





Introduction and Welcome!

Leader's

Update

Cllr Jason Smithers Leader of the Council

This last week has been shocking and very emotional for us all. The premeditated and unprovoked brutality of the Russian regime is in stark contrast to the fearless courage and determination of the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainians are an inspiration to us all as they fight for their democratic freedom, something that we have taken for granted for so long but has now been brought so dramatically into focus.

The Council, appalled by the actions of the Kremlin, passed a motion at Full Council condemning the unprovoked aggression of the Russian government who have invaded Ukraine. The Council also held a vigil outside the Corby Cube yesterday evening to provide the opportunity for the public to show their solidarity to the brave men, women and children of Ukraine.



Condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

At the meeting of Full Council on 24 February, North Northamptonshire Council condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Council clearly signalled that it stands in solidarity with the

Ukrainian people. At the meeting, in my capacity as Leader of the Council, I moved a motion speaking out against the act of aggression in Eastern Europe. The motion was seconded by the Labour Croup and supported by the Croop Alliance, giving

The motion was seconded by the Labour Group and supported by the Green Alliance, giving cross-party support. **"North Northamptonshire Council unreservedly condemns the unprovoked aggression of Russia**"

in invading the Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and supports the British Government in its diplomatic and economic measures against the Russian State."

Vigil held in solidarity of Ukraine

On the evening of Thursday 3 March, North Northamptonshire Council held a vigil at the Corby Cube as a show of solidarity and support for the people of Ukraine.

Members of the public attended for a moment of quiet reflection. We would like to thank those who turned out to mark this important event. The Cube has been chosen by the Council as it is the heart of North Northamptonshire's democratic

decision making and symbolises the democracy which is under attack in Ukraine.

Ukraine help: What can people in the UK do?

As a humanitarian crisis unfolds in Ukraine, many people are looking for ways in which they can help. Global charities and organisations are collecting funds, these include: The British Red Cross, the UNHCR refugee agency, Unicef (the UN's children's charity) and Save The Children. This **<u>BBC News article</u>** explains how you can support the some of the groups offering help.

Pay award update

I was pleased to see that a number of national pay awards (National Joint Council (NJC) - 'Green Book', Soulbury Pay and Chief Officers) were agreed last week and work is currently being undertaken to ensure that these are implemented and paid to employees/members at the earliest possible opportunity.

We know that we have many staff who are not contractually entitled to receive these nationally agreed pay awards having been managed historically under local pay bargaining. However, we have been committed from the outset to apply fairness, where possible, across our workforce to try to address some of the extremely difficult pay challenges that we inherited from previous councils.

For this reason, myself, alongside Rob and his leadership team have wholeheartedly recommended to the employment committee that the NJC 'Green Book' pay award should also be applied to those employees who are on local terms.

We believe that this is the right thing to do for our workforce especially as we continue in our journey to becoming an employer of choice. This will be part of a number of measures that we are considering through our People Strategy to reward and recognise colleagues going forward.



Northamptonshire Council

Full Council Meeting – 24 February

You may have followed the progress of the Council's budget over the course of the last few weeks and I have been keen to highlight the key events via this Update. The Budget was approved at a meeting of Full Council on Thursday 24 February in a marathon meeting. If you have some spare time you can watch it on the Council's YouTube channel here: Full Council Meeting - YouTube

- The approved budget should allow the Council to:Continue to move forward with the
- transformation of the Council.
- Invest in tackling climate change with a new fund of £1million over three years.
- Continue to invest in local services, town
- centres and rural communities.
 Support rural bus services and the local
- economy.
- Improve education and skills development.
- Deliver vibrant events and cultural services.

The budget also continues to make a capital investment in projects across the area. Through the hard work of all services, the Council will continue to work to protect vital services while, at the same time, present a balanced budget, with a net revenue budget of £295.9 million for 2022-2023.

It is my view that we should all be proud of what we have achieved over the last year to complete this budget, and all of the work that has gone in to getting it approved. You can read the budget reports that went to Full Council on 24th February online here: **budget reports**

Your Council, Your Services

As soon as the budget was approved a draft council tax information leaflet was finalised and sent off to the Council's printers. This leaflet will be delivered to homes from mid-March along with the annual council tax bills.

The council tax information leaflet will provide information about where the Council get its money from, what it spends it on and will also include important contact details for organisations that can provide financial advice and support. It will also include a web link where further information can be located.







Next Full Council Meeting

The next **Full Council meeting** will take place on Thursday 31 March at 2pm in the Council Chamber at Corby Cube. The agenda and reports will be available the week before.

Live streaming of meetings

Thank you to those of you who watched the Council meeting online. Soon the Council will routinely live stream Full Council and Executive meetings that will be held at Corby's Cube. You will be kept informed via this Update. Watch the meeting on play back on our **YouTube channel**.



Corby redevelopment projects showcased to Government

North Northamptonshire Council projects that are spearheading further redevelopment in Corby town centre were showcased during a Government visit last week. Minister for Levelling Up, Neil O'Brien, was taken on a tour of the sites which will benefit from a

£19.9million cash injection as part of the Town Fund. The Minister visited Chisholm House in Queen's Square, which will be repurposed and developed

into a sixth form college before touring Corby train station, which is part of a scheme to form a better connection with the town centre through active travel. The Minister for Levelling Up Neil O'Brien, said:

"I am truly excited by the regeneration of Chisholm House into a modern, new, carbon-neutral Sixth Form. With backing from Corby's £19.9 million Town Deal, the Sixth Form will give hundreds of young people across Northamptonshire the opportunity to achieve their true potential.

"It was also fantastic to tour Corby station and discuss government-funded plans to improve both pedestrian and cycle links from the town centre to the station. Encouraging active travel, reducing emissions and improving safety is how we create healthy, sustainable and thriving communities across the nation."

The Town Fund projects are:

- Sixth Form College at Chisholm House Chisholm House will be re-purposed and renovated to be a carbon neutral building using the latest innovative technologies to bring this groundbreaking and modern building to the heart of the town centre. It will attract 16 to 18-year-old, young adults from the surrounding area.
- Corby Station to town centre This project will look to improve the public realm on Oakley Road for cyclists and pedestrian usage. This main road will look to update these important links in Corby from the train station, Tresham College and the town centre, with a focus on promoting active travel along this key route.
- Smart and Connected Corby This project seeks to establish Corby as a smart and green town centre through harnessing connected and clean technologies. Using the latest connected and smart technology will enable us to monitor flows of pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, shoppers, and visitors to understand the present and predict the future.
- Multi-Purpose building This project aims to provide permanent new accommodation for a modern Arts and Community Centre in a multi-use facility, located in a central location in Corby's town centre.

Council commits to being carbon neutral by 2030

North Northamptonshire Council announced last week that it is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Since the authority came into being in April 2021, work has started in earnest to tackle climate change and look after our beautiful environment. Over the next 12 months, the Council will continue to develop its wider approach to doing so, building on the hard work already underway.

The council approved a significant budget of £1 million to be spent over the next three years to tackle climate change. It is expected that elements of this funding will be used to develop a carbon management action plan and establish a Climate Change and Environment strategy.



In the immediate term, the funding will also be used to roll out environmental awareness training for all elected members and staff in a phased approach, starting in March. Since its inception as a new council, a great deal of **activity has been undertaken**. For example,

the Council has instigated a tree-planting initiative which has seen more than 2,000 trees planted over the past few months as well as continuing a campaign to 'feed the bees' by allowing wildflowers to flourish in some roadside verges, where appropriate. The authority also hosted its own conference – NN Climate 21 – in November, to showcase

pioneering measures already in place and in development to reduce carbon emissions in the North Northamptonshire area.

Included in this were details of the rollout of on-street electric vehicle charging points with the company Liberty Charge at seven locations in the North Northamptonshire area. This initiative has been further progressed and residential on-street locations have been chosen to address the charging needs of those who do not have access to a driveway, or any other means of privately charging their vehicles.

Executive Meeting – 22 February

The Council's Executive met on Tuesday 22 February in the Council Chamber at the Corby Cube. Here are some of the highlights and outcomes.

- Performance Indicator Report 2021/2022 (Period 9/December) A report was considered that provides information about the Council's performance as measured by performance indicators. The performance indicators the Council uses will soon be refreshed to help reflect the Corporate Plan that was formally adopted by the Council in December 2021.
- Provision of school holiday food vouchers for children and young people eligible for benefits related Free School Meals (FSM) in future school holiday periods – Executive approved the funding of school holiday food vouchers for the 2022 Easter school holiday period and the 2022 May half-term period. The funding for this initiative was granted specifically for the period of time where COVID-19 was at its most disruptive state.
- Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Executive agreed to receive an additional £503,631 of funding and to commit to the funding being invested to extend the public realm works in Kettering's High Street before 31st March 2022. Executive also agreed to the extension of the Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone boundary to incorporate Sawyer's Almshouses and the Manor House Gardens in Sheep Street, Kettering.

You can view the <u>agenda, reports and decisions</u> online.

Next Executive Meeting

The next **Executive meeting** will take place on Thursday 17 March at 10am in the Council Chamber at Corby Cube. The agenda will be available next week.

Secondary school places allocated in North Northamptonshire

A total of 4,186 secondary school places have been allocated to pupils across North Northamptonshire on the 1 March.

This is the first year that places have been allocated specifically within North Northamptonshire, following on from local government reorganisation last year.

81.7% of applicants, that's 3,418 children, have been allocated a place at their first preference. This is a slightly higher percentage than for the county as a whole last year (80.7 % in 2021).

Primary school allocations will be announced on 19 April.

13.5 % of applicants have been allocated a place at either their second or third preference (15% at what was the County Council in 2021).95.2% of applicants have been allocated one of their preferred schools, similar to the number of

children getting a place at a preference school (95.7% in 2021). 98.8% of applications were made online (the same as in 2021).

Families who applied for their secondary school place online and within the deadline are able to **check their offer** on the council's website.

Any parent has the right to appeal (through the independent appeals process) against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. The next round of secondary school place allocations (for late applicants) will take place in April.



Support for businesses to help kick start the High Street

Workshops, webinars, masterclasses and bespoke advice are just a few highlights of the dedicated support available to local independent High Street and online businesses thanks to a new initiative to help kick start our High Streets led by North Northamptonshire Council. NN Future Retail has been made possible by Government's Welcome Back Fund and provides

free packages of support which are available for up to 100 businesses in the area to help them continue to adapt, grow and thrive as they navigate through the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing High Street scene.

Available until the end of March 2022 and on offer for retail, online and High Street businesses in North Northamptonshire are virtual and face to face events which cover topics led by local experts in the field on finance, marketing, social media, strategy, managing people – to name a few! Sessions will provide information, signposting, referrals to funding available and dedicated one to one support led by business specialists tailored to the needs of the organisation.



Delivered on behalf of the Council by local company Building Business with support from partners including Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, the University of Northampton and the Business and IP Centre Northamptonshire, the support provided through the NN Future Retail programme is free to access until the end of March 2022 and is available to independent businesses in the North Northamptonshire area including retail, hospitality, personal care services and more.

Businesses can learn more about this exciting opportunity by emailing the team at **enquiries@ buildingbusiness.org.uk** or by calling 01832 279444.

Learning to live safely with coronavirus

"Learning to live safely with coronavirus means continuing to reduce the risk of catching and passing on the virus with COVID-19 sensible and safe behaviours." That's this week's message from Northamptonshire's Director of Public Health as a further 4,089 residents test positive.

There is no longer a legal requirement for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) infection to selfisolate, however, if you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result, the local and national public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. Individuals can still reduce the risk of catching and passing on COVID-19 by:

- Getting vaccinated
- Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside
- Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high
- Trying to stay at home if you are unwell
- Taking a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive
- Washing your hands and following advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.'

Covid remains a dangerous disease, particularly if you haven't been vaccinated. Getting vaccinated and having the booster or fourth dose when invited is important. Those eligible should **book an appointment** on the NHS website or call 119. Alternatively, people can visit a local drop-in clinic – <u>view the list of vaccination sites</u>

Over 500 cases of environmental crime investigated by the Council

North Northamptonshire Council waste enforcement team investigated over 500 cases of environmental crime between July and December 2021.

The Council's Waste team put a significant amount of work into the street cleansing service but, unfortunately, the roads and streets across North Northamptonshire still suffer the blight of litter and fly tipping which the teams investigate and clear up.

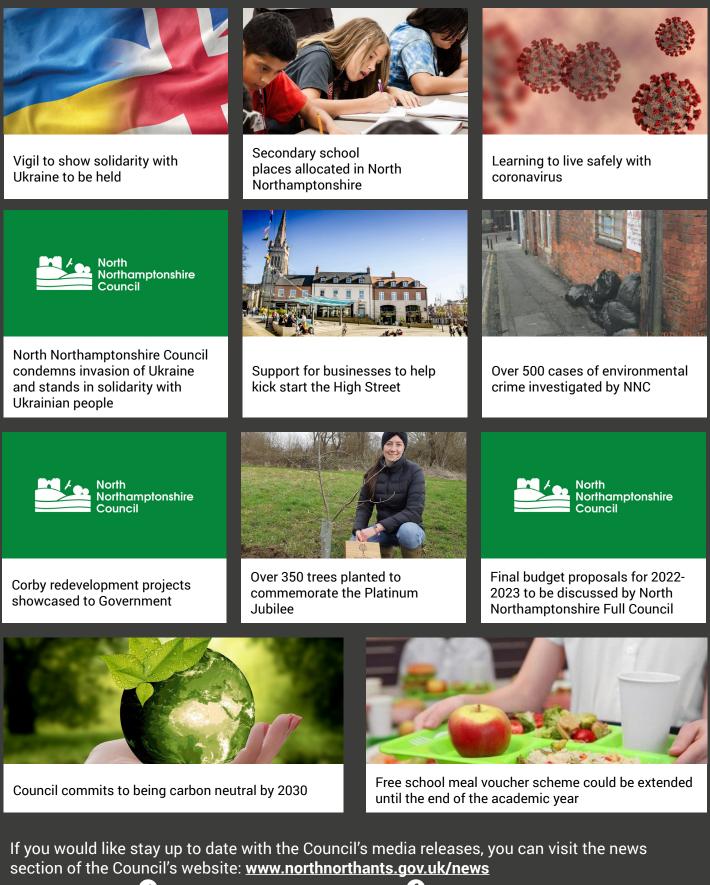
- The activity between July and December 2021 resulted in:
- Issuing 256 Warning Notices
 - Issuing 33 fixed penalty notices for fly tipping or for duty of care issues relating to material that went on to be fly tipped.
 - Referring 23 cases onward for prosecution at Magistrates Court.

The Council still has more than 50 live investigations which may yet result in further prosecutions. The Waste team also led a Community Clean-Up in the Queensway area of Wellingborough in October 2021, alongside partners including Northants Police, Greatwell Homes and local community groups and supported by FCC Environment, which resulted in 14 tonnes of waste being removed. This included 1.5 tonnes of metal, 16 fridges and 19 tyres.

Prior to the event, NNC wrote to all residents in the local area promoting the event and that any waste presented would be collected, including furniture, white goods and household items. The letter also reiterated the council's zero tolerance approach and, since the Clean-Up event, 16 Warning Notices and 1 Fixed Penalty Notice have been issued to residents in the area. Officers continue to patrol the area and are on hand to offer advice to anyone who needs it. Anyone witnessing an offence can report it by contacting us at <u>waste.enc@northnorthants.gov.uk</u>

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):



Or follow Twitter 🕑 @NNorthantsC and/or Facebook f @NorthNorthants



Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Update from Clir Helen Howell Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure,

Culture and Tourism

It's been a busy time recently for tree planting. The Council is working hard alongside town and parish councils and other organisations to get their trees planted before the end of March to get the most out of the current tree planting season. To date, the Council has planted nearly 2,000 trees for the Platinum Jubilee and we will be making sure we log these, if you pardon the pun, on the **Queen's Green Canopy online map**. Some key dates:

Thursday 2 June – Light a beacon for the Jubilee

- The traditional ceremony of <u>lighting the beacons</u> will take place throughout the United Kingdom. Towns and parishes across North Northamptonshire are being encouraged to get involved.
- Thursday will see the Trooping of the Colour, with 1,400 soldiers, 200 horses and 400
 musicians coming together to mark the Queen's official birthday. The parade will begin at
 Buckingham Palace, continuing through The Mall to Horse's Guard Parade, and closing with a
 traditional RAF fly-pass.

Friday 3 June - Thanksgiving service A service of Thanksgiving is to be held at St Paul's Cathedral, with more information to be announced at a later date.

Saturday 4 June - Countywide Jubilee pageant

Plans are under way to organise **a countywide Jubilee pageant** through Northampton town centre, involving military personnel and community groups. North Northamptonshire Council is looking for up to 400 community representatives from the voluntary sector to take part in the Jubilee Pageant. If you are interested in getting involved, please do get in touch and let me know by emailing: <u>Jubilee.pagent@northnorthants.gov.uk</u>

National events taking place on Saturday include:
Her Majesty, alongside members of the Royal Family, will attend the Derby at Epsom Downs.
The BBC will be broadcasting a live concert from Buckingham Palace, Platinum Party at the Palace, where some of the biggest names in entertainment will be performing live and celebrating the most significant moments from The Queen's 70 years of service. Details on how to apply for tickets will be released at a later date.

Sunday 5 June - Big Lunch and national pageant

- The <u>Big Lunch</u>, which has helped to bring communities together since 2009, will be inviting communities together as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Providing ideas for hosting an event, The Big Lunch can be as big as a street party, or as small as a garden barbecue. Plans are underway for a The Big Picnic Lunch event in North Northamptonshire. We're pleased to annouce this will take place at Wicksteed Park and an official press release will be issued soon providing more details about the event.
- <u>A Jubilee Pageant</u> will also be hosted, with 5,000 performers from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth combining a variety of performance arts to commemorate both Her Majesty, and the collective celebratory efforts of people worldwide.

For more information on national events see <u>Platinum Jubilee</u>. Community funding available

Local community and voluntary groups can also apply for a series of grants to help fund arts and sport projects commemorating the jubilee, including Arts Council England's <u>Let's Create Jubilee</u> <u>Fund</u> and <u>Sport England's Platinum Jubilee Activity Fund</u>.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee emblem

Anyone hosting an activity for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations can use the official emblem, but must follow the **Palace's guidelines**.

Over 350 trees planted to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee

364 trees have been planted at the Nene Valley Crematorium in Wellingborough as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

The tree planting on site comprises of two elements - 68 trees planted by Kier and 296 planted by North Northamptonshire Council. The planting by Kier was part of the works for the new prison with trees planted on land that had been leased to Kier from the Council whilst

construction was taking place. The majority of the trees were planted late in 2021 as part of landscaping works undertaken b

2021 as part of landscaping works undertaken by the Council and consisted of boundary planting and three memorial gardens.



Further trees will be planted until the end of the planting season in late March, before additional trees are planted towards the end of 2022 to coincide with the next planting season. The Council is working closely with the Northamptonshire Lord Lieutenant's office to help

encourage tree-planting activities across the area, as well as planting trees on NNC land, in the lead-up to Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022. For more information and how to get involved, visit the <u>Queen's Green Canopy website</u>. You can also find out more details about <u>tree planting and permissions</u>.

Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts on **Facebook** and/or **Twitter**.



- Shared post from The Chester House Estate A young apprentice at The Chester House Estate will get more than he baa-gained for this spring when he will become foster parent to dozens of lambs.
- (Reach 2,261, Post Clicks 22)
 Latest news: Secondary school places allocated across North Northamptonshire
 (Deach 1,424, Deat Olicks 51)
- (Reach 1,434, Post Clicks 51)
- We hope you're having an (ahem) egg-cellent #pancakeday If you have access to a food waste collection service, remember to put your egg shells in there, or if you have a compost heap, they can go in there too! #shrovetuesday (Reach 1,252, Post Clicks 3)

Top Tweets so far this week (28 February - 2 March 2022)

- Beat the Street is coming to Wellingborough in March! Make sure you are following @BTSWellingboro for all the news and updates!
- (Impressions 701, Engagements 11)
 Northamptonshire Carers Awareness Event Wed 9 March from 10am 2.30pm at St. Andrews Church Rooms, Kettering NN16 8JS. Local charities and organisations to isin us and provide information about their carviage supporting uppeid carers.
- join us and provide information about their services supporting unpaid carers. (Impressions 592, Engagements 11)
 Thank you for following our posts supporting and celebrating LGBT+ History Month. We are truly provided from we support our colleagues and we have some of you have
- We are truly proud of how we support our colleagues and we hope some of you have found this month enlightening and useful. You should all be #proud (Impressions 561, Engagements 9)

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 Wisnes, Tason



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Contacting North Northamptonshire Council © 0300 126 3000 @ www.northnorthants.gov.uk

