

# Leader's Update

15 December 2023

Issue: 65

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## Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- Council appoints new Chief Executive.
- Vital services protected as North Northamptonshire budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing need for services.
- New temporary library opens in Kettering.
- Over 400 trees planted in Wellingborough.
- Join the Hi Santa Stops festive trail.
- Community Engagement Hub opens in Swansgate Centre.
- New tailored toilet facilities at tourist hotspots for people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Where to find 'Warm Spaces' in communities across North Northamptonshire.
- Revenues and Benefits: Changes to Direct Debit Service User Number and Reference Number.
- Build Your Business programme.
- Lodge Park Sports Centre wins national award.
- Northamptonshire Carers launch 'One Million Of Us' film.
- Have your say on Police and Fire funding.
- On the Executive agenda: Travellers temporary stopping site.

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

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

## Council appoints new Chief Executive

North Northamptonshire Council formally approved the appointment of Adele Wylie as the council's new permanent Chief Executive at its meeting of Full Council held on Thursday 7 December.

Adele will start her duties on 27 January 2024.

The council issued an earlier press release on the appointment of the Chief Executive. You can read it in full online at: [Council announces new Chief Executive](#).

## Vital services protected as North Northamptonshire budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing need for services

Protecting and investing in our local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty is the focus of North Northamptonshire Council's budget proposals for the next financial year.

A report to be discussed at Executive on Thursday 21 December will propose a balanced revenue budget for 2024/2025 as well as outline the medium-term financial plan for the following three years.

View the report online at: [Draft Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#).

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 council will also be proposing a programme of capital investment totalling £163.5m 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.

Council fees and charges will also be reviewed for 2024/2025 and set in accordance with the council's constitution.

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, the disposal and collection of waste, highways maintenance, economic development, housing and support for those who are homeless.

Read the full press release online at: [Vital services protected as North Northants budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing need for services](#).

## **New temporary library opens in Kettering**

The council has opened a new temporary library in Kettering while roof repair works are undertaken on the existing Grade II listed library building.

Library services have been relocated to the upper floor of the new Cornerstone extension.

The entrance is accessible from the council car park on London Road.

The move was necessary after heavy rainfall in October damaged the roof which forced the library to close.

Library staff will be on site to offer support and guidance to customers, and a full range of services:

- Browsing and lending.
- Request service.
- Group activities including Rhyme Time.
- Warm spaces.
- Drop ins for bus passes.

Opening hours will remain the same:

- Monday to Friday (9am to 6pm).
- Saturday (9am to 5pm).

For further updates, please visit the [Kettering Library Facebook page](#).

## **Over 400 trees planted in Wellingborough**

Officers from North Northamptonshire Council have teamed up with Wellingborough Eco Group to plant 420 small saplings on public open space on Kilborn Road in Wellingborough.

The council has undertaken local surveys to identify open spaces that are suitable for larger scale tree planting, with two approaches taken.

The first approach is to professionally plant larger standard trees in selected areas and include them in a three-year maintenance programme. The second approach is for officers to work with volunteers on community tree plantings.

The first tranche of land dedicated to community tree planting will be the public open space on Kilborn Road with the trees coming from the Woodland Trust's 'Trees for Communities' scheme.

As a council, we are always keen to work with local communities to make a difference on a local level, looking at ways we can work directly with residents. Tree plantings like this one are an example of this.

I am pleased to see that this has been such a success and well attended by volunteers. The saplings took one day to plant but their legacy will be long-lasting.

## **Join the Hi Santa Stops festive trail**

There's no time like the present to join the Hi Santa Stops festive trail.

It's a fun activity for all the family and perfect for little explorers too. It's a great opportunity to discover wonderful places to eat out, shop, catch up and spend time together.

With each Hi Santa Stop you'll uncover enchanting clues from Santa himself, straight from the North Pole.

Watch our [Hi Santa Stops festive trail video](#) for a sneak peek into local twins Myla and Paisley's trail adventure with their mum Kolaine who runs a beauty salon in Kettering, the team had lots of fun filming with them.

The trail is an interactive experience that will get you feeling festive. You'll be in with the chance of winning £500 worth of vouchers to spend at your favourite local businesses when you've unlocked the Christmassy word. As a special treat, everyone taking part is rewarded with a free bag of sweets.

If you're ready to join in, head over to the [Hi Santa Stops](#) section of our website for all the details. Share your magical moments with us by tagging us into your photos on our [Hi Street Facebook](#) and [Hi Street Instagram](#) pages.

## **Community Engagement Hub opens in Swansgate Centre**

Helping people feel safe on the streets and listening to their concerns will be the focus of a Community Engagement Hub in Wellingborough town centre.

The council has teamed up with partners to run a unit in the Swansgate Centre, aimed at engaging with residents on a variety of community safety issues.

The shop was vacant, and the council will use the space at no cost until Sunday 7 January.

Residents are invited to pop in while doing their Christmas shopping to talk to representatives from our Safer Communities Team, Northamptonshire Police and Fire, Trading Standards, Wellingborough Town Council, Greatwell Homes and Ngage.

Information from other agencies and support groups is on display and staff will be on hand to advise.

The Community Engagement Hub can be found opposite Roman clothing store, next to F. Hinds Jewellers.

## **New Changing Places Toilets at tourist hotspots for people with special educational needs and disabilities**

Adults and children of all ages with profound and multiple learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities, now have more choice when deciding which local nature reserves and country parks to visit.

This week, the council has opened brand-new, fully accessible Changing Places Toilets at Stanwick Lakes and Barnwell Country Park. Everyone, regardless of their access needs, disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, can use these toilet facilities hygienically, and with dignity.

The Changing Places Toilets are part of a government-led initiative designed to provide greater accessibility and inclusivity. Unlike standard accessible toilets, Changing Places Toilets also meet the requirements of people with a range of needs such as spinal injuries, muscle-wasting conditions and multiple sclerosis.

Each Changing Places Toilet provides:

### **The right equipment:**

- A powered height adjustable adult-sized changing bench.
- A movable tracking ceiling hoist system.

### **Enough space:**

- Adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and up to two carers.
- A centrally placed toilet with space either side for wheelchairs.
- A screen to allow for privacy.

### **A safe and clean environment:**

- A paper couch roll to cover the bench.
- A large waste bin for disposable pads.
- A non-slip floor.

They also have features including a height adjustable sink, grab rails and alarms.

Once installed, the Changing Places Toilets are registered and approved by Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) and added onto the national [Changing Places](#) website to help people locate them and plan their visits.

A total of eight facilities across North Northamptonshire will be funded from £497,000, from the council's Capital Programme, which includes a £330,000 contribution from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Other locations in North Northamptonshire with Changing Places facilities already in use are The Corby Cube, East Carlton Park, Rushden Lakes, Wicksteed Park, Waendel Leisure Centre and Corby Swimming Pool.

Further construction works are underway to add Irchester Country Park and Wellingborough Library to the network.

## **Where to find Warm Spaces in communities across North Northamptonshire**

The council is running and supporting the Warm Spaces initiative.

Warm Spaces are safe places where people can go to for free, to get warm, have a hot drink.

This year, 50 community organisations, volunteer groups and public bodies have opened their doors to offer a Warm Space to local residents in need. There are 12 in Wellingborough, 17 in Kettering, 14 in East Northamptonshire and seven in Corby.

A [map of Warm Spaces](#) across North Northamptonshire can be found on our website.

If you know someone who you think might benefit, but doesn't have access to the internet, please let them know about their nearby Warm Spaces.

Residents can attend for activities at these locations without any need to discuss their personal circumstances, which will help reduce the stigma that often exists around poverty and asking for support.

When people enter a warm space, they do so with a guarantee that they will be treated with respect and dignity, without judgement and in confidence.

## **Revenues and Benefits: Changes to Direct Debit Service User Number and Reference Number**

Residents in the Corby area will see a change to how North Northamptonshire Council Direct Debits are referenced on bank statements from Thursday 4 January 2024.

Anyone impacted by this change will receive a letter from North Northamptonshire Council and residents will not need to make any changes.

Since the creation of North Northamptonshire Council in April 2021, we have been working to improve our services and provide a more efficient service delivery for our residents and businesses.

As part of this, we have streamlined our Direct Debit process in the Corby area and a new Service User Number (SUN) has been created (or Originator ID as it's sometimes called). This is a unique six-digit number which identifies North Northamptonshire Council as the organisation receiving money through a Direct Debit BACS transaction.

If you live in the Corby area and receive a letter, you do not need to take any action to continue receiving the benefits of Direct Debit.

The only change you will notice is that with effect from Monday 4 January 2024 we will collect your Direct Debits under the new SUN of 456263, we will continue to collect your Direct Debits under the name of North Northamptonshire Council (or abbreviated to NNC) which will appear on your bank or building society statement.

Residents will also have a new customer reference number - this will be included on the letters sent out to those impacted. From Monday 4 January 2024, should you wish to query any Direct Debit with the council or your bank or building society, please quote North Northamptonshire Council and your new customer reference number.

There is no need for you to complete a new Direct Debit Instruction, as details of the change will have been supplied to your bank. Your bank may also notify you separately.

Additionally, you may also see a comment on your bank statement advising you of the final payment under the old SUN and the first payment under the new SUN for North Northamptonshire Council.

You will continue to enjoy the full benefits of the [Direct Debit Guarantee](#). If you have any questions about this change, please [contact us](#).

## **Build Your Business programme**

The Build Your Business programme is being delivered by the Library Service's Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Northamptonshire and is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The programme is aimed at small businesses, entrepreneurs and anyone thinking of starting their own business. It consists of one-to-ones, webinars, workshops, access to specialist business databases, mentoring, networking and start-up grants of up to £2,000.

Please visit the [Build Your Business](#) section of our website for eligibility criteria and to download the application form, business plan template and terms and conditions.

The deadline for the first round of funding is Friday 5 January 2024.

Find out more about Build Your Business workshops and webinars on the [BIPC Northamptonshire Eventbrite](#) page.

## **Lodge Park Sports Centre wins national award**

The in-house leisure team at North Northamptonshire Council is celebrating after Lodge Park Sports Centre in Corby won the award for 'Best Performance' in the Sport and Leisure Facility Management category at the annual Association for Public Service Excellence Awards (APSE).

The council was up against six councils in the category and secured the top prize earlier in December.

The APSE awards use performance data in relation to factors including usage, cost per use, management, energy efficiency, staffing and customer satisfaction alongside overall facility performance for the past financial year and compares it the national picture.

Being nominated for a national award is always an honour, but to pick up the top prize is the icing on the cake - well done to the team on this excellent achievement.

The council's Lodge Park Sports Centre is an excellent facility which is well used by the local community and residents from further afield.

## **Launch of Northamptonshire Carers 'One Million Of Us' film**

Northamptonshire Carers have launched an impactful film called 'One Million of Us' which showcases the stories of young carers.

These children and young people selflessly care for their loved ones. Their dedication, strength and resilience is incredible.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved at Northamptonshire Carers for shining a light on the invaluable contributions of these young carers.

The film can be viewed at: [Young Carers Film | Northamptonshire Carers Association \(northamptonshire-carers.org\)](#).

For more information, please visit the [Northamptonshire Carers](#) website or follow their social media on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) or [Instagram](#).

## **Have your say on Police and Fire funding**

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Stephen Mold, has launched a survey asking the public for their views on police and fire funding and the precepts for the coming year.

The police and fire precepts are the amount that Northamptonshire residents pay towards policing and the fire service through their council tax - together, both precepts amount to around 18% of the council tax a household pays.

Have your say by completing the survey: [Council tax precept consultation](#).

The survey closes on Sunday 14 January 2024.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will then take his recommendations to a meeting of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2024.



## Forthcoming meetings

- **Executive:** Thursday 21 December from 10am.
- **Full (Budget) Council:** Thursday 22 February from 10pm.

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.

## On the Executive agenda: Travellers temporary stopping site

The possibility of a temporary stopping place for travellers at Junction 3 of the A14 will be discussed at next week's meeting of North Northamptonshire Council's Executive.

Executive will be asked to approve the project to be added to the council's Capital Programme.

At this stage nothing has been confirmed or decided about the possibility of a Travellers Temporary Stopping Site at Junction 3 of the A14.

A capital bid was made to the Traveller Site Fund, administered by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC), for the provision of a Temporary Stopping Place at Junction 3 of the A14 in June 2022, which was supported by the Council's Executive, local MPs, Northamptonshire Police and the Gypsy and Traveller forum for Parish Councils.

DHLUC confirmed that the funding bid was unsuccessful in early 2023 (the fund was heavily oversubscribed) and the council has subsequently been looking at alternative funding options.

If the Executive approve the report, the proposal will be taken to Full Council in early 2024 for further approval.

If approved at both stages, the project will be added to the council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 and progress to the next phase, which would include the submission of a planning application and associated public consultation on the proposals.

## 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](#).

- [Corby Station to Town Centre link road and Smart and Connected Corby projects consultation](#). In September 2022, North Northamptonshire Council conducted engagement activities regarding the proposed Corby Station Link Road and Smart and Connected Corby projects. These two projects are part of the programme of projects being funded through the Corby Towns Fund which the council was awarded £19.9m from the government to deliver. Closes 22 December 2023.
- [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.

## 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):

- [Lodge Park Sports Centre wins national award](#)
- [Travellers temporary stopping site on Executive agenda](#)
- [Vital services protected as North Northants budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing need for services](#)
- [Council appoints new Chief Executive](#)
- [Over 400 trees planted in Wellingborough](#)
- [Community Engagement Hub opens in Swansgate Centre](#)
- [New tailored toilet facilities at tourist hotspots for people with special educational needs and disabilities](#)
- [Where to find 'Warm Spaces' in communities across North Northamptonshire](#)

## 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 (11 to 13 December)

- We've started to add tags to bins highlighting changes to waste collections over the festive period (only those affected will get a tag). Please share this with relatives, friends and neighbours not online so they know to read it. You can find out now online...  
<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/.../bin-service-over...>  
(Reach 4,917, Link Clicks 174, Engagement 251)
- Residents of Avondale and Grange estates in Kettering are invited to join us for some festive fun tomorrow (Tue 12 Dec) from 10am to 12noon. Lots of things to do, including a tabletop sale, free hot drink and snacks, help decorate the tree and lots lots more. Hope to see you there.  
(Reach 3,648, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 54)
- Parents and carers - if your child will be 4 years of age on or before 31 August 2024 it's time to apply for a school place. The deadline for applications for places in Reception is Monday 15 January at midnight. Apply online: <https://ow.ly/Fsy450PXJTN>  
(Reach 2,811, Link Clicks 1, Engagement 68)

### Top Tweets so far this week (11 to 13 December)

- Parents and carers - if your child will be 4 years of age on or before 31 August 2024 it's time to apply for a school place. The deadline for applications for places in Reception is Monday 15 January at midnight. Apply online: <https://t.co/P4zM5Lyw2Z>  
(Impressions 473, URL Clicks 3, Engagements 13)



- We've started to add tags to bins highlighting changes to waste collections over the festive period (only those affected will get a tag). Please share this with relatives, friends and neighbours not online so they know to read it. Find out now online... <https://t.co/HKfzc7Ka0o> (Impressions 406, URL Clicks 11, Engagements 17)
- Looking for a new job? Have you considered a career in local government? Are you the final piece of the puzzle to make our team the best it can be? Check out our latest vacancies, and we look forward to welcoming you to NNC! <https://t.co/MvHTjgSvKy> (Impressions 320, URL Clicks 7, Engagements 11)

## 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