

Leader's Update

13 December 2024

Issue: 89

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- Vital services protected as North Northamptonshire Council budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing demand for services.
- New car parking charges at Corby Railway Station.
- Executive Members champion women's and girls' football as they consider next steps for £1 million Kettering pitch, track and pavilion refurbishment.
- Fines for fly-tipping, graffiti and littering set to be discussed by Executive.
- Major milestone reached for multi-million-pound Isham bypass scheme.
- Kettering Library roof replacement project moves into next phase.
- First chair appointed to lead new Northamptonshire-wide visitor partnership.

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!

Vital services protected as North Northamptonshire Council budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing demand 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 (2025/2026).

A report to be discussed at the Executive meeting on Thursday 19 December will propose a balanced revenue budget for 2025/2026 and outline the medium-term financial plan for the following three years.

The proposed net revenue budget for 2025/2026 is £400.93 million, excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant. 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.

A commitment to maintain vital service provision has seen the council invest an additional £51.9 million into services, including £29.2 million into adult social care and £6.2 million into children's services to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and address growing demand for these vital services.

These pressures are, in part, offset by savings, efficiencies and further income of £26.3 million. 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 2025/2026.

Council fees and charges have been reviewed for 2025/2026 and set in accordance with the council's constitution.

The council will also be proposing a programme of capital investment totalling £180.4 million over the four-year period 2025-2029 across a number of schemes including:

- Over £43.6 million into highways,
- £36.6 million for continued investment into our Housing Stock,
- £27.9 million for investment into schools,
- £8.1 million to support facilities for those with disabilities,
- £8.2 million in improving digital infrastructure and
- £2.6 million for Electrical Vehicle infrastructure.

View the [Draft Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) report on our website.

New car parking charges at Corby Railway Station

On Monday 2 December, a tariff change at Corby Railway Station came in effect.

The changes were implemented following a [public consultation](#) earlier in the year.

Tariffs:

- Daily parking: £10
- Two days consecutive parking: £20
- Three days consecutive parking: £25
- Four days consecutive parking: £27.50
- Weekly parking: £30
- Monthly parking: £100
- Three months parking: £270
- Annual parking: £1,000

Off-peak tariffs:

- Monday to Friday between 10am and 2:30am: £5
- Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays - Anytime: £5

Executive Members champion women's and girls' football as they consider next steps for £1 million Kettering pitch, track and pavilion refurbishment

North Northamptonshire Council's Executive Members will discuss the refurbishment and redevelopment of Kettering's pitch, track and pavilion project at their next meeting on Thursday 19 December.

In September, Members agreed to provide £150,000 towards improving the artificial pitch and pavilion at the Thurston Drive site, with an additional contribution of £50,000 from Northamptonshire Football Association (FA).

This partnership funding enabled the council and Northamptonshire FA to secure a grant of £810,330 from the Premier League, the FA and the government's Football Foundation.

This project is one of at least 30 set to benefit from The Lionesses Futures Fund, a £30 million cash injection from the government and the FA delivered by the Football Foundation.

The pitches celebrate the Lionesses roaring to victory at the UEFA EUROs in 2022 as well as their achievement of making the FIFA World Cup 2023 final, and will help meet the growing demand for women's and girls' football.

Next Thursday, the Executive will consider the procurement and construction phase of the project totalling £1.021 million at the high-profile home of Kettering Town Harriers Athletics Club, where the artificial pitch

was condemned in 2019. The total cost of the scheme includes £33,000 from external contributions and a virement (transfer of funds from one part of a budget to another) of £178,000 from the Leisure Minor Works budget within the approved capital programme.

The refurbishment plan will see a complete redevelopment of the artificial playing surface into a 3G pitch equipped with new fencing, LED floodlights and a spectator area. The 30-year-old pavilion will also benefit from a significant refurbishment, providing improved changing facilities, new athletics club room and café.

Once complete, local women's and girls' grassroots football clubs will have priority access to the facilities with further access for older people, disabled people and seldom heard groups.

Read the [Kettering Pitch, Track and Pavilion Refurbishment Project](#) report on our website.

Fines for fly-tipping, graffiti and littering set to be discussed by Executive

Next week's meeting of the council's Executive will receive an update on proposals to increase fines for a variety of environmental crimes, including up to £1,000 for fly-tipping.

Changes to national regulations were introduced by the previous government in July 2023. The council is looking at the best way forward for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for environmental crime offences.

It is proposed that fines are increased to the new maximum levels, which could see a maximum fine of up to £1,000 for fly-tipping, alongside changes to fines for littering, graffiti, flyposting and household waste duty of care.

The council has noticed an increase in cases where unsuspecting members of the public have been prosecuted due to using an unregistered waste carrier and are using this as an opportunity to remind residents to use licensed carriers or risk a fine.

If the report is approved, anyone found using an unlawful waste carrier could still be fined, while the unlawful waste carrier would also be fined up to £1,000.

Waste carriers must be registered with the Environment Agency and be in possession of a Waste Carrier Licence. They must also provide a waste transfer note outlining where and when the rubbish was disposed of. If you suspect that a person offering a waste removal service is operating unlawfully, please email our Waste Team at waste@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Major milestone reached for multi-million-pound Isham bypass scheme

Building a dual carriageway bypass for the North Northamptonshire village of Isham has taken an important step closer now that North Northamptonshire Council has now submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Department for Transport (DfT).

Submitting an OBC is a routine stage for a major highways scheme and is done so the government can check the project is still financially viable.

The submission also seeks funding of £4.346 million which will be matched by £2.172 million from the council to give a total of £6.518 million to get the scheme to the stage where it is ready to start construction.

This covers the detailed scheme design, progressing land purchase negotiations and compulsory purchase procedures as well as seeking tenders to build the road.

Late last year, the previous government announced that it would fully fund the build costs of the 3.75km road, which will not only alleviate congestion in Isham but also help unlock economic growth in the area.

The next stage would be to submit a Full Business Case to government for the £116 million required to build the road.

Subject to planning permission - expected to go to committee early in 2025 - construction is currently programmed to start in April 2027 with the scheme opening in March 2029.

The Isham bypass forms the first part of a strategy to dual the whole A509 between the A14 south of Kettering and the A45 in Wellingborough.

Kettering Library roof replacement project moves into next phase

Planning permission and listed building consent have been granted to replace the Grade II listed library and art gallery roof on Cornerstone in Kettering.

While the applications have been going through the planning process, North Northamptonshire Council has also been going through a full tender process for the works through the government's contract finder.

Now that permissions have been granted, approval is being sought from Natural England to confirm that our bat protection measures are appropriate.

A contractor is expected to be appointed in early 2025 and physical work will be able to begin on site, using Collyweston slate that has been agreed (following discussions with conservation experts and advice from Historic England) on the roof.

Within the initial project plans were proposals to tent the building to help keep the building watertight before works could start. A revised approach is now being taken, with temporary repairs having taken place where there were leaks and the roof is being monitored with further repairs being undertaken where necessary. This approach will result in a significant cost saving in the overall project budget. The tent will be necessary once roofing works begin and tiles start to be removed.

Cornerstone is an extremely complex project, and we remain committed to ensuring the building is maintained and fit for purpose for future generations. We continue to work as quickly as possible so the site can re-open. The planning application being approved is a great leap forward for the project.

First chair appointed to lead new Northamptonshire-wide visitor partnership

The development of the new Northamptonshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) has taken a major step forward as [Richard Clinton](#), Delapre Abbey's Chief Executive, has been appointed as Chair of the new LVEP.

The LVEP for Northamptonshire brings together partners from across the sector as well as both North and West Northamptonshire Councils with the aim to strengthen and build on the area's visitor economy.

Following a recruitment campaign, candidates were interviewed by a panel including representatives from North and West Northamptonshire Councils and sector stakeholders.

Richard was identified as the most suitable candidate to lead the new partnership through the next phase of its creation, which includes the key next stage of the process - the submission of the LVEP application to Visit England.

This application is due to be submitted imminently with a decision expected in the early part of 2025. If approved and Northamptonshire gains LVEP status, the area would receive national accreditation and a boost to the area's tourism offer and unlock new opportunities.

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](#).

- [Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2029](#). Closes 16 December 2024.

- [Term Dates for North Northamptonshire schools for the 2026-27 academic year](#). Closes 29 December 2024.
- [Consultation on school admission arrangements for September 2026 intakes](#). Closes 29 December 2024.
- [Have your say on the SEND Local Offer logo](#). Closes 31 December 2024.
- [Great Addington Parish Neighbourhood Plan Proposal](#). Closes 4 February 2025.

Forthcoming meetings

Full Council

- **Budget Council** - Thursday 20 February 2025 from 10am.
- Thursday 6 March 2025 from 6pm.

Executive

- Thursday 19 December 2024 from 10am.
- Thursday 16 January 2025 from 10am.
- **Budget Executive** - Thursday 6 February 2025 from 10am.

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

The 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):

- [Fines for fly-tipping, graffiti and littering set to be discussed by Executive](#)
- [Executive Members champion women's and girls' football as they consider next steps for £1m Kettering pitch, track and pavilion refurbishment](#)
- [Vital services protected as North Northants budget tackles the challenges of a tough economic climate and increasing demand for services](#)
- [Library roof replacement project moves into next phase](#)
- [Major milestone reached for multi-million-pound Isham bypass scheme](#)
- [Statement of reassurance for Raunds Library customers](#)
- [Tonight residents are invited to 'unite and Reclaim the Night' to raise awareness around preventing violence against women and girls](#)
- [First chair appointed to lead new Northamptonshire wide visitor partnership](#)
- [Statement regarding the Court judgement in relation to the former Weetabix site at Earlstrees Industrial Estate, Corby](#)
- [Major incident stood down as multi-agency response moves to recovery phase](#)
- [New car parking charges at Corby Station](#)

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 (9 to 11 December)

- Don't forget, your waste may be collected on a different day over Christmas. Not sure what your bin day is? Head over to our website. <https://ow.ly/XqfV50U4ZJP> (Reach 3,104, Link Clicks 91, Engagements 237)

- Treated yourself to a new sofa this Christmas? We have a bulky collection service, available to all domestic properties, where a maximum of 5 items can be collected for £40. Find out more
- <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/.../bulky-item-collections> (Reach 2,347, Link Clicks 10, Engagements 183)
- Council-owned car parks in Kettering and Corby will be free this Saturday. Whether you're looking for unique gifts, have a family festive meal or catch-up with friends over a coffee, take advantage and visit your High St. Find out which car parks online <https://ow.ly/lhfx50Uj5y0> (Reach 1,933, Link Clicks 9, Engagements 51)

Top Tweets so far this week (9 to 11 December)

- Council-owned car parks in Kettering and Corby will be free this Saturday. Whether you're looking for unique gifts, have a family festive meal or catch-up with friends over a coffee, take advantage and visit your High St. Find out which car parks online <https://ow.ly/M23p50Uj5wF> (Impressions 318)
- Major milestone reached for multi-million-pound Isham bypass scheme <https://ow.ly/OBNc50UnorE> (Impressions 316)
- Don't forget, your waste may be collected on a different day over Christmas. Not sure what your bin day is? Head over to our website <https://ow.ly/E0LK50U4ZHQ> (Impressions 299)

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