

Leader's Update

26 January 2024

Issue: 68

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- New Chief Executive for the next phase of our journey.
- North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2024/2025 Consultation: Closes at midnight tonight (Friday 26 January).
- Cllr Gill Mercer announced as new Executive member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing.
- Recruitment campaign for volunteer patient transport drivers.
- Launch of Retail Support Programme.
- Engagement launched on rapid electric vehicle charging points.

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!

New Chief Executive for the next phase of our journey

I am delighted to welcome Adele Wylie as she starts her duties as Chief Executive tomorrow (Saturday 27 January).

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

Adele is very talented and brings a wealth of inspirational leadership experience to the role. She has a proven track record of delivering excellence in public services and she has successfully demonstrated this in her current role as Executive Director of Customer and Governance and Interim Deputy Chief Executive.

We are entering the next phase of our journey in improving public services. The challenges ahead are significant. Adele brings a bold and creative approach that will help the council work in new and imaginative ways. This fresh thinking will be critical in taking the innovative leap required to deliver our challenging aspirations for the area.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to our Interim Chief Executive, George Candler. I have greatly appreciated George's high levels of professionalism, valuable input, patience and commitment to his role. He has done an excellent job keeping us on course and is hugely valued by our staff, members and partners. I look forward to continuing to work with him closely in the future.

North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2024/2025 Consultation: Closes at midnight tonight (Friday 26 January)

The draft budget consultation closes at midnight tonight.

The draft revenue budget for North Northamptonshire Council was approved for consultation by the Executive on Thursday 21 December.

The council has been seeking views on the proposals over several weeks.

If you wish to share your feedback, please complete the online survey. For information on how to have your say, please visit [North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2024/25 Consultation](#).

Draft budget proposals

The council's draft budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2024/2025 and outlines the medium-term financial forecast for the following three years.

Protecting and investing in local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty is the focus of the council's budget proposals.

The government has permitted local authorities to increase the Council Tax rate by 4.99% in recognition of the increasing demand and cost pressures faced by councils.

As such, the council is proposing an increase in council tax of 4.99%, which includes the 2% adult social care precept. There is no change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%.

Next steps

The Executive will meet on Thursday 8 February to consider final budget proposals for recommendation to Full Council on Thursday 22 February.

Cllr Gill Mercer announced as new Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

The new Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing on North Northamptonshire Council has been announced.

Cllr Gill Mercer, who represents the Rushden Pemberton West ward, will take over the role with immediate effect.

Cllr Mercer has been with the authority since its inaugural election in May 2021.

Cllr Mercer will bring her considerable experience in local government to this very important job on our Executive and I very much look forward to working alongside her.

The challenges in this area have been well documented nationally and the same is true for North Northamptonshire.

I very much welcome her to the team.

Recruitment campaign for volunteer patient transport drivers

Last week saw the launch of a publicity campaign aimed at recruiting local volunteers as patient transport drivers.

The campaign is looking for volunteers who meet the following criteria:

- Live in North Northamptonshire.
- Between 18 and 80 years old.
- Full driving licence.

- Competent drivers with use of their own car.
- Happy to use own car for door-to-door patient transport.

Volunteer drivers provide a vital lifeline to help people without their own transport to get out and about. As a driver you will pick up patients from their home and take them to medical appointments at doctors, hospitals, opticians, dentists and/or general wellbeing activities.

Volunteers are asked to make a regular commitment to the role, which is flexible around their availability, from one hour to 39 hours a week.

A DBS check will be required and paid for, and training will be given. For volunteers who are already qualified to drive a minibus, a Cat D Minibus licence will be required.

You will be paid 45p expenses for every mile that you drive on behalf of the scheme.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your local organisation for more information.

Organisations seeking volunteers

- [SERVE](#) (Call 01933 315555).
- [Shire Community Services](#) (Call 01933 223636).
- [Volunteer Action Oundle](#) (Call 01832 275433).
- [Rushton Community Minibus](#) (Call 07850 236833).
- (Soon-to-be-reinstated) Corby Carpool (Call 01933 223 636).

The publicity campaign is supported by North Northamptonshire Council's [Local Area Partnership](#) initiative.

Local Area Partnerships (LAPs)

Local Area Partnerships help coordinate and deliver health, care and wellbeing services at local levels.

There are seven LAPs in North Northamptonshire made up of elected members, residents, voluntary and community sector, and statutory organisations.

The purpose is to:

- Respond to identified local needs.
- Deliver outcomes from the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Partnership Strategy and Local Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Our LAPs focus on improving health and wellbeing in the following areas:

- Community transport.
- Engagement with youth.
- Looking at all the different health services and buildings that are available for use and making sure the community is aware of them.

Launch of Retail Support Programme

North Northamptonshire Council has launched a new retail support programme aimed at boosting local retail businesses and empowering entrepreneurs.

The initiative, funded through the government's [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF) and delivered in partnership with [Smarter Society](#), offers a range of free support services to eligible businesses.

The comprehensive programme includes workshops, mentoring sessions, webinars, events with networking opportunities, and tailored assistance.

Covering essential topics such as customer service, retail excellence, sales support, website development, and social media expertise, the goal is to equip businesses with the tools and confidence needed to thrive in the challenging retail landscape.

Experts from Smarter Society are actively engaging with businesses in the 12 towns of North Northamptonshire with their 'Beat the Streets' initiative.

This hands-on approach allows the team to understand the unique challenges faced by local businesses and identify specific areas where support is most needed.

The team has already visited businesses in Kettering, Corby, Rothwell, and Burton Latimer, with plans for further visits to Raunds, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Thrapston and Wellingborough in the coming weeks.

Local businesses in North Northamptonshire interested in enrolling in the support and mentoring programme should be independent retailers, with the event series being available to any independent business in the area.

Businesses can find more information and register on the [NNBusiness](#) website.

Engagement launched on rapid electric vehicle charging points

The council has launched a survey on potential locations for rapid electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in six towns across North Northamptonshire.

Locations are being considered in Burton Latimer, Corby, Kettering, Raunds, Thrapston and Wellingborough.

The potential sites would have rapid chargers, enabling users to charge their electric vehicle to 80% in 20-40 minutes, depending on the model's battery capacity and starting state of charge.

Properties near the proposed sites will receive a letter in the coming days with more detail and instructions on how to complete the survey. The letter will be from Believ, the company that is working with North Northamptonshire Council to run the privately funded project.

All feedback will be reviewed by the council. Before installation can go ahead, residents and businesses will have a further opportunity to comment on the designation and operation of the bays through the Traffic Regulation Order process.

If you would like have your say, please complete and submit the [North Northants Electric Vehicle Charging Points Survey](#) by Monday 12 February.

Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other current consultations and engagement activities. Please use the links below to provide your feedback and inform council decisions and share with family and friends who may be interested in shaping future plans.

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub, [Your Voice Matters](#).

- [Are you Eastern/Central European and live in Northamptonshire?](#) If you were born in or originate from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Ukraine, please help us by completing this survey about you and your community. Closes 12 February 2024.

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 8 February from 10am.
- Thursday 15 February from 10am.

Full (Budget) Council

- Thursday 22 February from 10am.

The agenda and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

These meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube](#) channel.

Press releases

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

- [Cllr Gill Mercer announced as new Executive member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [North Northamptonshire man ordered to pay more than £2,800 for anti-social behaviour](#)
- [Residents reminded of the need for photo ID when voting](#)
- [Last chance to have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans from 2024/2025](#)
- [Vision for culture, tourism and heritage in North Northants to be discussed](#)
- [Recruitment campaign for volunteer patient transport drivers launched today](#)
- [Council takes action to continue to balance its budget](#)
- [Public Space Protection Order for Rushden recommended for introduction](#)
- [Engagement launched on rapid electric charging points](#)

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 (22 to 24 January)

- If you're concerned about anyone sleeping rough during the current weather conditions, please report their whereabouts and identity to the Rough Sleeping Team during office hours, and to the council's Out of Hours Service at all other times as follows: Rough Sleeping Team Hotline: 01536 464630. Rough Sleeping Team Email: roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk. Out of Hours Service: 0300 126 3000. North Northamptonshire Council is still operating the "Everyone In" initiative, and commit to offer suitable accommodation to verified and genuine rough sleepers, regardless of the weather, as quickly as possible.
(Reach 4,926, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 137)
- Met Office warning issued for strong winds in Northamptonshire as a result of #StormJocelyn. Winds gusting 45-55mph. Valid from midday tomorrow (Tuesday) until 3pm on Wednesday.
(Reach 3,867, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 280)
- We want those on pension credit in North Northants to apply for support through HSF4 funded by the Department for Work and Pensions www.northnorthants.gov.uk/hsff If this is someone you know, can you help them apply?
(Reach 3,105, Link Clicks 50, Engagement 81)

Top Tweets so far this week (22 to 24 January)

- 1/3 If you're concerned about anyone sleeping rough during the current weather conditions, please report their whereabouts and identity to the Rough Sleeping Team during office hours, and to the council's Out of Hours Service at all other times as follows:

(Impressions 554, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 2)

- Did you know that changes for new postal and proxy voters came into effect on 31 Oct 2023? Apply online now, but you must be registered to vote first. Find out more <https://t.co/TNDFR9mXVI> (Impressions 518, URL Clicks 5, Engagements 16)
- Did you know photo ID is now needed when voting? There are lots of options to take with you. Don't lose your right to vote, remember your photo ID. Find out more <https://t.co/IICxllzFcN> Not registered to vote? <https://t.co/icdGxg7XTL> (Impressions 432, URL Clicks 2, Engagements 8)

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.

With Best Wishes,
Jason