-year period 2024-28 across a number of schemes including investing over £49.1m into highways, £12.2m for schools, £10.7m to support disabled facilities, £9.1m in improving digital infrastructure, £2.7m from the Corby Town Fund and £2.9m for Electrical Vehicle infrastructure.

### **Next steps**

The final budget will be presented to Full Council on Thursday 22 February for final approval.

## **Love your local businesses this Valentine's Day**

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, there has never been a better time to fall in love with your High Street and support your local businesses.

Show love for your loved one - and give back to your community - by shopping for gifts, flowers, food, drink and more at the small businesses in your local town. You'll find something unique with personalised touches. Let's share the love for our local businesses this Valentine's Day.

Preparations are in full swing including at In Bloom in Rushden, a wonderful florist that is full of buds, blooms, gifts and more, and you're greeted with the sweetest scent when you step in the door!

If you're celebrating Valentine's Day this year, remember to support local. There are fantastic places to eat out and treat your loved one in the area, and they would love to welcome you through the door. Get your table booked and your flower and gift orders in now as we think they will be very busy over the coming weeks.

### **Win a £20 gift voucher to spend at In Bloom**

We've got a blooming lovely giveaway for Valentine's Day over on our [Hi Street Facebook](#) and [Hi Street Instagram](#) pages. Head over for your chance to win, and to read the full feature with In Bloom too.

You can find out more about the [Hi Street campaign](#) on our website.

## **The Chester House Estate and Creating Tomorrow Trust commit to new 5-year partnership**

Following a successful two years, the Creating Tomorrow Trust has agreed a new five-year lease on a classroom space at the Chester House Estate.

The partnership between the estate and Creating Tomorrow College, alongside the Creating Tomorrow Trust, has been in place since the site opened to the public in October 2021.

In this unique collaboration, students with special educational needs work alongside estate staff and volunteers on all aspects of the site.

As part of the growing partnership, students are granted invaluable opportunities for hands-on learning within the setting of Chester House, where they actively engage in roles that span customer service, education delivery, archaeology, events delivery, food preparation, and retail management. This immersive learning experience not only enriches their academic knowledge but also equips them with practical skills that are essential for future employment.

There is also a strong focus on mentorship with the estate team playing a pivotal role in guiding and nurturing students, providing knowledge and practical training in their specialised areas.

Watch the [Creating Tomorrow College and the Chester House Estate partnership](#) video on YouTube.

## **New strategy sets out vision to boost visitor economy, support local businesses and enhance tourism in Northamptonshire**

A new tourism strategy for Northamptonshire was given the go ahead by West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council at their Cabinet and Executive meetings last month (Tuesday 16 and Thursday 18 January).

The Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy sets out a vision and approach to nurturing and enhancing the county's visitor economy and aims to improve pride in place, generate inward investment and create new employment opportunities as well as reduce carbon emissions in line with both councils' sustainability goals.

The strategy, which has been developed over an 18-month period and co-produced by both councils alongside partners and stakeholders from across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, will be implemented between now and 2030 focusing on 4 key themes: Visits and Value, Great People, Better Business and Inspirational Places.

Plans also include the exploration of a new private sector-led Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) which will work with national tourism agency Visit England to oversee and drive the delivery of the strategy while playing a crucial role in promoting and marketing specific destinations to attract tourists. The LVEP will also be responsible for identifying and bidding for government funding streams.

Similarly to Visit England, which focuses on showcasing the diverse attractions, cultural heritage, and experiences offered by different regions across England, a LVEP would work on developing and implementing strategic marketing initiatives to boost tourism, support local businesses, and enhance the overall appeal of Northamptonshire to visitors both domestically and internationally.

The development setting out what the LVEP could look like in Northamptonshire is a priority following the adoption of the Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy and will be explored in partnership with the private sector.

Both councils will continue to deliver specific tourism activities at a local level but will work with wider partners for larger initiatives when appropriate and necessary.

Read the [Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy and Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Northamptonshire](#) on our website.

A full designed version of the strategy will be available on both councils' websites in the coming weeks.

## **Update on Kettering Library roof project**

Following council approval, a project to replace the 120-year-old roof on the heritage Grade II listed Kettering library building has now entered the 'delivery' phase.

At the December meeting of Full Council, members agreed to the funding allocation. Since then, council officers have been working behind the scenes on the next steps to ensure the project runs smoothly and Cornerstone is able to fully open as soon as possible.

Over the next few months, residents may see preparation work and surveys starting on site, ahead of scaffolding and the tenting of the existing roof. Scaffolding will not proceed until the council has gone through a full procurement exercise, obtained the necessary approvals from Natural England of our bat mitigation works and Historic England/North Northamptonshire Council approval for the plans to protect and enhance the Grade II listed building.

This preparation work will include the removal of vegetation from the outside of the building, which is causing damage to the building and needs to be removed. Tree canopies around the building have also been raised to prevent damage to existing slates.

As part of the wider works on site, the Art Gallery doors have recently been refurbished. Whilst the roof repair works are undertaken, the Library has temporarily relocated into the upper floor of the modern extension of Cornerstone, adjacent to the existing library.

The council will keep under review moving the library services back into its permanent home to allow Cornerstone to open in full. However, the council need to ensure the protective measures make it practicable to operate the library and users are able to visit safely.

## **Northamptonshire students take part in Children's Mental Health Week (Monday 5 to Sunday 11 February)**

Embracing this year's theme: 'My voice matters', the Healthy Schools team in North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire have come together with local children and young people to create a resource pack which has been sent out to schools.

It's full of activities to give pupils the tools they need to express their feelings and provides them with helpful, healthy coping strategies.

The resource pack is the perfect tool for schools to use and includes ideas such as 'My voice matters' walls, affirmation writing, scream time, journaling, fidget toys and active listening. All are positive ways, recommended by young people, to help other youngsters share their thoughts and feelings on mental health.

Pupils at Key Stage 2 and above will also each get a 'Comfort Card'. These are handy bank card sized cards which can be kept by students in a wallet, purse or mobile phone case. The cards signpost to key services and apps which offer further support and guidance if they should need it.

Throughout the week, Reach Collaborative - which includes organisations such as Service Six, Youth Works (North), Lowdown (West) and the Mental Health Support in Schools team - have visited a number of secondary schools to deliver assemblies on mental health. They held awareness sessions for students and signposted them to mental wellbeing resources.

There is a lot of support available via apps, text services, community organisations and health services for children, young people and families who are looking for support for either themselves, a friend, or for their child or relative.

These include:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS Connect): Open 9am to 7pm – 0300 1111 022.
- Text your school nurse: Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm – 07507 329600.
- Text SHOUT to 85258. Available 24 hours.

- Speak to Childline on 0800 1111. Available 24 hours.
- Speak to the Samaritans on 116 123. Available 24 hours.
- Use apps such as Calm Harm, Clear Fear, Move Mood or Teens.

For further information, please visit the [CAMHS Resources](#) website.

## February half term activities for children in North Northamptonshire

It's nearly February half term (Monday 19 to Friday 23 February).

Our leisure facilities across North Northamptonshire have some fun sessions for all the family: swimming, diving, football, racquet sports and more.

- [Half term activities in Corby](#)
- [Half term activities in East Northamptonshire](#)
- [Half term activities in Kettering](#)
- [Half term activities in Wellingborough](#)

Please visit the [Half term activities](#) section of our website for more information.

## Traffic enforcement measures to be introduced on George Street, Corby

From early March, enforcement measures will be introduced to deter drivers from using a section of George Street in Corby as a cut-through.

Following a consultation in late 2023, the traffic regulation order (TRO) will be replaced with one that will enable the council to enforce vehicle access restrictions, using automatic number plate recognition cameras (ANPR).

It is hoped that the move will improve safety for pedestrians crossing the road by allowing only taxis, buses and cyclists to enter the main crossing section between the hours of 8am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday. These works will significantly improve the accessibility and mobility for pedestrians and cyclists moving between the town centre retail area and the leisure quarter, as well as improve the attractiveness of the public realm and reduce noise from road vehicles. It will encourage more independent movement and provide safety for shoppers on this section of George Street during busy times.

Anyone found to be breaching the order would face a fine of £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days). There will be a grace period in place for the next six months, in which anyone driving through the section of George Street will receive a warning letter but not be fined, on the first occasion only. If they continue to flout the rules, a fine will be issued. Once the six-month grace period has finished, anyone not permitted to drive through the section will receive a letter and fine.

An exact go-live date for the traffic enforcement measures will be published on our channels in late February/early March.

## Survey feedback on activities and respite for children with disabilities

In Autumn 2023, the Northamptonshire Children's Trust conducted a survey seeking residents views on a proposed new way of delivering activities and respite (short breaks) for disabled children in Northamptonshire.

People had the opportunity to feedback via an electronic survey and through face-to-face sessions.

Conducted throughout October and November, the survey received an overwhelming response, with 150 individuals contributing their valuable insights and a further 134 attending the various workshops.

They want to thank all those who took part and are immensely grateful for the enthusiastic participation of our community. These responses have proven instrumental in addressing key issues that currently exist.

The complete survey report is available on the [Northamptonshire Children's Trust](#) website.

## Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other 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](#).

- [Are you Eastern/Central European and live in Northamptonshire?](#) If you were born in or originate from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and 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 12 February 2024.
- [North Northamptonshire Council All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029](#). We are developing our first All Age Carers Strategy and are asking carers, or those supporting a carer, to share feedback on the draft strategy. Closes 3 March 2024.

## Forthcoming meetings

### Executive

- Thursday 15 February 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):

- [Traffic enforcement measures to be introduced on George Street, Corby](#)
- [Northamptonshire students set to take part in Children's Mental Health Week](#)
- [Final budget proposals for 2024-2025 to be discussed by North Northamptonshire Council's Executive](#)
- [Retail support programme launched to boost local businesses](#)
- [The Chester House Estate and Creating Tomorrow Trust commit to new 5-year partnership](#)
- [New strategy sets out vision to boost visitor economy, support local businesses and enhance tourism in Northamptonshire](#)
- [Survey feedback on activities and respite for children with disabilities](#)
- [Update on Kettering Library roof project](#)

## 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 (5 to 7 February)

- Develop your career with an Apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are fully inclusive we have 100% achievement rate with care leavers achieving a Level 3 Business Administrator Apprenticeship <https://ow.ly/UtCT50QvOex>  
(Reach 3,941, Link Clicks 85, Engagement 281)
- Traffic enforcement measures to be introduced on George Street, Corby: <https://ow.ly/ln3Z50QygnL>  
(Reach 2,118, Link Clicks 158, Engagement 348)
- We're supporting Children's Mental Health Week to share support and guidance for parents and carers worried about their child's mental health <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>  
(Reach 1,014, Link Clicks 7, Engagement 24)

### Top Tweets so far this week (5 to 7 February)

- (1/3) It's our Big50 Future Vision event today in Kettering and we are delighted to be working with partners from across sectors on how we work more effectively together to deliver the #BIG50Vision for North Northamptonshire.  
(Impressions 2,541, URL Clicks, Engagements 61)
- If you are wishing to vote in the Wellingborough MP by-election and don't have a form of eligible photo ID, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. A list of accepted ID and how to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate is online: <https://t.co/HkZz0kstO9>  
(Impressions 937, URL Clicks 3, Engagements 28)
- Traffic enforcement measures to be introduced on George Street, Corby: <https://t.co/yhwDlpxujS>  
(Impressions 585, URL Clicks 38, Engagements 59)

## 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