

# Leader's Update

19 April 2024

Issue: 74

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## Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- Traffic enforcement measures introduced on George Street in Corby.
- Places allocated for children starting in primary and infant schools in North Northamptonshire in September 2024.
- The Future of Kettering Leisure Village - Options Review report.
- Uplift in adult social care aims to support the sector.
- £2.2million funding for A6 road safety works.
- £2million funding for bus service improvements.
- North Northamptonshire pools awarded £300K funding to improve energy efficiency.
- Discover Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire Family History Society team up for Heritage Fair.
- Candidates announced for Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election.
- Postal Vote Return Form: Changes in legislation.
- Have your say on Kettering Energy Park - Revised draft masterplan document.

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!

## Traffic enforcement measures introduced on George Street in Corby

Traffic enforcement measures are now in place to deter drivers from using a section of George Street in Corby as a cut through.

As of Tuesday 16 April, only buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and cyclists will be able to enter the main crossing section between 8am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday.

The measures have been introduced to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the road.

The previous traffic regulation order (TRO) has been replaced with one that will enable North Northamptonshire Council to enforce vehicle access restrictions by using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR).

Anyone found to be breaching the order will face a fine of £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days).

Following guidance from central government, there will be a grace period in place for the next six months to give drivers time to adjust. During this grace period, anyone driving unpermitted through this stretch will receive a warning letter but will not be fined on the first occasion only. However, if people continue to flout the rules, a fine will be issued. Once the six-month grace period has finished, anyone driving unpermitted through the section will receive a letter and a fine.

## Places allocated for children starting in primary and infant schools in North Northamptonshire in September 2024

A total of 3,861 reception places have been allocated to children across North Northamptonshire.

- **First preference school:** 93.03% of applicants (3,592 children).
- **Second preference school:** 4.51% of applicants.
- **Third preference school:** 0.57% of applicants.
- **Preferred school:** 98.11% of applicants.
- **Online applications:** 98.47% of applications were made online.

Parents or carers who applied online before the closing date for their places in reception are able to check their offer on our website.

### Junior school places (Year 3)

There were 951 applications, with 99.79% of pupils being allocated a place at their first preference school. Some 99.97% were allocated one of their preferred schools.

Where children have not been successful in getting a place at a preference school, parents have the right to appeal through the independent appeals process.

The next round of primary school place allocations for late applicants will take place in May.

Starting school is a huge step for all children to take and I wish them all the very best as they embark on their education.

Investing in our children's futures is a key priority for the council and we are committed to making continued improvements.

Over the past three years we have continued to invest in new schools and classrooms to help increase the number of school places and have further earmarked £12million of capital investment over the next four years.

### Further information

Please visit the [School admissions](#) section of our website.

## The Future of Kettering Leisure Village - Options Review report

The long-term future of Kettering Leisure Village was discussed at a meeting of North Northamptonshire Council's Executive yesterday (Thursday 18 April).

[The Future of Kettering Leisure Village - Options Review](#) report examines the current situation with the running of the valued community asset.

It outlines the complicated leasing arrangements for the facility, which was built in 1991.

Following discussions between the council and Phoenix Leisure Management ([Statement regarding Kettering Leisure Village](#)), an agreement was reached on 28 June 2023 that Phoenix Leisure Management would take over operations from 4 September 2023 from Compass (Kettering Leisure Village).

Since then, Phoenix Leisure Management has continued to successfully operate the complex, with sports and leisure activities on offer as well as the arena hosting a number of high-profile events, including performances and shows at The Lighthouse Theatre.

The operational running of Kettering Leisure Village is outside the control of the council. However, the report explores options for the council should it ever need to consider stepping in. This can only happen if the council was to gain full control of the site. The report follows on from a motion which was approved by Full Council in June 2023. The motion asked that a business and legal case be put together which considered the viability of the council stepping in to run the site should the need arise.

The report acknowledges that the council will continue to work with Phoenix Leisure Management to support the ongoing business growth and development of future plans.

Currently, North Northamptonshire Council has no legal right to step in and run the site. The council is however happy with how the site is being run and officers will continue to work with Phoenix Leisure Management. Whilst this review considers all future options for the site, none are within the gift of the council. As part of the process, the council must also consider what is best value should it need to take on the site - something that is not currently possible (or needed) due to the nature of its legal interest.

I'm delighted that the deal which we helped broker last summer has so far proved to be a tremendous success and I'm pleased with the progress that has been made in the past few months.

Kettering Leisure Village is a treasured asset in our area and it's essential that it continues to thrive.

## **Uplift in adult social care aims to support the sector**

North Northamptonshire Council will pay more money to contracted suppliers of social care services for vulnerable adults in the area.

The [Annual Inflationary Uplift Adult Social Care & Support 2024/2025](#) proposal presented to the council's Executive yesterday recommends increasing payments to contracted providers as part of the annual uplift in a bid to bolster support for the sector and address the shortage of care workers, which is part of a national issue.

For 2024/25 the uplift is for across the full range of community-based provision which includes residential and nursing care, home care, day care, Shared Lives and supported living.

By targeting annual uplifts, the council supports the ability of contracted care providers to develop strategies to tackle workforce challenges, including offering rates of pay that are competitive with other local sectors.

Alongside targeting inflationary uplifts, the council continues to work in partnership with its contracted providers to make social care an attractive career proposition within North Northamptonshire.

Additionally, the authority has offered fully funded training to care staff working within the independent care sector and continued to develop a social care workforce strategy.

Annual fee uplifts take into consideration market pressures and market sustainability. This includes the care market's ability to maintain adequate capacity and supply, whilst adhering to regulatory and quality requirements.

The uplifts also take into consideration central government's annual position on setting the National Living Wage. In 2024/25 the government has confirmed that the Living Wage will rise by 9.8% from £10.42 per hour in 2023/24 to £11.44 in 2024/25 for those aged 23 years and over.

## **£2.2million funding for A6 road safety works**

North Northamptonshire Council has received £2.2million of funding from central government for safety improvements along the A6 between Burton Latimer and the Chowns Mill roundabout.

In 2023, selected councils were invited to submit bids for road safety improvements along known high level road safety routes.

The Department for Transport (DfT) announced last month that North Northamptonshire Council was one of 15 authorities to receive funding under the programme.

Following the approval of the [Department for Transport Funding Allocation](#) report at yesterday's meeting of the Executive, a timeline will be set out for delivering the scheme to complete the work within the 2024/2025 financial year. Local members will also be kept up to date as the project progresses.

Proposed interventions include:

- Signalisation of the junction of the A6 at Higham Road, Burton Latimer, including the upgrade of pedestrian facilities.
- Reduction of the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph between Finedon and Burton Latimer.
- Measures along the length of the A6 to reduce speeds including central hatching.
- Measures along the A6 between A14 and A510 to improve lane adherence including edge lines, clearing roadside hazard, guard railing.
- Signalisation of the northern junction of the A6/Station Road near Irthlingborough.

This latest round of funding is in addition to the [previously announced funding for the highways network](#) across North Northamptonshire.

## £2million funding for bus service improvements

North Northamptonshire Council has been allocated £2.045m of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for bus service improvements in 2024/25.

The money from central government is part of a national initiative called the Bus Service Improvement Plan which aims to improve local bus services.

The [Department for Transport Funding Allocation](#) report, agreed by the council's Executive yesterday, allows for a significant programme of bus service improvements including:

- To continue to fund existing bus services where they represent value for money or maintain essential connectivity for local communities.
- To increase service frequency or restore services withdrawn since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic where there is a reasonable prospect of the service becoming commercially viable.
- To forward fund improvements where Section 106 developer funding is due before the end of the funding period to increase the time for the service to achieve commercial viability.

This funding is in addition to [previous allocations](#) of £569,412 for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Retaining high quality bus services is a priority for us and this funding stream will have such a positive impact on local communities.

From speaking to residents, we know that high quality bus services are vital to help reduce isolation and support local economies.

## North Northamptonshire pools awarded £300K funding to improve energy efficiency

Over 300 public swimming pools and leisure centres across England will receive a share of £60 million from the government and Sport England to ensure their long-term financial sustainability, by improving their energy efficiency and keep running costs down.

North Northamptonshire Council has been awarded £303,482 funding from Phase II of the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) that will benefit two local swimming pools.

- **Corby's East Midlands International Pool** (run by North Northants Leisure) will develop energy saving projects including the installation of a covering on the 20m pool and LED lighting.
- **Rushden's Splash Leisure Pool** (managed on behalf of the council by Freedom Leisure) will be able to replace their gas boilers and scope out the potential installation of photovoltaic (solar) rooftop panels.

Pools consume a lot of energy as machinery must be run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to keep them operational.

The investment will help ensure that residents of all ages can continue to use these vital community hubs. Swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay active, with positive impacts on physical and mental health.

Making innovative changes to the way these buildings are operated ensures that we continue to reduce our carbon footprint and supports our goal of North Northamptonshire Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

## **Discover Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire Family History Society team up for Heritage Fair**

Discover Northamptonshire are working in partnership with the Northamptonshire Family History Society, with support from Wicksteed Park to hold a Heritage Fair on Sunday 28 April at Wicksteed Park.

History, heritage, and visitor attractions will be celebrated as part of the Heritage Fair. The event will be officially opened at 11am by Councillor Barbara Jenney, Chairman of North Northamptonshire Council. Mr Oliver Wicksteed and wife will also be in attendance.

On the day nearly 45 groups, societies and visitor attractions will be showcasing a different aspect of Northamptonshire's history and heritage.

They include Naseby Battlefield Project, Northants Weavers, Spinners & Dyers, Deene Park (the home of the Brudenell family since 1514) and the 384th Bombardment Group Museum.

Northamptonshire Archives and Heritage Service staff will be offering advice on how to do historical research, what documents the archive has and how to look after your own precious heirlooms.

Kettering Civic Society promotes cultural community events in the town and has produced a series of magazines on the town's heritage.

St Mary's School in Kettering is promoting the 125-year history of the school and want to gather the living history of those who have been part of the school over the years. If you have connections with the school or even better, photographs or memories of your time there, do come along and share them.

Wicksteed Park will be showcasing their year-round heritage and community programmes as well as a handling table for children of items from their archives.

Northamptonshire Family History Society will have a range of publications available and volunteers on hand to offer advice for anyone researching their family history. They are an active group who hold monthly meetings in Northampton, Kettering and online. Come and see what they have to offer.

The event will also show the richness of the natural heritage of the county with the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants promoting their great work in caring for nature and offering volunteering opportunities alongside Northamptonshire Beekeepers Association and Nene Valley Bat Group. Stanwick Lakes will also be there - you can catch up with the amazing projects they are currently working on and find out about why it is a great place to visit.

Other exhibitors include Chester House Estate with its 10,000 years of human activity and the Archaeological Resource (ARC) Centre which is based there. The ARC holds archaeological objects that cover the whole breadth of human occupation within Northamptonshire.

The team at Discover Northamptonshire will also be on hand to help with days out inspiration and itinerary planning including ideas for local walks, cycle routes, places to eat and much more.

To see a full list of exhibitors, please visit the [Northamptonshire Family History Society](#) website.

## Candidates announced for Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election

Voters across Northamptonshire will go to the polls to elect their Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on Thursday 2 May.

The council has published a [Statement of Persons Nominated](#) listing all candidates who will be standing for the election.

They are:

- Martyn Emberson, Conservative and Unionist Party,
- Ana Gunn, Liberal Democrats, and
- Danielle Stone, Labour and Co-operative Party.

The [Police Fire and Crime Commissioner](#) is elected to oversee local policing and fire and rescue services, manage the police and fire and rescue budget, set council tax rates for policing and ensure transparent communication about police activities in the community. They will also make key appointments of the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer for the Northamptonshire area.

If you wish to [vote by proxy](#) (when someone votes on your behalf) have until 5pm on Wednesday 24 April to apply (not for postal-proxy or emergency proxy applications).

Students have the option of registering at both their home and term-time addresses. If they are in different local authority areas, they can vote in both locations for this election.

The UK government has introduced a requirement for voters to produce acceptable [photographic identification when voting](#) in person at a polling station. This new requirement will apply to this election.

Residents without an acceptable form of ID have until 5pm on Wednesday 24 April to apply for a [Voter Authority Certificate](#).

For more information, please visit the [Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election](#) section of our website.

## Postal Vote Return Form: Changes in legislation

Due to changes in legislation, a Postal Vote Return Form must now be completed when handing in postal votes to a designated council office or polling station.

Any postal votes submitted without the form being completed must be rejected.

Residents should:

- post postal votes using a Royal Mail post box or
- hand in postal votes at a polling station on polling day or
- hand in postal votes to a designated North Northamptonshire Council office (all council offices with the exception of Bowling Green Road in Kettering will close at 5pm on polling day).

By law you can only hand in your own postal vote and those of up to five others for any relevant poll. All postal votes must reach the Local Returning Officer by 10pm on polling day.

## Have your say on Kettering Energy Park - Revised draft masterplan document

A consultation has opened on revised proposals for an energy park to the east of Burton Latimer.

In April 2023, a consultation asked for views on an initial draft masterplan for Kettering Energy Park which outlined a vision for the site at Burton Wold and how it could be developed. Comments and feedback have now been considered and a revised masterplan is now out for consultation.

The masterplan will guide proposals and applications related to renewable energy, including how new employment opportunities could be brought forward.

The proposal fits with the Joint Core Strategy (or Local Plan) for North Northamptonshire, which identifies land at Burton Wold as the main area of local opportunity for an energy park.

## Public consultation

The masterplan is currently subject to a six-week public consultation which runs up until Wednesday 15 May.

The [masterplan](#) and a [feedback form](#) can be found on the [Kettering Energy Park](#) website.

## Engagement event

As part of the consultation process, First Renewable Developments are holding a public engagement event tomorrow (Saturday 20 April) from 10am to 1pm.

Anyone who would like to find out more about the energy park proposals, can come along and view material and speak with promoters and officers from North Northamptonshire Council at: Finedon Community Sports and Leisure Centre, 71 Wellingborough Road, Finedon NN9 4QP.

## Next steps

Following the six-week consultation on the masterplan, the promoters propose to make further amendments, and will report the outcome to the council's Planning Communities Executive Advisory Panel.

Following this process, it is understood that First Renewable Developments, as site promoters, will submit planning applications to the council, of which the masterplan will form part, for consideration.

## 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](#).

- [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\)](#). Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are legal documents developed by the Traffic Authority which are required to support a range of different measures which govern or restrict the use of public roads. These measures include waiting and loading restrictions (double yellow lines, limited waiting, loading etc.), one-way streets, banned turns, speed limits, weight or width restrictions, bus or cycle lanes and electric vehicle parking places. Further information regarding current North Northamptonshire Council TROs under consultation can be found on our [Traffic Regulation Order consultations](#) web page. Closes 31 Mar 2025.

## Forthcoming meetings

### Full Council

- Thursday 25 April from 6pm.

### Executive

- Thursday 16 May 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):

- [Discover Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire Family History Society team up for Heritage Fair](#)
- [Places allocated for children starting in primary and Infants schools in North Northamptonshire in September 2024](#)
- [Enforcement measures to be introduced from 16 April on George Street, Corby](#)
- [Proposed uplift in adult social care aims to support the sector](#)
- [Bus service improvements set to be discussed next week](#)
- [A6 road safety works on the Executive agenda](#)
- [Report on Kettering Leisure Village to be discussed by North Northamptonshire Council's Executive](#)
- [North Northamptonshire pools awarded £300K funding](#)
- [Candidates announced for PFCC election](#)
- [Have your say on Kettering Energy Park - revised draft masterplan document](#)

## 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 (15 to 17 April)

- Please do not place clothing in your recycling bin. If they are in good condition, clothes can be taken to a charity shop, textiles bank or one of our Household Waste Recycling Centres (tips). Find your nearest HWRC <https://ow.ly/okzw50QcNLT>  
(Reach 9,746, Link Clicks 9, Engagement 730)
- You could be the final piece of the puzzle. The one we've been looking for. Consider a career in local Government <https://ow.ly/lQob50OWNP3>  
(Reach 3,636, Link Clicks 69, Engagement 238)
- Places allocated for children starting in primary and Infants schools in North Northamptonshire in September 2024 <https://ow.ly/k7Hs50Rh4fw>  
(Reach 3,684, Link Clicks 71, Engagement 250)

### Top Tweets so far this week (15 to 17 April)

- It is an offence not to pick up and dispose of your dog's waste appropriately and can lead to a £1000 fine. If you see an overflowing bin, please report it online <https://t.co/8OpHa24wHh>  
(Impressions 676, URL Clicks 4, Engagements 17)
- As part of the consultation process for Kettering Energy Park, First Renewable Developments are holding a public engagement event on Saturday 20 April 2024 between 10:30am and 1:30pm at Finedon Community Centre. To find out more, visit: <https://t.co/9KrfytPirf>  
(Impressions 509, URL Clicks 5, Engagements 11)
- From today, enforcement measures start on George Street, Corby. Anyone found to be breaching the order will face a fine of £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days). Find out more: <https://t.co/EOFBQ8WwYy>  
(Impressions 490, URL Clicks 11, Engagements 23)

## 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

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