

Introduction and Welcome!

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year! I know many of our staff and those working for our partner agencies worked tirelessly throughout the Christmas period, so I am always very cautious when I say I hope you had a lovely break.

I mentioned in my last update of 2021, just before Christmas, that we enter 2022 with a veil of uncertainty over us regarding the Omicron variant of COVID-19. Although as a Council we have been able to continue to provide services, it is very clear that the Omicron variant is making its impact felt on health and care services and also threatens the routine provision of other important services such as refuse collections too.

At the time of writing this update, Northamptonshire's Local Resilience Forum were in the process of declaring a system wide major incident in relation to the impact of COVID-19. Calling a major incident bolsters health and public services ability to join forces and co-ordinate activity to help continuity of essential services and help manage and plan for sustained pressure caused by COVID-19 on staffing levels. Alongside our partner agencies, we are keeping the situation under constant review, making proactive preparations to deal with issues which may present themselves at any moment. Any further announcements we make will be shared via our Twitter feed and on the homepage of our [website](#).

On 23 December, the Executive met and approved a draft budget for 2022-23 for consultation. The consultation closes on 28 January 2022 in preparation for the presentation of the final budget proposals being considered at Executive and Council this February. Please do take some time to take part in the budget consultation which can be accessed via the Council's [Consultation Portal](#).

Finally, and a nice way to see in the New Year, I was delighted to see some very talented local people receiving recognition in The Queen's New Year Honours. They are an inspiration to us all! I have included more about this further below.

Northamptonshire care workers offered £600 thank-you payment for ongoing commitment over the pandemic

A bonus of £600 is to be offered to all staff across Northamptonshire delivering Care Quality Commission (CQC) Regulated Care Services for their efforts during the ongoing pandemic and over the coming winter months.

Leaders from North and West Northamptonshire Councils, together with the Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Executive, have worked together and merged funding available for this purpose to make the offer.

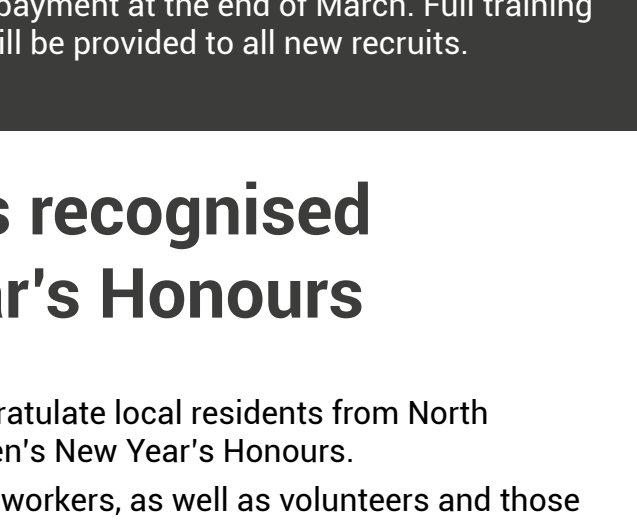
The payment is made in recognition of the vital role carers undertake in helping to keep people at home, or looking after them in care homes, and supporting those returning after hospital stays. This kind of care is critical in helping our hospitals and health service cope over this busy and challenging period.

It is hoped that the extra payment will act as an incentive for care workers to keep going and remain in their jobs in CQC regulated settings over the winter, and for new starters to join the caring profession over the coming winter months, up until 31 March.

There are more than 12,075 staff employed by over 400 independent care and support providers providing care and support to vulnerable individuals in the community and residential settings in the county. The funding will cost approximately £7.245m and comes from:

- The combined North and West Northamptonshire Council's COVID-19 Contain Outbreak Management Fund (£508,907).
- The government Social Care Workforce Retention Fund (£5,236,093).
- A contribution to each Northamptonshire Council (North & West) from Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (£0.75m).

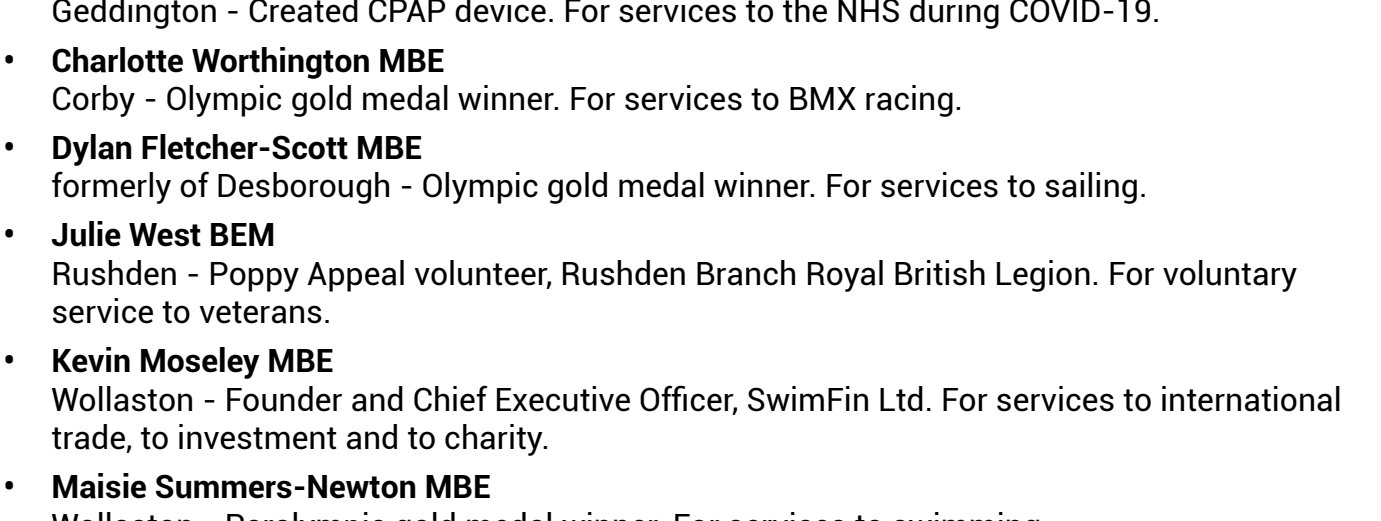
The payment will be made on 31 March to existing staff and to new starters. To qualify as a new starter, individuals must be new to CQC regulated care and support and recruited on or before the end of January 2022. They will also receive the payment at the end of March. Full training and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be provided to all new recruits.



Local residents recognised in the New Year's Honours

North Northamptonshire Council would like to congratulate local residents from North Northamptonshire who were recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours.

From Olympians and Paralympians to public sector workers, as well as volunteers and those making a difference in their communities, 11 individuals received honours:



- Aaron Shrive BEM**
Desborough - Supplied the NHS with PPE. For services to the Covid-19 response.
- Alison Duckles CBE**
Wellingborough - Head, Learning and Development, Laing O'Rourke. For services to education.
- Professor Ben Hodgkinson BEM**
Geddington - Created CPAP device. For services to the NHS during COVID-19.
- Charlotte Worthington MBE**
Corby - Olympic gold medal winner. For services to BMX racing.
- Dylan Fletcher-Scott MBE**
formerly of Desborough - Olympic gold medal winner. For services to sailing.
- Julie West BEM**
Rushden - Poppy Appeal volunteer, Rushden Branch Royal British Legion. For voluntary services to veterans.
- Kevin Moseley MBE**
Wollaston - Founder and Chief Executive Officer, SwimFin Ltd. For services to international trade, to investment and to charity.
- Maisie Summers-Newton MBE**
Wollaston - Paralympic gold medal winner. For services to swimming.
- Timothy Aldous BEM**
Kettering - Works Supervisor, Forestry England. For services to forestry.
- Vincent James BEM**
Irchester - Employee, Network Rail. For services to prisoners.
- Yvonne Baker OBE**
Rushden - Chief Executive, STEM Learning. For services to STEM education.

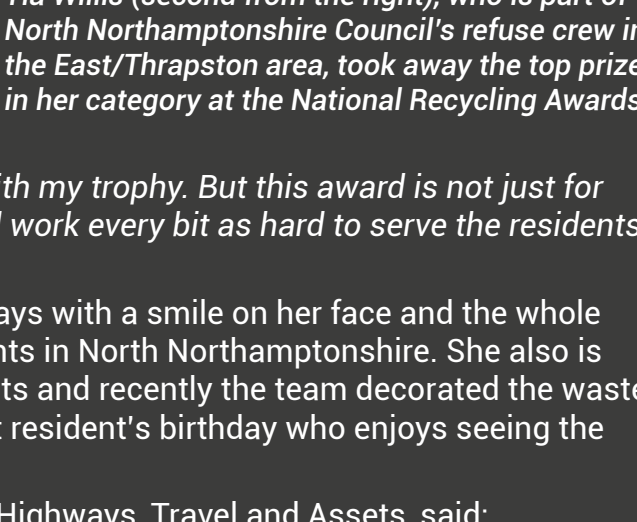
Rising star Tia wins National Recycling Award

During the ceremony in London in early December Tia, who has been a member of the team since she was 18, picked up the 'Rising Star' award for going above and beyond during the pandemic.

The judges commented that Tia was an amazing person who really stood out from the pack and a truly positive person who is an excellent representative for the industry.

Tia Willis said:

"I love my job and I really enjoy meeting the public and helping them to recycle, as a key worker, but never did I think I would win an award for doing something that I love. And it is not just any award, the National Recycling Awards' Rising Star! I was totally blown away and so proud to go up on stage and be presented with my trophy. But this award is not just for me, it's for the whole of the team I work with who all work every bit as hard to serve the residents of North Northamptonshire."



Tia Willis (second from the right), who is part of North Northamptonshire Council's refuse crew in the East/Thrapston area, took away the top prize in her category at the National Recycling Awards.

Throughout the pandemic, Tia has worked hard always with a smile on her face and the whole team have continued to provide a service for residents in North Northamptonshire. She also is always keen to go one step further for some residents and recently the team decorated the waste truck for one of North Northamptonshire's youngest resident's birthday who enjoys seeing the bin lorry visit his street.

Clr Graham Lawman, NNC's Executive for Highways, Travel and Assets, said:

"All of our bin crews have worked so hard throughout the pandemic and I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single one of them. Tia always goes above and beyond. I know she loves her job, which she does with a smile on her face and taking time to speak to residents - this award is well deserved for her commitment and enthusiasm and I was privileged to watch her collect it at the ceremony. She should be extremely proud of herself, as I and the rest of her team are. Well done!"

The results of the National Recycling Awards were revealed on 8 December in a ceremony where over 500 of the recycling sector's leading lights came together in-person, for the first time since June 2019 to celebrate the industry's achievements.

With 16 categories, the awards cover every aspect of the recycling and waste management industry, from Food Waste Initiative to Recycling Excellence.

The MRW National Recycling Awards bring together recycling and waste management professionals to recognise and celebrate best practice and innovation in recycling and waste management. The awards provide industry recognition and unrivalled networking opportunities.

The Council sets out its Spending Plans for the year ahead – have your say!

The draft revenue budget for North Northamptonshire Council was approved by the Executive on 23 December. You can [view the full budget report on the website](#).

The Council is now seeking views on its spending proposals for the next financial year.

You can take part in the consultation in the following ways:

- Completing the online survey.**
- Alternatively, you can write to: North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL.



North Northamptonshire Council's budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2022-2023 as well as outlining the medium-term financial plan for the next two years.

The Council is working hard to protect vital services, while at the same time proposing a balanced budget, with a net revenue budget of £293.5million for the next financial year.

This funding 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, household waste recycling, economic development, housing and support for the homeless.

The budget further develops firm financial foundations for the Council as it settles into its second year following the reorganisation of local government in Northamptonshire.

Proposals focus on further transformation of services as well as developing policies around the authority's newly adopted Corporate Plan.

While the Council is in a stable position now, it is recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on societies and economies around the world and this presents some uncertainty in the medium-term.

However, the Council believes that by being prudent it can be in the best position possible as it moves forward.

It is proposed that council tax is increased by 2.99%, which includes the adult social care precept of 1%. There is no change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%.

This consultation will run from 23 December until midnight on Friday 28 January with the Executive then meeting on 10 February to consider final budget proposals for recommendation to Full Council on 24 February.

Executive meeting on Thursday 13 January 2022

Whilst we are on the subject of the Executive, you can now [view the agenda and reports](#) for the meeting of the Executive that will take place on Thursday 13 January 2022 from 10am.

Here is a list of some of the reports that will be considered:

- Performance Indicator Report (Period 7)
- Afghan Citizens Resettlement
- Community Programme to Support Growing, Cooking and Eating Healthy Foods
- North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Procurement of Short-Term Home Care Services
- Procurement of a Countywide Carers Support Service
- Future Ways of Working Strategy
- North Northamptonshire People Plan
- Budget Forecast 2021/22 (Period 7)
- Capital Programme Update



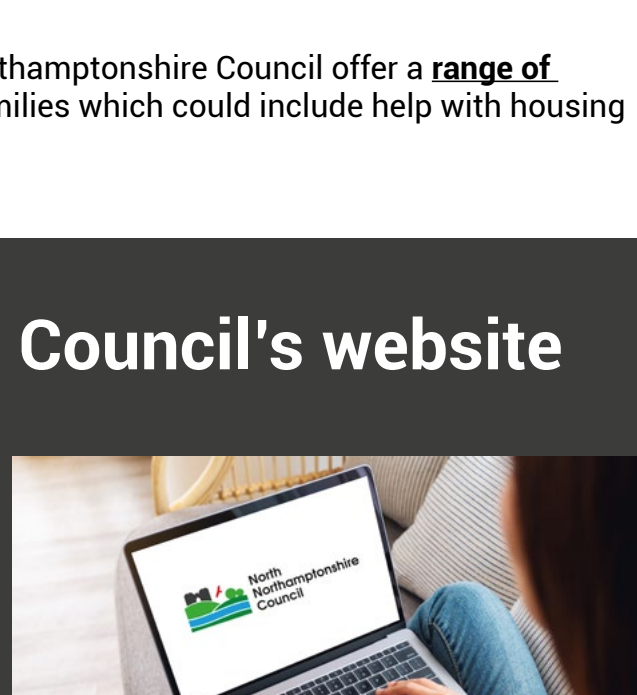
Northamptonshire unitary councils deepen pledge to armed forces

Support for armed services personnel, veterans, and their families is set to improve in Northamptonshire after the unitary councils received bronze awards in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council have already signed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) which puts in writing both council's commitment to supporting those connected to the forces. The ERS Bronze award is now the first step in a constant improvement programme which makes it easier for reservists to find flexible employers and improves employment pathways between the forces and the private and public sectors.

Clr Andy Mercer, North Northamptonshire Council's AFC Member Champion and Executive Member for Housing and Community, said:

"Our emergency services are a traditional route for the armed services, but there's also a huge overlap with local councils in terms of sense of duty, serving the community and working towards something much bigger than yourself. I'm really proud that, as a county, we have made the commitment to go further and to tap into the skills and experience those from the armed forces can offer our communities."



In addition to signing the AFC, Bronze ERS holders must show they promote armed forces-friendly to partners and show they are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners.

Among other measures, Silver ERS awards are given to employers who have a policy in place which will allow reservists to fulfil their military commitments, while Gold award holders have committed to taking on those leaving the services via the Careers Transitions Programme and have registered for the Forces Family Portal.

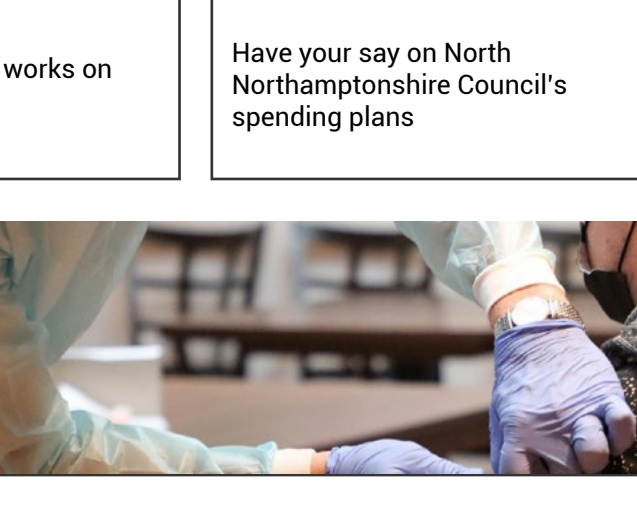
Both North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council offer a **range of support** for serving personnel, veterans and their families which could include help with housing and Council Tax.

Improvements to the Council's website

Over the course of the next few months we will continue to make improvements to our [website](#).

We continue to add more content and make it easier for people to transact with the Council and access services at a time and place that best suits them. We have very recently added the ability to embed video in certain areas of the website, opening up new possibilities moving forward.

To help get the ball rolling, we have added a video of Paul Parsons, the former Northamptonshire High Sheriff, providing advice on tree planting for the Queen's Green Canopy (please note the video was made prior to the onsite of the Omicron variant): [Supporting the Queen's Green Canopy](#).



Press releases

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

<p>Notice of Vacancy for Oundle ward of North Northamptonshire Council</p>	<p>North Northamptonshire Council congratulates local residents recognised in the New Year's Honours</p>	
<p>163 confirmed cases of COVID-19 Omicron variant in last seven days in North Northamptonshire</p>	<p>Update on highways works on Kettering junctions</p>	<p>Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans</p>
<p>Northamptonshire care workers offered £600 thank-you payment for ongoing commitment over the pandemic</p>	<p>Northamptonshire unitary councils deepen pledge to armed forces</p>	<p>Rising star Tia wins National Recycling Award</p>
<p>Reduce NHS pressure, protect ourselves and others, and enjoy Christmas</p>	<p>Northamptonshire unitary councils deepen pledge to armed forces</p>	<p>Rising star Tia wins National Recycling Award</p>

If you would like stay up to date with the Council's media releases, you can visit the news section of the Council's website: www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news

Or follow Twitter [@NNNorthantsC](#) and/or Facebook [@NorthNorthants](#)

Social media: Top stories

To follow our social media accounts you can find us on [Facebook North Northamptonshire Council - Home](#) | and on Twitter by following [@NorthNorthantsC](#)

Top Tweets and posts from 3 - 5 January:

- Facebook:** (measured by reach and post clicks)
- Have the batteries ran out on the new Christmas toy already? (reach 6,727, post clicks 118)
 - COVID boosters are available in Wellingborough today at Glamis Hall from 9am until 6pm, no need to book. (reach 5,963, post clicks 88)
 - We'd like to wish North Northamptonshire residents, businesses and partners a very Happy New Year. (reach 5,378, post clicks 90)
- Twitter:** (measured by impressions and engagements)
- COVID boosters are available in Wellingborough today at Glamis Hall from 9am until 6pm, no need to book. (Impressions 1,890, post engagement 13)
 - Booked a taxi for your New Year celebrations? (Impressions 1,663, post engagement 13)
 - We'd like to wish North Northamptonshire residents, businesses and partners a very Happy New Year. (Impressions 1,277, post engagement 19)

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have ideas of items to include in future updates please let me know at: executive@northnorthants.gov.uk

With Best Wishes,
Jason