

## MONTHLY NEWS REPORT OCTOBER 2021 E Newsletter Issue 5/2021



**Zero Carbon Tour the UK's first Carbon Battle Bus at DIRFT  
en route to COP26 in Glasgow in November.  
23 September 2021**

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## NEWS REPORT OCTOBER 2021

I have great pleasure in presenting my fifth Monthly News Report for the Parish Councils and residents of Hackleton and Grange Park. Thank you to all of you for the kind wishes that you sent me in relation to my eye operation this month. Since I am doing much better, I've gone through all my get-well wishes that people have sent me, and I'd like to thank all of you for your kind thoughts.

Each month, more and more of you are using my Facebook: Stephen.Clarke.31924 and responding to my postings on the Community Group pages. Apart from a brief few days, whilst recovering, I have kept up to date via Facebook with all of you.

In this Monthly News Report, I have covered matters that I have been directly involved in at your behest, together with other activities such as the Zero Carbon Tour, and the new Northamptonshire Beat Bus which is of great relevance to us all.

I really enjoyed getting to DIRFT this month in order to hear about the Zero Carbon Tour and see the UK's first 'Carbon Battle Bus'. The Zero Carbon Tour, which started in the City of London on 28 April, is travelling across the United Kingdom and it will culminate at COP26 in Glasgow in November. This was the only physical stop off for the tour in West Northamptonshire. But do we all know enough about Net Zero Carbon to change our behaviours? I enjoyed hearing and learning more about this important campaign and what needs to be done to achieve Net Zero. I have shared some of this with you later in this report.

It has been another busy month with committee activity and dealing with residents' casework. In Hackleton and Grange Park, the main issues have been potholes, surface water drainage, fly tipping, food waste issues, planning matters, speeding cars, active cycling, bus services, S106s, and dealing with various planning matters at Lyne Walk, Hackleton.

I undertook a walkabout in September and was shocked at the number of fly tipping incidents I encountered. Many of these were all photographed and reported to Fix My Street by Hackleton Wombles. Whilst they are all collected within days, we must have an appropriate solution. I have asked yet again whether we can take a different approach for a particular layby.

## PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

### Little Houghton

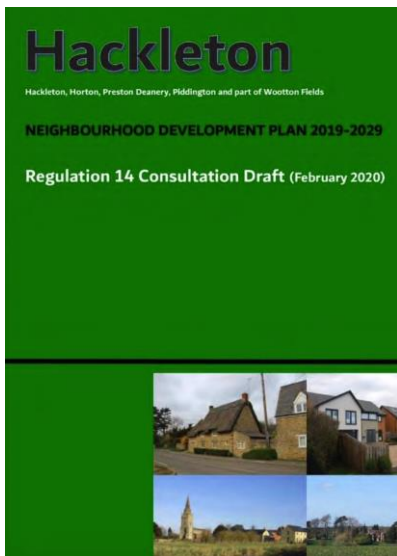




On Sunday 26 September, I joined others at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton at 2.30pm. We spent a couple of hours and enjoyed some lovely scones, tea and homemade cake. It was a fine opportunity to meet residents and appreciate their company. I learnt so much about the history of Little Houghton and heard several amusing anecdotes as some of our party reminisced of times gone by. Thank you, Jenny, for all your efforts.

### **Hackleton Neighbourhood Development Plan**

At the Cabinet Meeting on 12 October members considered the recommendations of the independent examiner following the examination of the Hackleton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and sought approval to put the plan to referendum. The examiner's report on the Hackleton NDP was received by West Northamptonshire Council on 31 July 2021 and has been published on the council's website. In his report, the examiner concluded that, subject to several modifications, the plan has met all the legal requirements and should proceed to referendum in the Hackleton Neighbourhood Area to determine if local people support it. He noted that the NDP has been underpinned by community support and engagement. The council is required to issue its final decision on the NDP within five weeks of the receipt of the Examiners report. In the case of the Hackleton NDP, the Examiner's report was received on 31 August 2021. Agreement was sought from Hackleton Parish Council (HPC) to an extension of time to allow this decision to be made at Cabinet on 12 October 2021 with the decision issued on the 13 October. HPC agreed with this.



The referendum should be carried out for Hackleton Parish. The examiner recommends this and there are no reasons to differ from his recommendation. As set out in the proposed decision statement the date for the referendum is provisionally set for 02 December 2021. Prior to the referendum the suggested changes would be made to the NDP for it to be published as one of the specified documents in respect of the referendum.

The referendum would follow a similar format to an election. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area would be given the opportunity to vote. Voters would be given a ballot paper with the question (the wording of which is specified in the Regulations) "Do you want West Northamptonshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Hackleton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote "yes" then the council is required to "make" the plan. If the referendum is unsuccessful then the council takes no further action and HPC would have to decide what it wished to do.

The council is required to fund the examination and referendum. It is not expected that the cost of the referendum will exceed £3,600. The council receives some financial support from the government to support neighbourhood planning, which is paid into an earmarked reserve.

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (Regulation 17A) the council considered the report of the independent examiner and decided to take the plan to referendum and to 'make' the plan if there is a successful vote.

#### **Background Papers**

Hackleton Neighbourhood Development Plan – Submission Draft

<https://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/.../neig.../284/hackleton->

Report of the independent examiner into the Hackleton Neighbourhood Development Plan, August 2021

<https://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/info/47/neighbourhood-plans/284/Hackleton-neighbourhood-plan>

## Land off Lyne Walk, Hackleton



I have been involved in further case work relating to Land off Lyne Walk, Hackleton:

### Bridleway

The Bridleway is proposed to be retained as being grass as it currently exists, not rolled stones, which had created some confusion. The Charter plan submitted with the developer's application to discharge the condition relating to boundary enclosures showed the rolled stone surface for the bridleway.

The fencing/walls details shown on this plan are approved, but the soft/hard landscaping details shown on this plan are not approved. Should the developer wish to change the surface of the bridleway they would require prior approval by the Council. I have included links below to pages on the WNC website (when you click on the link it will download the .pdf file), so that you can view the approved site layout, soft landscaping plans and enclosures plan for the development.

Key plans that were approved are under application **S/2019/1479/MAF**:

The approved site layout is Drawing No. 'SK-03 rev A'.

<http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/DisplayImage.aspx?doc=cmVjb3JkX251bWJlcj0xMDQ2NDQmZmlsZW5hbWU9XFxzZXJ2aWNlcy5sb2NhbFhchBkYXRhXERFRl9GbGF0RmlsZXNcRG9jdW1lbnRfVGltcF9MaXZlXFBsYW5uaW5nXFMtMjAxOj0xNDc5LU1BRlxiYWNrbGV0b24gU0stMDMgUmV2IEEgQ29sb3VyZWQucGRmJmItYWdlX251bWJlcj0xMzYuMDAwMCZpbWFnZV90eXBIPXBsYW5uaW5nJmxhc3RfbW9kaWZpZWRFZnJvbV9kaXNrPTAxLzAxLzAwMDEgMDA6MDA6MDA6>

The approved soft landscaping plans are 'P18 0167 01 a Soft Landscape Proposals 1 of 2' and 'P18 0167 02a Soft Landscape Proposals 2 of 2'.

<http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/DisplayImage.aspx?doc=cmVjb3JkX251bWJlcj0xMDQ2NDQmZmlsZW5hbWU9XFxzZXJ2aWNlcy5sb2NhbFhchBkYXRhXERFRl9GbGF0RmlsZXNcRG9jdW1lbnRfVGltcF9MaXZlXFBsYW5uaW5nXFMtMjAxOj0xNDc5LU1BRlxiYWNrbGV0b24gU0stMDMgUmV2IEEgQ29sb3VyZWQucGRmJmItYWdlX251bWJlcj0xMzYuMDAwMCZpbWFnZV90eXBIPXBsYW5uaW5nJmxhc3RfbW9kaWZpZWRFZnJvbV9kaXNrPTAxLzAxLzAwMDEgMDA6MDA6MDA6>

<http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/DisplayImage.aspx?doc=cmVjb3JkX251bWJlcj0xMDQ2NDQmZmlsZW5hbWU9XFxzZXJ2aWNlcy5sb2NhbFhchBkYXRhXERFRl9GbGF0RmlsZXNcRG9jdW1lbnRfVGltcF9MaXZlXFBsYW5uaW5nXFMtMjAxOj0xNDc5LU1BRlxiYWNrbGV0b24gU0stMDMgUmV2IEEgQ29sb3VyZWQucGRmJmItYWdlX251bWJlcj0xMzYuMDAwMCZpbWFnZV90eXBIPXBsYW5uaW5nJmxhc3RfbW9kaWZpZWRFZnJvbV9kaXNrPTAxLzAxLzAwMDEgMDA6MDA6MDA6>

The details relating to enclosures were approved under application **S/2020/1700/COND** as being 1.8m Close board Fence; 1.8m Larch lap Fence; 1.2m Metal Estate Fence; 1.2m Vertical Metal Fence (gates over pathways); 1.8m Timber Personnel Gate as detailed on plan reference L186/CHARTER/01/REVISION F, received 22/06/2021

\*\*\*NOTE: THE LANDSCAPING DETAILS SHOWN ON THE CHARTER PLAN ARE NOT APPROVED. ONLY THE DETAILS SPECIFIED ARE APPROVED. \*\*\*

<http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/DisplayImage.aspx?doc=cmVjb3JkX251bWJlcj0xMDgzMTQmZmlsZW5hbWU9XFxzZXJ2aWNlc y5sb2NhbFxcHBkYXRhXERFRl9GbGF0RmlsZXNcRG9jdW1lbnRfU3RvcmlvFTGI2ZVxQbGFubmluZ1wyMDlwX DlcUy0yMDIwLTE2OTYtQ09ORFxmMTg2LUNIQVJURVItMDEgUmV2IEMucGRmJmltYWdlX251bWJlcj02LjAw MDAmW1hZ2VfdHlwZT1wbGFubmluZyZsYXN0X21vZGlmaWVkaXZyY21fZGlzaz0xOC8wOS8yMDIwIDE2Oj M5OjAx>

### **Boundary Fences & Turning Heads**

I had been involved in clarifying with Highways the situation regarding several issues relating to the boundary fences and the turning head at the top of Lyne Walk. Any existing boundary fence is not the responsibility of the Highway Authority and nor would the provision of a new one be. The landowner would be responsible for boundary features. Highways only interest is in the Bridleway and to protect the public's rights to use it; they are not responsible for the boundary features alongside it.

In terms of a local resident's query about the current turning head, I have dealt with this directly with the resident in question.

### **Land off Horton Road, Hackleton, NN7 2AW**

On 5 October, I alerted Peter Gittins, WNC, Principal, Planning Officer to the problems that we had encountered with the sale of the land off Horton Road asking him to consider an Article 4. As Chairman of South Northamptonshire Planning Committee, I had worked with the Officers on an Article 4 for a similar proposal in Rothersthorpe. In that case the proposed activity was within the village, so I was seeking advice as to whether it could apply here in this case.

An Article 4 Direction (under the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Order 2015) may be used to remove 'permitted development' rights, including: the right to erect fences and other means of enclosure, temporary uses of land (e.g. temporary buildings, moveable structures, plant or machinery required in connection with operations being carried out on the land).

I am delighted to say that on 14 October, WNC has issued an Article 4 Direction, associated plan and supporting statement relating to this site. The Direction has immediate effect and has been served on the owners of the land and on the land itself. The details will be advertised in the local press and on the Council's Website as soon as possible. WNC has forwarded a copy to the Estate Agent.

### **Grange Park Parish Council and SEGRO**

Following my previous meeting with SEGRO and subsequent email exchange, on 30 September I received an email from Kate Bedson, Senior Director, National Logistics, SEGRO. They had decided, on a one-off exceptional basis, to extend the benefits that have already been agreed for neighbouring Parish Councils to Grange Park Parish Council. It has been quite a negotiation on my part, and I am delighted that we have obtained a resolution to this longstanding issue.



### Yardley Hastings, Macmillan Coffee Morning



On 24 September, I joined villagers in Yardley Hastings for their Macmillan Cancer Support, Coffee Morning. It was held at the Memorial Hall and it was very well attended. Debbie and John were doing a great job serving us all with hot croissants and coffee and the cakes were very good indeed.

Taking part in this Coffee Morning was the perfect chance to catch up on community matters with the residents over a cuppa and a slice of cake for a great cause. The money raised at a Macmillan Coffee Morning helps everyone with cancer to live life as fully as they can.

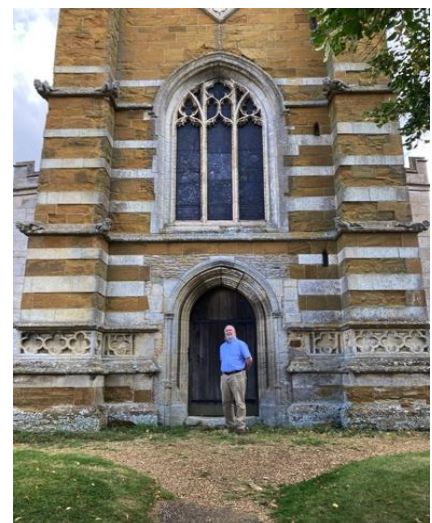
### Denton, Coffee Morning

After my visit to Yardley Hastings on 24 September, I met with villagers at St Margaret's Church, Denton for their Coffee Morning. This was the first of their regular Friday Coffee mornings since the COVID Lockdown. We were offered tea and toast and I had a most enjoyable chat with residents. I had missed calling here on the Ride and Stride on 11 September as I ran out of time on the day. It was a most enjoyable time spent discussing several Denton community matters.



### Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust (NHCT)

On the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, I sent my sponsorship money off to Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust. Half the money raised will go directly to my chosen church and the other half is used by the NHCT to give grants towards the restoration of churches in the County. As you know I had participated in the Ride and Stride, sponsored event on the 11 September 2021 for cyclists, joggers, walkers and horse riders. As I am a West Northamptonshire Councillor for Hackleton and Grange Park, I initially intended to visit all 11 churches in



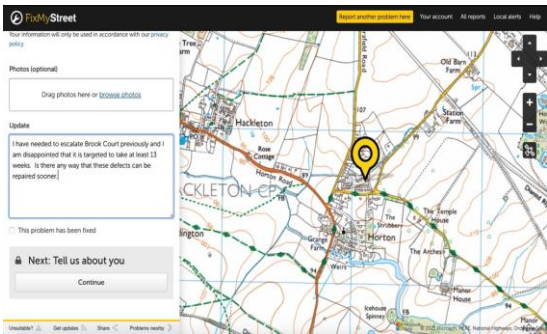


the area. Instead, I went to Little Houghton, Cogenhoe, Whiston, Castle Ashby, Yardley Hastings, Preston Deanery and Hartwell using my car and walking.



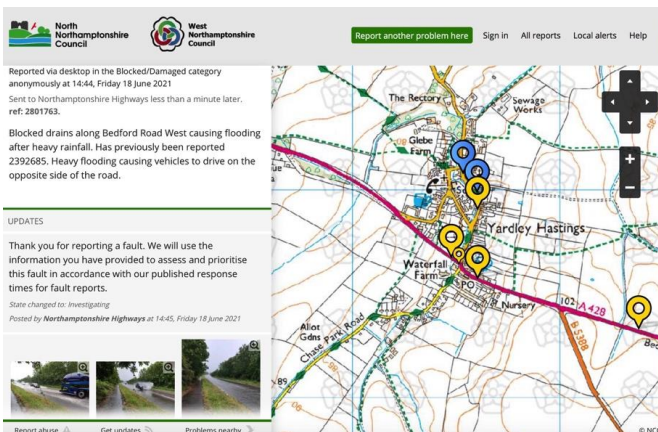
It was a most enjoyable day and I met lots of interesting people at each stage of the Ride and Stride. We learnt so much about the history of each of the churches and the communities around them. I will certainly do this again next year.

### Brook Court, Horton, road erosion in front of dropped kerb



I have needed to escalate Brook Court previously and I am disappointed that it is targeted to take at least 13 weeks. I have contacted Highways again to request that these defects can be repaired sooner. I will keep you informed as to the outcome. On 3 October I received the following response from Highways: "Thank you for your further comments. In some cases, we can attend before this prospective time, however, at this time, we have no further information other than repairs being completed by the timescale. Please be assured that you will receive an update once repairs are concluded." I will continue to press them for a resolution.

### Yardley Hastings Fix My Street-Drains



I escalated the Chase Park Storm Drain matter to Fix My Street as I understand that Yardley Hastings Parish Council were concerned at the lack of attention given to it, despite a categorisation of "Emergency Crew to attend." There is a broken storm drain in Chase Park Road Ref 2520777 and repeated flooding of the carriageway of the main A428 Ref 2801763 and Ref 2392685. I am being told that Highways have refused to engage in any meaningful conversation. I have asked them to email me with an explanation and an update.



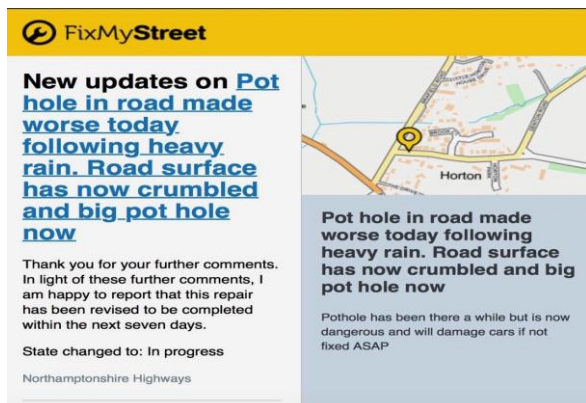
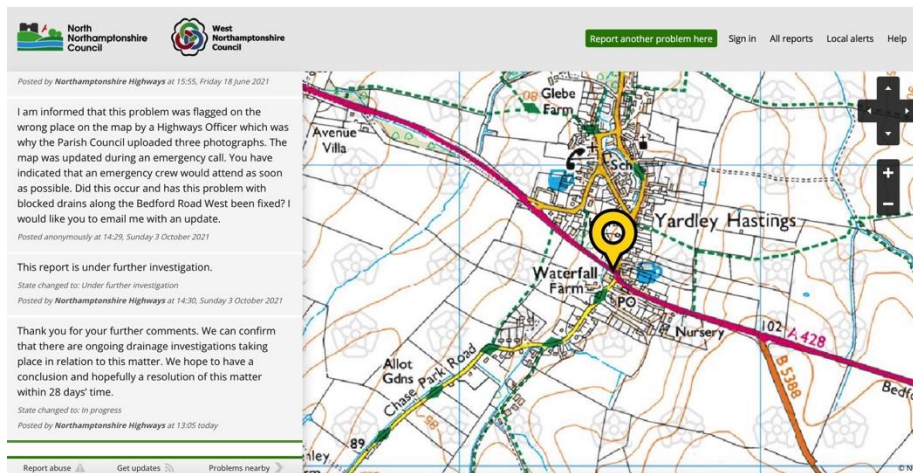
On 11 October I received feedback from Fix My Street as follows: "Thank you for your further comments. We can confirm that there are on-going drainage investigations taking place in relation to this matter. We hope to have a conclusion and hopefully a resolution of this matter within 28 days' time." I will keep you updated

### Yardley Hastings Fix My Street-Deformed Pavement

I escalated the pavement outside 14 Northampton Road. The Parish Council was concerned about the deformed pavement immediately opposite the Hall. They had said that Highways were refusing to take any action in relation to the issue on the grounds that the alleged defect "did not meet investigatory levels." I requested an explanation as to why this repair was not carried out when clearly there was an outstanding need. On 21 September, I was advised that the repair was now scheduled. On 22 September, I received an email from Yardley Hastings Parish Council thanking me for my efforts. The resident in question had informed me that the Paving Contractors had arrived and within an hour and a half the job was done.

### Yardley Hastings Fix My Street-Bedford Road West

I was informed that a Highways Officer flagged this problem on the wrong place on the map, which was why the Parish Council uploaded three photographs. The map was updated during an emergency call. Highways then indicated that an emergency crew would attend as soon as possible. I had to chase this yet again with Highways on 3 October, as there was no evidence that this problem with blocked drains along the Bedford Road West had been fixed. I asked them to email me with an update. On 11 October, I received the following update: "Thank you for your further comments. We can confirm that there are on-going drainage investigations taking place in relation to this matter. We hope to have a conclusion and hopefully a resolution of this matter within 28 days' time." I will keep you updated.



### Horton to Brafield Pothole

I have escalated this problem on Fix My Street yet again on 15 September. I was advised by a resident that when travelling out of Horton on the road heading to Brafield she was caught by a very nasty pothole/disintegration on the road. She couldn't avoid it due to traffic coming the other way. She was concerned about doing some



damage to her car. She asked me to find out what can be done. It seems to me that keeping this pothole on a six-month order was inappropriate. It is clearly a road hazard and needs dealt with now. I asked Highways to email me as soon as possible to let me know their intentions. I heard on 20 September that following my intervention they fixed the pothole the same day.

## FINANCE

### West Northamptonshire Council Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022 to 2023

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (sometimes known as Council Tax support) helps people and households on low income pay their Council Tax bill.

West Northamptonshire Council has proposed two changes for the 2022 to 2023 financial year.

The first proposal would change the rules for working-age people who receive a war widows or war disablement pension. They are currently eligible for a Council Tax discount of up to 80%, but this would be increased to 100% under the new proposal. The second proposal would make it easier for young people who are leaving care to seek financial support. Currently, West Northamptonshire residents aged 18 to 25 who were formerly children in the care of the Council can apply for several different awards and discounts to reduce their Council Tax bill. It is now proposed to include this support as part of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, meaning they would be eligible for a discount of up to 100% on their Council Tax bill while only having to complete a single application process. The proposed changes will impact those of working age. Those of pensioner age are protected by the prescribed regulations set out by central government. We are seeking views on our proposals for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022 to 2023. West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet when making their final decision on the proposals on 9 November will consider feedback from the consultation. This consultation closes at midnight on Sunday 17 October 2021.

### £500m support for vulnerable households

Vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500m government support fund to



help them with essentials over the coming months as the UK continues its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The new Household Support Fund will support millions of households and will be distributed by councils in England, who the government said know their local areas best and can directly help those who need it most. This includes small grants to meet daily needs, such as food, clothing and utilities. Cash will be made available to local authorities this month. The

Barnett formula will apply in the usual way to additional funding in England, with the devolved administrations receiving up to £79m of the £500m total. This funding recognises the vital role of local welfare support and is a positive step to enable councils to continue to provide much-needed support to low-income households at risk of poverty and financial hardship throughout the winter.

We need to move from crisis support towards improving life chances and building resilience. An effective long-term solution to preventing poverty and disadvantage is needed in the Spending Review.

## REGULATORY SERVICES

### Natasha's Law on allergen labelling introduced

New laws governing the requirements for pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) food labelling was introduced on 1 October 2021. The new labelling will help protect consumers by providing potentially life-saving allergen information on the packaging.



Any food business that produces PPDS food will be required to label it with the name of the food and a full ingredients list. Allergenic ingredients must be emphasised within this list.

The Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams have been supporting businesses to prepare for the change and will help to ensure the new rules are adhered to.

The new regulations are also known as Natasha's Law, as they were brought about thanks to the actions of a lobbying group led by the parents of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, a teenager who died after suffering an allergic reaction to an undeclared ingredient in a pre-packed meal.

Affected businesses are encouraged to find out more on the Food Standards Agency website.

## PLANNING MATTERS

### Planning Appeals

Since my appointment, I have kept you informed as to the progress of the major Appeals in South Northamptonshire. The update for this month is as follows:

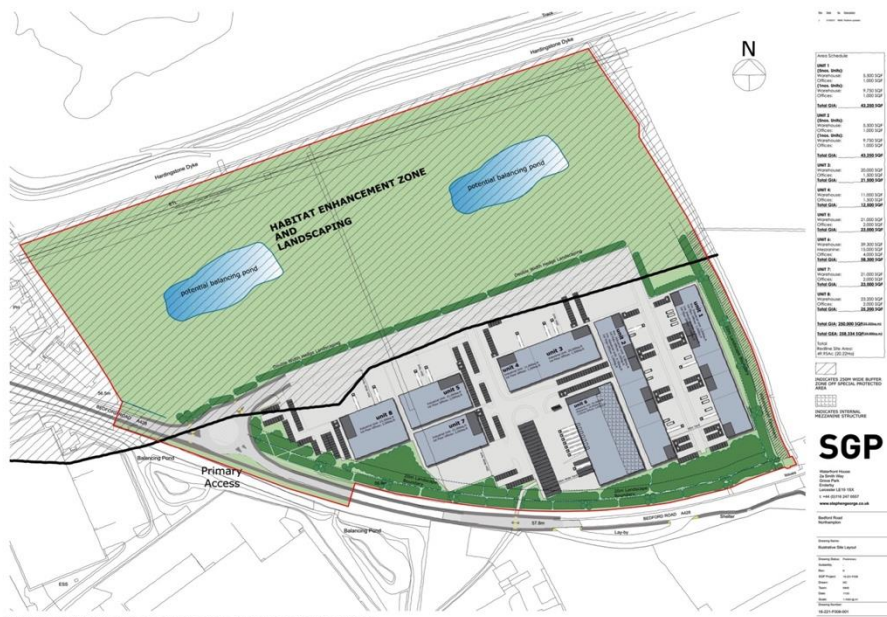
- Hartwell, land North of Ashton Road-Dismissed
- Blisworth, land South of Station Road-Dismissed
- Bakesley Hill, Greens Norton- Awaiting decision
- Greens Norton, Land off Mill Lane-Withdrawn
- Milton Malsor, land East of Lower Lane-Dismissed
- Blisworth, land off Northampton Road -Awaiting Decision.

### Little Houghton, adjoining parish consultation re Great Houghton WNN/2021/0466

If you wish to express your views, then your comments are needed by 15 October 2021 for WNN/2021/0466 Outline Planning Application (All Matters Reserved Except Access) for the development of up to 24,000 SQM (GEA) of employment land (Use Classes E(G), B2 AND B8) with new vehicular access, associated parking, highway infrastructure and other ancillary works on land north of, Bedford Road, Great Houghton, Northampton. [www.westnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk) | [planning.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:planning.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk) 0300 126 7000.

To: Planning Department, Place & Economy Directorate, West Northamptonshire Council, Northampton Area Office, Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.





## West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, Spatial Options Consultation

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is preparing a new strategic plan, which will guide development for the area up to 2050. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) sets out a vision for West Northamptonshire in 2050 and the objectives to realise the ambitions for our economy, our communities and our environment. WNC wants to hear from stakeholders and communities across the area and to work together to ensure that it prepares the best plan possible for a sustainable future.

We are still at an early stage in plan preparation and the options being presented are potential rather than preferred, so this is an opportunity to influence the outcome of the plan. As part of this spatial options consultation, WNC wants to hear your views on:

- The **spatial vision** setting out the plan's ambition for our economy, our communities and our environment
- A set of **spatial objectives** to help achieve the vision
- The **housing and economic needs** that we need to plan for
- The potential **spatial options** that could be considered as part of the development strategy for the area

WNC is running a series of online and in-person events where you can learn more about the plan and ask questions. Details of the events can be found on the West Northamptonshire Consultation Hub, using the link below.

**This consultation closes at midnight on Monday 6 December 2021.**

### Have your say

Please visit the [West Northamptonshire Consultation Hub](#) for further information about the consultation and how to have your say.

If you have any questions or enquiries about the consultation, please contact the Strategic Plan Team at [strategicplan@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplan@westnorthants.gov.uk).

### WNC Strategic Plan On-Line and In Person events

People will have the chance to help shape plans for housing and businesses across West Northants during the consultation. A series of virtual public events will be held as part of the consultation, taking place between 6pm and 7.30pm on the following dates: Thursday 21 October, Wednesday 27 October and Monday 1 November. These will all be hosted on Teams, with booking via Eventbrite and questions can be submitted beforehand or through the chat function at the event. Public drop-in sessions are also planned:

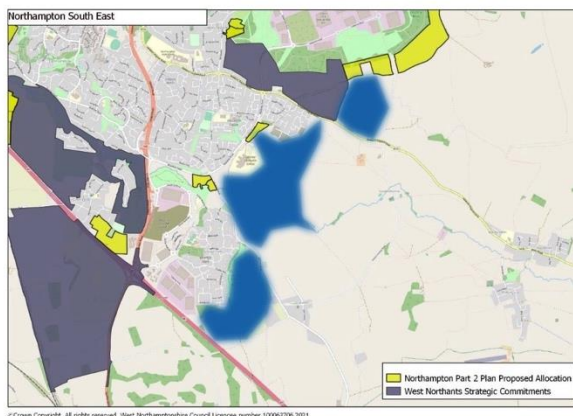
- Tuesday 2 November – Wootton Community Centre, 2pm to 6pm
- Thursday 4 November – Saxon Suite, Daventry Leisure Centre 1pm to 5.30pm
- Tuesday 9 November – Moulton Community Centre, 1pm to 5.30pm
- Wednesday 10 November – Brackley Methodist Church, 2pm to 6pm
- Thurs 11 November – The Forum, Towcester, 2pm to 6pm

Parish council briefings were planned for 13 October from 6pm to 7.30pm and 15 October from 2pm to 3.30pm. Physical copies of the documents will also be available to view at all public libraries in West Northamptonshire, and from the Council's offices at Lodge Road in Daventry, The Guildhall in Northampton, and The Forum in Towcester.

### Spatial Option 1e Northampton South-East Residential

I have set out below Spatial option 1e which is an area situated to the south-east of the existing Northampton urban area adjoining Grange Park and Wootton with the potential to deliver approximately 3,000 dwellings. Key access points for this option would be from the Newport Pagnell Road for the northern and central area, and from the Wootton Road for the central and southern area. The southern area of the option could also gain access from the Quinton Road.

**Spatial Option 1e - Northampton South-East - Residential**



### Strengths

The area is located adjacent to principal urban area of Northampton with the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and would be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Brackmills, Grange Park and the consented Northampton Gateway strategic rail freight interchange.

The option presents opportunities to deliver net biodiversity gain and through an appropriate landscape framework present a more sensitive edge to the countryside in this part of Northampton. Development would need to retain and enhance existing open spaces such as Foxfield country park.

There are no overriding physical or environmental constraints that would prevent development. The option is being actively promoted by landowners and developers and would be deliverable in the plan period.

### Weaknesses

Parts of the option fall within flood zones 2 and 3 which would constrain the extent of the area to be developed and appropriate flood risk management measures would be required. The design of development would also need to acknowledge the presence of 2 high pressure gas pipelines which cross the area.

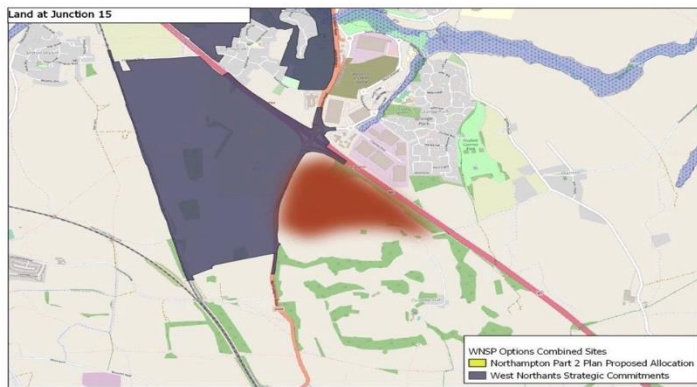
Further consideration will be required on the impacts of development on the capacity of both the local road network and the strategic road network especially the A45.

As with all options at Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

### **Spatial Option 1f-South of M1 Junction 15-Employment**

Spatial option 1f is an employment area in close proximity to the existing employment site at Grange Park to the north of the M1 and adjoins the consented Northampton Gateway strategic rail freight interchange immediately to the west.

#### **Spatial Option 1f - South of M1 Junction 15 - Employment**



It is an area situated to the south of Junction 15 of the M1 and Grange Park on the southern edge of the Northampton urban area. The area could come forward for employment use across an area of approximately 68ha. Access could be gained from the A508 to the west of the site taking advantage of the highway improvements related to the adjoining Northampton Gateway development.

### **Strengths**

The area benefits from access to the M1 at Junction 15 and is in a strategically significant position for logistics with connectivity to the UK's motorway network. Development of this area could be a logical expansion of existing and proposed employment development in this area. The option is close to the Northampton Related Development Area including planned residential development at the Northampton South and Northampton South of Brackmills SUEs and therefore has ready access to a potential labour market.

### **Weaknesses**

The option is close to the grade II listed Courteenhall historic park & garden which lies to the south, and the impact of large-scale employment development on the setting of this important heritage asset would require careful consideration.

A portion of the area (approx. 10%) falls within flood zone 2 and parts of the site may also be affected by surface water flooding. This could reduce the capacity of the site and would need to be thoroughly assessed and effective flood risk management measures will be required. Public rights of way that cross the area will need to be retained (diverted) and the impact on them mitigated.

### **My letter to Jonathan Nunn, WNC Leader re Spatial Strategies**

I wrote to Jonathan Nunn on 13 September asking that Cabinet consider my comments on the Spatial Strategies before making any recommendations at the Cabinet meeting. Jonathan Nunn subsequently confirmed that my letter would be considered in the consultation.

I have two primary concerns relating to Item 11, West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation-Appendix A-Spatial Options 1e and 1f.

### **Flood Risk**

On Tuesday 20 July 2021, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, and (MHCLG) released an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and on the same day the Environment Agency released an update to climate change allowances for Flood Risk Assessments. The updated text in the NPPF states that:

***“All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.” [Paragraph 161, NPPF 2021]***

The inclusion of all sources means that the need for a Sequential Test may be triggered if a site is in an area at high risk of surface water or groundwater flooding. However, the guidance on the process for applying the Sequential Test has not yet been updated and still only refers to the Flood Zones (fluvial and tidal flood risk).

### **Potential Impact**

For sites, which are currently subject to a Sequential Test, the scope of the study may need to be increased to consider the flood risk posed by surface water, groundwater, and other flood sources. For sites, which are not currently subject to a Sequential Test, the Local Planning Authority may require that this be undertaken so that the risk from all sources of flooding can be Sequentially Tested.

The NPPF states that for sites allocated through local plans, then provided a Sequential Test was undertaken at the plan making stage, it is not necessary to undertake a Sequential Test. There are a few changes introduced by the latest guidance from the Environment Agency relating to which climate change allowances are relevant in which area and clarification on which allowance to use. The Surface Water and Tidal allowances remain the same as previously provided. However, the river flow allowances have significantly changed.

Where previously England had been split into ten River Basin Districts, the new approach divides these ten River Basin Districts into 92 smaller Catchment Management areas, each of which has its own climate change allowance value. Therefore, as we are at the plan making stage it seems premature that West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is consulting on the above spatial options both of which lie within flood zones without completing the sequential tests now required. As a result, I am seeking assurance that none of the Spatial Options including 1e and 1f will be chosen to go forward in the Spatial Strategy without the appropriate Flood Risk Assessment.

### **Appeal dismissal**

The Manor Oak Homes outline application for up to 300 dwellings and land for a new school (up to two forms-of-entry) along with open space, drainage, footpath improvements, new off-site footpath links, vehicular access and all matters reserved other than access at Land South of Grange Park Quinton Road Northampton was dismissed by the Planning Inspector on 19 February 2020. The main issues in this appeal were the effects of the proposed development on the need to travel and whether the proposal would offer a genuine choice of transport modes.

The Planning Inspector states “The appellant’s comparisons with the permitted development at Wootton Fields Phase 3 are not very helpful in determining the current appeal. It was apparent from my site visit how beneficial it is for that 110 dwelling scheme to have direct road access into the NRDA in terms of minimising the length of journeys that could not be undertaken by walking, cycling or public transport and so were made by car. That contrasts starkly with the circuitous vehicular routes into the NRDA from the



appeal site.” He then goes on to say: “The National Design Guide (NDG) introduces 10 characteristics to illustrate the Government’s priorities for well-designed places, which include “Movement - accessible and easy to move around”. The NDG states that a well-designed movement network provides a genuine choice of sustainable transport modes and limits the impact of cars by prioritising and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport. The proposed development would conflict with the NDG, which seeks to reduce reliance upon the private car and to move away from car use for short journeys. Connectivity for the appeal scheme would fall far short of the aims of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, which seeks to ensure that all developments are well connected by public transport and walking, cycling and motor vehicle routes to allow ease of movement between the development and existing built-up areas and provide access to employment and key services.”

The Planning Inspector took all the above into account and his rounded judgment was that the appeal scheme would have poor connectivity with the Northampton urban area and that the appellant had understated the likely impact of the proposal on the need to travel by car, and underestimated the resultant harm given the distance these vehicles would be likely to travel, and the type of roads used. The scheme would be harmful because it would increase car dependency, with implications for greenhouse gas emissions, congestion on local roads, and social exclusion. “This is a consideration that weighs heavily against the proposed development” he said.

Whilst there were several other considerations where this appeal failed, I would like some assurance that this matter has been addressed before these sites are even considered for consultation, otherwise we just repeat the previous outcome at great cost to all concerned. Indeed, when considering the new Transportation Plan, I would also expect WNC to consider ‘Active Travel’ routes.

### **New WNC Planning Enforcement Plan**

On 12 October, the WNC Cabinet adopted a new WNC Planning Enforcement Plan. The aim of the plan is to deal with suspected breaches of planning control. This includes:

1. Providing an accessible service that maintains public confidence in the planning system
2. Providing a response that is prioritised according to the harm caused by the breach
3. Achieving a balance between protecting amenity and allowing acceptable development to remain or continue in the absence of permission
4. Monitoring our own performance in delivering the service.

There are separate enforcement plans in place in Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire and there is an inconsistent approach to planning enforcement across the area. However, the new Enforcement Plan addresses this and it can be found here:

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/.../Local...>

It sets out how the Council goes about investigating an alleged breach.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Zero Carbon Tour**

On 23 September, I went to DIRFT to hear about the Zero Carbon Tour and see the UK's first 'Carbon Battle Bus'. The Zero Carbon Tour, which started in the City of London on 28 April and is an eight-month tour aimed to illustrate the phenomenal array of actions the business community is taking to address the climate crisis and take the net zero carbon message to communities around the world.

The tour is travelling across the United Kingdom and it will culminate at COP26 in Glasgow in November. This was the only physical stop off for the tour in West Northamptonshire. The tour aims to share the net



zero carbon message to communities across the UK in support of the UN-backed Race to Zero campaign, the world's largest alliance of actors committed to halving global emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. It will highlight how businesses can set their own net zero carbon targets in line with the Race to Zero's rigorous minimum criteria and implement plans to achieve them.

At the stop off on 23 September, they provided information about how to achieve net zero. There are to be free to attend carbon clinics as well as free Net Zero essentials' workshops, which will give participants the tools and knowledge to join the Race to Zero with a robust net zero target and an action plan to support it. The Net Zero Carbon Battle Bus is travelling across the UK to engage with Communities and:

1. Raise awareness about COP26, the UN Backed Race to Zero and #TogetherForOurPlanet campaign.
2. Gather carbon stories-tangible examples that organisations have been taking to cut their carbon emissions that we can share with and inspire others.
3. Enable organisations to set credible net zero carbon targets and a plan to achieve them.



The broad intent of a net zero future is clear, however, there's no concrete definition of what this ambition might constitute. Good practice will commit to tackling Scope 3 emissions, prioritise absolute emissions reduction, and only invest in carbon removal projects once strategies to avoid, reduce and substitute have been implemented. But do we all know enough about it to change our behaviours. I enjoyed hearing and learning more about this important campaign and what needs to be done to achieve Net Zero.

### **What do you know about Net Zero?**

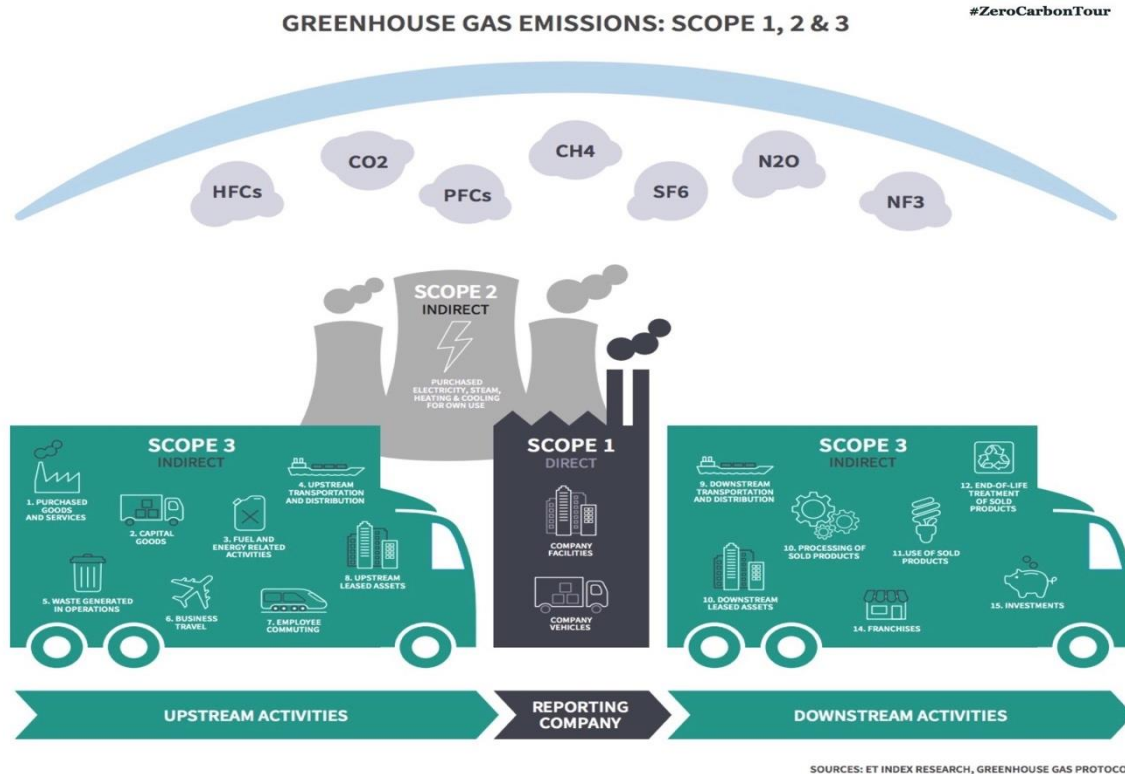
The energy sector is the source of around three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions today and holds the key to averting the worst effects of climate change, perhaps the greatest challenge humankind has faced. Reducing global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to net zero by 2050 is consistent with efforts to limit the long-term increase in average global temperatures to 1.5°C. This calls for nothing less than a complete transformation of how we produce, transport and consume energy. The growing political consensus on reaching net zero is cause for considerable optimism about the progress the world can make, but the changes required to reach net-zero emissions globally by 2050 are poorly understood. A huge amount of work is needed to turn today's impressive ambitions into reality, especially given the range of different situations among countries and their differing capacities to make the necessary changes. In my report, I have provided you with some of the information I gained from the Zero Carbon Tour event. I received an explanation of what Net Zero means and what we are required to do in order to achieve this goal, resulting in a clean and resilient energy system that would bring major benefits for human prosperity and well-being.

### Scopes of emission

There are 3 Scopes of Emissions:

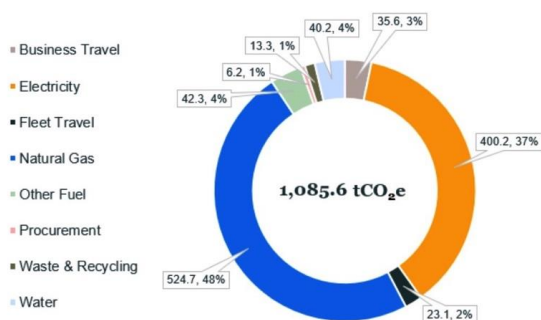
1. **Scope 1 Fuel** you burn yourself (e.g., oil heaters and fuel in owned company vehicles).
2. **Scope 2 Energy** you consume (e.g., electricity).
3. **Scope 3 Everything** else! (e.g., waste, commuting, supply chain and so on).

The following diagram describes the three scopes of greenhouse gas emissions.



### Total Carbon Footprint

Carbon footprint by emission source for year ending 2020, tCO<sub>2</sub>e



Your carbon footprint is measured 2 ways, one using the location-based method of calculating Scope2 electricity emissions and the other the market-based method which, reflects the average emissions intensity of grids on which energy consumption occurs (using monthly grid average emission factor data). A market-based method reflects emissions from electricity that companies have purposefully chosen (or their lack of choice). Emissions measured are: Electricity, Transmission & Distribution (T&D) issues, natural gas, homeworking energy (not included in total carbon footprint) gas oil, refrigerants, water, waste, fleet, business, travel, paper

use.

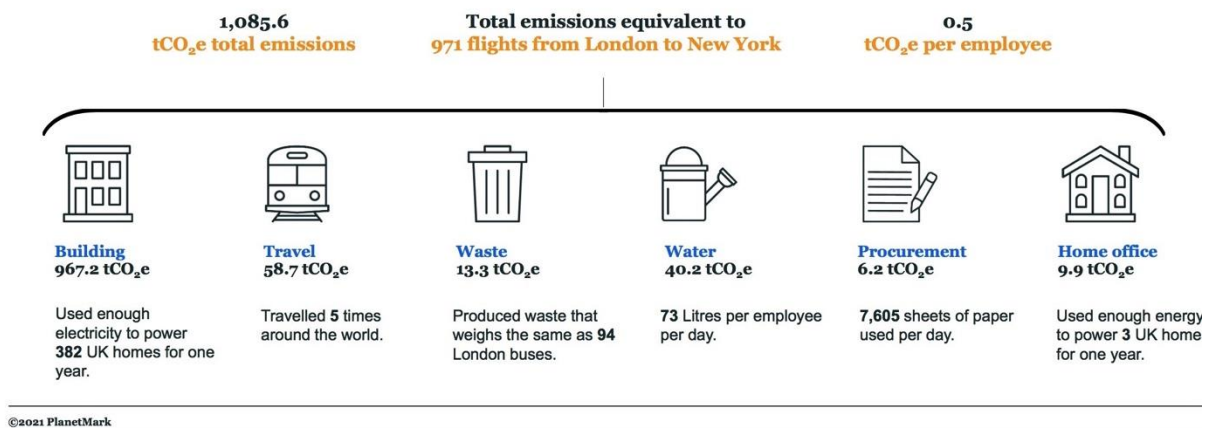
The carbon footprint in the diagram above is measured from 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020 and the boundary for reporting is across 45 sites in the UK. The highlights are as follows:

- Carbon footprint (tCo2e) 1,085.6
- Per employee (tCo2e) 0.5
- Next reduction target 5%
- Data Quality Score 18 out of 20

The following diagram describes the component parts of our carbon footprint.

## Total carbon EMISSIONS

### Location-based



### What do we mean by Net Zero Carbon emissions?

The aim is to get to net zero carbon emissions by actively working on Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as follows:

- Scopes 1 and 2, Direct and Purchase emissions to be reduced to zero, by renewable energy, EV fleet and energy efficiency
- Scope 3, Indirect emissions to be reduced as close as possible to zero, by supplier engagement, waste reduction and travel hierarchies
- Scope 3, Residual emissions to be offset by accredited carbon removal schemes, by natural solutions and limited technologies.

Once the sum of the above reaches net zero then we will have achieved our goal of Net Zero Carbon Emissions.

### Carbon offsets.

Carbon offset schemes allow companies to invest in international environmental projects that balance out their own carbon footprints. Using the Gold Standard (International, additional) and Verified Carbon Standards.

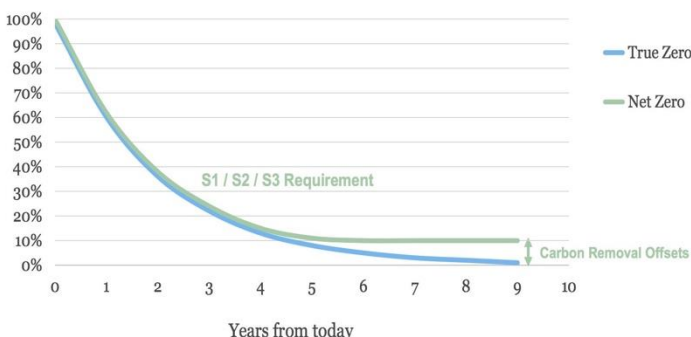
There are two types of carbon offsets:

#### Carbon Avoidance

This is where we introduce schemes that avoid carbon emissions going into the atmosphere (e.g., wind, solar).

#### Carbon Removal

### Net Zero vs True Zero





This is where we introduce schemes that remove carbon through carbon sequestration. Such as UK Woodland Code (trees, peat land restoration) or through technology.

**What’s the difference between carbon net zero and carbon neutral?**

As understanding of the climate crisis increases and we know more about the harm to ourselves, the environment, business, industry and the economy that will follow, so a desire to not only reduce carbon but to be seen reducing carbon increases. Two seemingly interchangeable terms often seen are ‘carbon neutral’ and ‘net zero carbon’. However, the two are not the same thing. Carbon neutral refers to a policy of not increasing carbon emissions and of achieving carbon reduction through offsets. While net zero carbon means making changes to reduce carbon emissions to the lowest amount – and offsetting as a last resort. The offsetting is used to counteract the essential emissions that remain after all available reduction initiatives have been implemented.

In both cases carbon offsetting removes CO<sub>2</sub> from the environment. For it to count, that removal must be permanent and accredited or licensed. Projects can offer a range of benefits. As well as reducing carbon from the atmosphere, offset projects can be selected to also offer social and community benefits. Projects can range from local planting of trees to the funding of projects that empower families in developing countries to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. Examples include afforestation, reforestation and conservation. Alternative investments can also be made in initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as in cattle feed that reduces the methane output of cows.

	<b>Carbon neutral</b>	<b>Net Zero carbon – best practice</b>
<i>Defined by</i>	<i>PAS 2060 standard</i>	<i>Standard developing</i>
Measurement: Scope 1 and 2	Required	Required
Measurement: Scope 3	<u>Not required</u>	Required
Carbon reduction target: Scope 1 and 2	Reduction plan required	Zero (Reduce as close to zero as possible)
Carbon reduction target: Scope 3	<u>Not required</u>	Reduce as close to zero as possible
Offsetting/GHGR	Buy offsets equivalent to total carbon footprint	Residual emissions (scope 3) compensated by GHG removals

Other offsetting projects enhance biodiversity, improve soil quality, food production or rainwater absorption. Projects that benefit soil quality are particularly pertinent to global warming and climate change, as soil is a significant store of carbon, holding three times as much carbon as the atmosphere – and the importance of soil quality has often been overlooked. Food production benefits are relevant too given that crop failure is a significant negative impact of climate change, devastating communities and forcing migration.

There are carbon offset schemes offered that are sold on an arbitrary average carbon footprint basis, as opposed to a quantified footprint. The risk with these is that they offer the temptation of an easy-to-buy option, which not only does not include any emission reductions they also may fail to meet sufficient offset to address the problem of climate change. These are sold on the basis that a true quantification of your carbon footprint can be expensive, time-consuming and complicated but this need not be the case.

Net zero carbon commitments always involve emission reductions. This requires an initial carbon footprint measurement. This is followed by strategic greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives, the implementation of renewable energy solutions and then carbon offsetting.

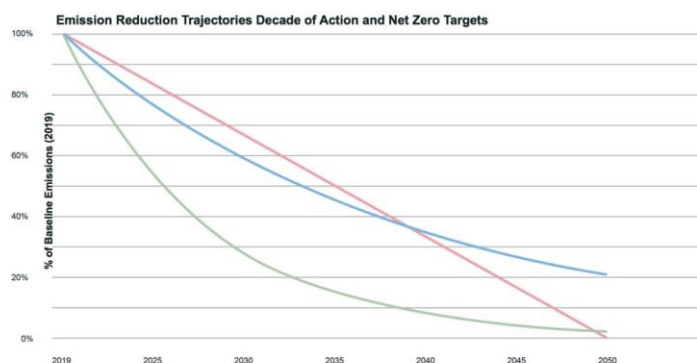
The right carbon reduction service can offer you all of these. Furthermore, they can support you in your net zero commitment with ongoing monitoring both success of the initiatives but also of emerging technologies

for further emission reduction opportunities. These could be in the form of technology, or availability of alternative energy – or internal opportunities from changes in processes, or collaborative opportunities with your supply chain. Potential opportunities could arise with local business partners such as neighbouring manufacturing facilities with whom you may be able to trade reused processed heat or reuse or repurpose materials. For example, could your carbon cardboard waste be shredded to become their packaging material or could waste heat from your processes be used for their hot water or offices? This sort of methodical, structured and quantified approach leads to more optimised use of resources, lowers energy bills, reduces waste, reduces reliance on the national grid, delivers true reductions in emissions and so true reduced harm to the environment.

### Target Setting

Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will require nothing short of the complete transformation of the global energy system. The minimum annual reduction referred to by Planet Mark during my visit to DIRFT for the Zero Carbon Tour was 5% year on year. But we were told that a 12% year on year reduction from the 2019 baseline will set us on track to meet the UK target of Net Zero by 2050.

#### Target setting.



#### Renewables

Renewable energy technologies like solar and wind are the key to reducing emissions in the electricity sector, which is today the single largest source of CO2 emissions. To achieve net zero, almost 90% of global electricity generation in 2050 must come from renewable sources, with solar PV and wind together accounting for nearly 70%.

#### Energy efficiency

Many energy efficient solutions for buildings, vehicles, home appliances and industry are available today and can be scaled up quickly, creating lots of jobs in the process. To achieve Net Zero by 2050 we must rapidly put all of them to use on a massive scale in order to push the average rate of energy efficiency improvements in the 2020s to about three times the average of the last two decades.

#### Electrification

As electricity generation becomes progressively cleaner, electrification of areas previously dominated by fossil fuels emerges as a crucial economy-wide tool for reducing emissions. This takes place through technologies like electric cars, buses and trucks on the roads, heat pumps in buildings, and electric furnaces for steel production.

#### Bioenergy

Sustainable bioenergy delivers emissions reductions across a wide range of areas, including low-emissions fuels for planes, ships and other forms of transport, and the replacement of natural gas with bio-methane to provide heating and electricity. Sustainable bioenergy is also essential for bringing clean cooking solutions to the 2.6 billion people who currently lack them.

#### CCUS

Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) contribute to the transition to net zero in multiple ways. These include tackling emissions from existing energy assets, providing solutions in some of the sectors where emissions are hardest to reduce like cement, supporting the rapid scaling up of low-emissions hydrogen production, and enabling some CO2 to be removed from the atmosphere.

### **Hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels**

Hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels will need to fill the gaps where electricity cannot easily or economically replace fossil fuels and where limited sustainable bioenergy supplies cannot cope with demand. This includes using hydrogen-based fuels for ships and planes, as well as hydrogen in heavy industries like steel and chemicals.

### **Behavioural changes**

Achieving net zero by 2050 cannot be achieved without the sustained support and participation from citizens. Behavioural changes, particularly in advanced economies – such as replacing car trips with walking, cycling or public transport, or foregoing a long-haul flight – provide around 4% of the cumulative emissions reductions to reach net zero by 2050. The global goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 detailed in this report requires all governments to significantly strengthen and then successfully implement their energy and climate policies. Commitments made to date fall far short of what is required. The number of countries that have pledged to achieve net-zero emissions has grown rapidly over the last year and now cover around 70% of global emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. This is a huge step forward. However, most pledges are not yet underpinned by near-term policies and measures. Moreover, even if successfully fulfilled, the pledges to date would still leave around 22 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide in 2050. The continuation of that trend would be consistent with a temperature rise in 2100 of around 2.1 °C. Global emissions fell in 2020 because of the Covid-19 crisis but are already rebounding strongly as economies recover. Further delay in acting to reverse that trend will put net zero by 2050 out of reach.

### **Net zero by 2050 hinges on an unprecedented clean technology push to 2030**

The path to net-zero emissions is narrow: staying on it requires immediate and massive deployment of all available clean and efficient energy technologies. In the net-zero emissions pathway presented in this report, the world economy in 2030 is some 40% larger than today but uses 7% less energy. A major worldwide push to increase energy efficiency is an essential part of these efforts, resulting in the annual rate of energy intensity improvements averaging 4% to 2030 – about three-times the average rate achieved over the last two decades. Emissions reductions from the energy sector are not limited to CO<sub>2</sub>: in our pathway, methane emissions from fossil fuel supply fall by 75% over the next ten years as a result of a global, concerted effort to deploy all available abatement measures and technologies. Ever-cheaper renewable energy technologies give electricity the edge in the race to zero. Our pathway calls for scaling up solar and wind rapidly this decade, reaching annual additions of 630 gigawatts (GW) of solar photovoltaics (PV) and 390 GW of wind by 2030, four-times the record levels set in 2020. For solar PV, this is equivalent to installing the world’s current largest solar park roughly every day. Hydropower and nuclear, the two largest sources of low-carbon electricity today, provide an essential foundation for transitions. As the electricity sector becomes cleaner, electrification emerges as a crucial economy-wide tool for reducing emissions. Electric vehicles (EVs) go from around 5% of global car sales to more than 60% by 2030.

### **UN Backed Race to Zero**



We are partnered with the UN backed Race to Zero as follows:

#### **Pledge**

Pledge at the Head of the Organisational level to reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050.

#### **Plan**

Within 12 months of joining, set an interim target representing your fair share of 50% reduction by 2030.

### **Proceed**

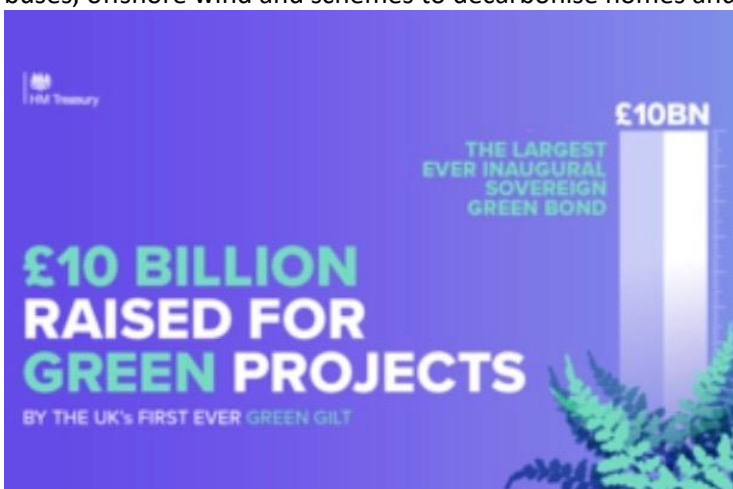
Take immediate meaningful action towards achieving net zero within just 12 months of joining.

### **Publish**

Report Progress annually against your targets on a public platform.

### **UK's first Green Gilt raises £10 billion for green projects**

Green projects across the country are set to benefit from funding from the UK's first ever Green Gilt, launched 21 September, which will help drive progress to net zero and create jobs across the UK. £10 billion was raised from the sale of the Gilt, the largest inaugural green issuance by any sovereign, with the largest ever order book for a sovereign green transaction. This will be followed by a second issuance later in the year. Green Gilts will raise a minimum of £15 billion for green government projects like zero-emissions buses, offshore wind and schemes to decarbonise homes and buildings in this financial year.



By launching the Green Gilt in the run up to COP26 next month, the UK is demonstrating its commitment to tackling environmental challenges and the vital role that green finance plays in this fight. Government bonds, or gilts, are sold to institutional investors and provide a fixed rate of return until their expiry. The UK's inaugural Green Gilt is a 12-year bond, maturing on 31st July 2033. As set out in the government's Green Financing Framework, published earlier in the summer, the money raised by the Green Gilt will be used to finance expenditures in clean transportation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, pollution prevention and control, living and natural resources, and climate change adaptation. And in a first among comparable sovereign issuers, the UK has committed to reporting on both the environmental impact, and the important social co-benefits of green expenditures financed by Green Gilts, such as job creation, access to affordable infrastructure and socioeconomic advancement. The Green Gilt will be followed later in the year by the world's first standalone retail Green Savings Bonds, issued by NS&I. These two products will give UK investors and savers the opportunity to join the collective fight against climate change while creating green jobs across the country.

### **Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme**

On 14 September, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Cabinet: Noted the work to date on securing £6.2m of Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant allocation for West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, and the next steps required to progress the project.





Approved the use of the ring-fenced Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant funding of £6.2m to deliver innovative flood resilience measures across the two catchments, one in each of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, as set out in the report. The government-funded scheme is for the areas around Wootton Brook in Northampton and Harpers Brook between Corby and Thrapston. This Project is funded by central government and came with the caveat that it could not be used to supplement existing work, or fund capital schemes which would otherwise be funded by 'grant in aid. Northamptonshire County Council originally bid for £6.2 million for Wootton Brook and Harpers Brook through the Environment Agency's £200 million Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Project. Of 358 reports of flooding across the two areas since detailed records started in 2012, 237 were for the Wootton Brook area, which includes Collingtree, Wootton, East and West Hunsbury, Hunsbury Meadows and Hackleton. WNC will manage the project, on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council, which will engage with landowners and residents to implement a series of measures and assess their effectiveness. I have asked for more details about the impact of this project on Hackleton. I will give you an update in due course.

### **Food Waste Collections**

Following an enquiry from a Parish Council, regarding food waste collections, I asked WNC if there had been any changes to waste collections recently. On 5 October, I was advised that there have been no changes to collections since we became WNC. Residents do need to ensure that their containers are out for collection by 7am and leave them out until all the collection vehicles have been around as a separate lorry collects each type of waste. Any missed collections can be reported to WNC. If we have any short-term disruptions to collections then we will put this on the WNC social media pages and update our website.



<https://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/.../report-a-missed-bin...>

If you have any further concerns, then please let me

know.

## **RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)**

### **RSN Annual Conference**

I attended the Annual Conference 2021 (on-line) week commencing 13-17 September. It was entitled 'Levelling up to Revitalise Rural.' The RSN conference is the rural event of the year for those delivering services in rural areas and supporting the wellbeing of our rural businesses and communities. There were several expert speakers sharing their experiences with delegates and stimulating lively debate.

After years of underfunding and policy implementation designed for urban areas rather than targeted at rural needs, it is vital that rural areas are finally given the opportunity to level up and realise their full potential. This conference is only available to members of the Rural Services Network.



The conference session took place over the course of the week, with each day focusing on a few different topics critical for rural areas. The details were as follows:

- Rural Digital Connectivity
- Rural Economy
- Rural Health & Care
- Rural Affordable Housing
- Rural Transport and Decarbonisation

I have covered the discussion about the State of Care in County and Rural Areas under Health and Social Care below. I will be distributing a separate report about the RSN Annual conference 2021.

### Rural Communities have greater unmet needs



The RSN's National Rural Conference focused on 'levelling up to revitalise rural' and considered themes from RSN's 'Revitalising Rural' campaign. Their message to Ministers is loud and clear!

"Fairly fund rural services-rural areas continue to suffer through unfair allocations of funding to deliver services. Ensure that processes put in place to 'level up' are based on evidence-official statistics often ignore rural poverty. Understand the needs of rural communities-ensure that policies are rural proofed and develop targeted policies to address rural deprivation."





register with them and to identify which risks would have the priority for our deep dives.

It would also help our officers to have the deep dive about the economic recovery in January. Although we will have a lighter agenda in November, we will be setting the next steps for our scrutiny of the risk register and starting an open dialogue with our new auditor.

I am looking forward to this.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### The State of Care in County and Rural Areas



I attended the RSN, National Rural Conference 2021 (on-line) on 15 September. Councillor Martin Tett, CCN Spokesperson for Adult Social Care and Leader of Buckinghamshire Council gave us a presentation of the State of Care in County and Rural Unitary Areas. The CCN report was made available 16 September. He spoke about the unique issues facing rural areas including resources, workforce recruitment and retention, sparsity, self-funders,

proportion of residential care homes and demographics of aging population and rural market dynamics. After considering all the issues he then gave us a summary of his six recommendations to Government.

1. Increase Funding in the Spending Review to meet the rising costs and the unmet need in the system before reductions in services will be required in County and Rural Unitary Areas.
2. The impact of extending commissioning duties to self-funders to enable them to have their care arranged by councils, and access local authority contracts and fee levels, must be consulted on, and risk assessed, with appropriate funding and policy mitigation to prevent unsustainable financial costs and risks to councils and providers.
3. Enshrine in law that the Social Care Levy comes back from Health to Social Care at the end of the three years.
4. There are 112,000 care workforce vacancies in County and Rural Unitary Areas. This may require specific policies and resources to address this.
5. Ensure fair funding and equality of Social Care Service across the County and Rural Unitary Areas.
6. Help to support and manage the transition from residential to domiciliary care.

I have received several interesting and informative presentations about Rural Health & Social Care, and I will let you have a copy of my report of the conference in due course.

### COVID-19 update

Public Health Officials are urging parents to consent to children aged 12-15 having the COVID jab in a bid to keep them well and help reduce disruption to their education this winter. Volumes of the virus remain concerningly high across Northamptonshire with a further 4,418 coronavirus cases reported in the week up to 03 October. Rates per 100,000 population are significantly higher than the national average and the rates in Kettering are currently ranked as the highest in England. The report for the period up to 03 October shows that of the ten-year age bands, the younger adults' group, 10- to 19-year-olds have the most cases, closely followed by 40- to 49-year-olds. Weekly seven-day average cases have increased since mid-September in both pupils and staff members with increases being recorded mostly among pupils. In a bid to prevent further spread, parents of young people in education are being urged to give their official



consent to the vaccination of youngsters of secondary school age group between 12 and 15 years old. A reminder is also being issued to keep children off school if they suspect they have the virus until they have had a PCR test and received a negative result to show they are clear of infection. Primary school children are not required to be regularly asymptotically tested but need to come forward for a PCR test if they have symptoms. Officials are also urging secondary school children to wear masks in the classroom and to wear additional layers of clothing if needed so classrooms can remain well-ventilated. The surveillance report, an analysis of the county's recent coronavirus cases and rates over the period 20 September – 03 October 2021, shows a slight decrease of 2% in the number of COVID-19 cases since last week's figures were published. Northamptonshire's infection rate per 100,000 population for the most recent week is 588.0, which is significantly higher than the national average (339.2). The area with the highest case rate in the county and amongst the highest in England is Kettering (912.8). The area with the second highest rate in the county is Daventry (669.0). All local area infection rates are significantly higher than national averages except for South Northamptonshire, which is similar. Over the previous 4-week period the number of cases amongst people aged 60+ has increased slightly and numbers remain high. Overall, more women than men tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 28 days. The latest data shows a concerning increase in the hospitalisation of cases, with a total of 92 COVID-19 patients occupied hospital beds in Northamptonshire on 5th October 2021. This represents a 23% increase when compared to the previous week (28th September 2021). In the most recent week, Northamptonshire saw an overall decrease in the number of deaths when compared to the previous week. Lucy Wightman Joint Director of Public Health - North and West Northamptonshire Councils says: "We are continuing to see an increase in cases of COVID-19 among our young people and, along with continued adherence to the public health advice, the vaccination remains the best protection we can offer them."

### Review of Health and Social Care Leadership

Government ministers are launching one of the most far-reaching reviews of health and social care leadership in 40 years, in order to better understand regional disparities in efficiency and health outcomes, and how fostering effective leadership can help reduce some of these challenges. Led by former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger, the review is expected to report back to Health Secretary Sajid Javid in early 2022. The Health and Social Care Leadership Review will look to improve



processes and strengthen the leadership of health and social care in England. Working with the health and care systems, retired General Sir Messenger will be supported by a team from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the NHS. Dame Linda Pollard, Chair of Leeds Teaching Hospital, will lead this.

Strengthening health and social care leadership, including clinical leadership, has been identified as one of the ways which the Government can get more from their investment and ensure that regional health inequalities are less prevalent across

the country. The review comes as the government invests £36 billion to put health and social care on a sustainable financial footing and deliver the NHS catch-up programme. The work of the review only applies to England, though other nations will be free to consider its findings, and it will be funded from within existing DHSC budgets.

## EDUCATION

### COVID Vaccine offered to students

Students aged 12 to 15 have begun to receive the COVID- 19 vaccine as the Northamptonshire Vaccination Programme begins its rollout to secondary schools across the county. The programme is being led by the Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) school-aged immunisation service, and parents or guardians of children aged 12 to 15 have begun to receive letters with details of when the vaccine will be offered.

They will also be asked to provide consent for their child to receive the vaccination. This will be done either through an online e-consent process or via a paper form if required.

Parents or guardians do not need to contact their local GP or other NHS services about getting the vaccine, and the local school-aged immunisation service has put in place processes to exclude children who have already received a first dose of the vaccine under previous advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination



and Immunisation (JCVI), for example if they are clinically vulnerable. Parents and guardians of home-schooled children in our county have been contacted separately to invite their children to receive their vaccine at the Northamptonshire Vaccination Centre in Moulton Park. At this time, the UK's Chief Medical Officers advise that healthy 12- to 15-year-olds should be offered a first dose only, which will be the Pfizer-BioNtech (Comirnaty) vaccine, the only vaccine currently authorised for those aged 12 to 15.

### Meal vouchers for our most vulnerable children



The most vulnerable children in West Northamptonshire are set to receive lunch vouchers during school holidays for the rest of 2021. The scheme will support 9,500 families during the October half-term and the Christmas break by providing them with a £15 meal voucher per child per week, to pay for lunch during the three weeks of school holidays. Schools are currently being asked to provide lists of eligible families from which WNC will generate individual pupil vouchers that will be returned to schools for distribution. The initial period of voucher distribution will cover the October half-term period

only. Schools with the largest number of eligible pupils will receive the vouchers first and the rest in descending order in time for the start of the school holidays this month.

### Application for School Places

Parents and carers can now apply for school places – to start in September 2022. All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the deadline to be considered on time. Find out more here <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions>

The deadline for applying for a place at a Secondary school for September 2022 is:

**5pm on Sunday 31 October 2021.**

Closing date for Primary applications is:

**5 p.m. on 15th January 2022.**

### Free school meals

Free meals are automatically available to all Key Stage 1 (reception, year 1 and year 2) children under the Universal Infant School Meals Scheme.

You can apply for free school meals for older children in full-time education up to the age of 18 if you are in receipt of certain benefits. Find out more here

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-information-parents/free-school-meals>

### Measures to help students with exams next summer

Department for Education (DfE) (@educationgovuk) DfE have announced measures to help students who are sitting GCSE, AS and A level exams in England next summer. They'll reduce the impact of the disruption to their learning due to the pandemic and make assessments as fair as possible. Students will benefit from a range of adaptations to GCSE, AS and A level exams in England – these adaptations will help them reach their potential following the disruption they've faced. They include:

A choice of topics or content on which students will be assessed in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography.

Providing advance information on the focus of exams to support students' revision in subjects where there is not a choice of topics. Giving students formulae sheets in GCSE maths and revised equation sheets in GCSE combined science and physics.

Changing requirements for practical science work and practical art and design assessments to ensure fairness. These changes will also apply to the November 2022 GCSE English language and mathematics re-sit exams. There will be advance information deployed for both subjects in July, and a formulae sheet will be available for mathematics. While it is the Government's firm intention for exams to go ahead next year it is right for contingency plans to be in place in the event they cannot. Ofqual and the department plan for Teacher Assessed Grades to be used and have launched a consultation on how this might work in 2022, building on the 2021 process.

## CONSULTATION

### Annual Canvassing Door Knocking about to start



Residents who have not completed their electoral registration form yet will soon receive a visit from one of West Northamptonshire Council's canvassers.

Forms were sent to every household in West Northants as part of the annual individual voter registration canvass. Those who have not responded will receive a visit from one of the Council's canvassers from mid to late October.

If people are at home when one of the canvassers visits, they can complete their registration with them on their doorstep. Residents who are not in will receive a card to let them know the canvassers

have been and to remind them to complete their registration form. All the canvassers carry identification. Each household is required by law to make sure that the details on the form are correct. Those who need to make changes or who have been asked to respond can do so via one of the options below:



Visit [www.householdresponse.com/westnorthants](http://www.householdresponse.com/westnorthants) and login using the two-part security code on your form  
Text NO CHANGE (if you have no changes) to 80212 followed by the two-part security code on your form  
Call (if you have no changes) 0800 197 9871

Complete the paper form and return it using the address provided

It's important that people keep an eye out for their canvass form and check the details we hold for them. It only takes a couple of minutes to respond, and saves you being contacted by our team who will be in touch by text, email or in person if you don't reply. If you're not currently registered to vote you can easily register online or you can call 0300 126 7000.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

### West Northamptonshire Jobs Fair



West Northants Council (WNC) Economy Team are holding a Jobs Fair on Friday 29 October at Franklins Gardens Stadium from 10.00am-1.00pm. Expert partners, who possess a wide range of experience and knowledge to support all your employment needs, support WNC.

If you are seeking employment support then come along and meet local employers, find out what jobs are available and learn more about the variety of different industries and opportunities in West Northamptonshire.

### Plan for Jobs

While emergency support draws to a close on 30 September, the Government will continue to maximise



employment across the country, create high quality, productive jobs, and deliver the skills that people, businesses and the economy need to thrive. If you haven't signed your business up yet for Kickstart, there's still time. Government will pay 100% of the National Minimum Wage (or the National Living Wage depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months.

This includes:

1. The £2bn Kickstart Scheme, which has so far placed 76,900 young people at risk of long-term unemployment into jobs.
2. The Sector-Based Work Academy Programme which has helped 65,000 jobseekers to date – exceeding initial targets.
3. The continued support for employers to take on apprentices, with the government offering a newly improved Apprenticeship Levy transfers system which will help smaller employers to fund their apprenticeship training, and a £7 million fund to support the creation of new flexi-job apprenticeships to unlock more opportunities in freelance and creative sectors.
4. The Government's pioneering Lifetime Skills Guarantee will continue to transform the skills system so everyone, no matter their background, can gain the skills needed to progress in work at any stage of their lives through various programmes including 'skills bootcamps' and funding for adults to access free Level 3 courses.

### Northampton Market Square Transformation

A £8.42m project is set to transform Northampton's Market Square into an attractive and welcoming environment.





Supported by the Government's Towns Fund and overseen by Northampton Forward, it includes plans to improve market stalls and to change how they are managed and maintained.

There are proposals to improve landscaping, seating and lighting, and to install a large-scale water feature in order to make the Market Square a more attractive environment.

And with work due to begin next year on the area's transformation, engagement will start soon with a series of workshops to inform the design of specific elements.

Quarterbridge has been commissioned to create a vision and business plan for the market. It will deliver its report this autumn.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../new-plan-needed...>



## Social Enterprise Fund

Northamptonshire Community Foundation has launched a new fund to support social enterprise initiatives that will help with the economic recovery from the pandemic. Social enterprises based in the county can apply for up to £5,000 to help support decent work and economic growth within local communities.

The activities must benefit residents, especially those that may be disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Groups can apply via [www.ncf.uk.com](http://www.ncf.uk.com) with a closing date for applications of Friday 15 October.

## TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

### Review of Bus Lane Enforcement Scheme

As you know, I have heard from many of you who want WNC to review the bus lane enforcement at Westbridge in Weedon Road. Well, you now have an opportunity to let WNC know your thoughts. Please respond to the Consultation.



You can now 'Have your say' on bus lane enforcement at Weedon Road / St James' Road, Northampton as West Northamptonshire Council has launched a public consultation on bus lane enforcement at Westbridge in the Weedon Road / St James area of Northampton. The purpose of the bus lane is to ensure that bus services run on time, in order to reduce car journeys, reduce congestion, and improve choice. It also always allows taxis and active travel users access.

Enforcement has been in place since February last year, when the previous county council installed a number-plate recognition camera near the rail bridge in St James Road. The bus lane is in operation 24/7, with motorists facing a fine of up to £60 if they break

The 24-hour bus lane could be changed back to its previous operating times

the rules.

The consultation is asking people's views on several options, including whether to:

- Reduce the enforcement hours to a minimum period from 7.30am to 9.30am
- Reduce the enforcement hours to 7am to 7pm
- Leave the enforcement hours as they currently operate

The consultation is open to all residents, stakeholders and people representing organisations. This consultation closes at midnight on Tuesday 2 November 2021. Do have your say!

Please visit the West Northamptonshire Consultation Hub for further information about the consultation and how to have your say. If you have any questions or enquiries about the consultation, please contact WNC via email at [Parkingenquiries@kierwsp.co.uk](mailto:Parkingenquiries@kierwsp.co.uk)

### **Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plans**

On 30 July a significant investment in upgrades to the National Cycle Network was unveiled as part of a commitment to make it easier for people to choose active forms of travel. The announcement coincided with the DfT's introduction of the 2021/22 Capability Fund. On 9 August, I wrote to Members Enquiries looking for advice as to how best to progress an enquiry as to whether West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) intended to access this fund to improve rural and inter urban connectivity. By converting old train lines that criss cross Northamptonshire into cycle paths. For example, Olney could be linked to Northampton providing links for Hackleton, Horton, Brafield and other locations on the way. As the old line goes directly to Northampton station it might mean that commuters could safely cycle rather than drive. I suggested that we might be able work on it together with Sustrans. I asked them to pass this enquiry onto the most appropriate person within WNC and let me have an appropriate reply for the local resident who had contacted me about this. I thought it to be worthy of careful investigation, and I wanted WNC to give it serious consideration.

On 19 August, Michelle Johnson, Senior Officer Improvements, Northamptonshire Highways replied and advised me that the monies had already been allocated to Brackley and Towcester and that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans had a very urban focus. However, she did say that the idea of using old railway lines was an interesting one and that we now awaited the publication of further guidance from the Department for Transport on how that initiative will be progressed, and what funding will be made available.

On 2 September, I wrote to Michelle saying that I was disappointed to hear that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans had been very urban focussed, particularly as I have a few residents and Parish Councillors that would like me to help them to implement a cycleway which links the local villages to Wootton and then on to Northampton. In addition to the idea of using the old railway line that goes directly to Northampton station, I had heard further from Hackleton Parish Council who had already progressed the idea of a new off road shared footway/cycleway linking their villages to amenities at Wootton and beyond. This proposal is included in the Hackleton Neighbourhood Plan, which the Cabinet decided to take to referendum and make the plan on 12 October if there is a successful vote at a referendum (Policy HN11-Traffic Management and Transport Improvements). Helen Howard at Highways has provided them with rough order of magnitude of costing.

I said that 'Active travel' can bring enormous benefit to people's wellbeing and the environment and that my goal is that people of all ages and abilities should be able to enjoy themselves cycling and walking. I suggested that by creating a project team involving the Parishes impacted by such a proposal we could aim to complete the feasibility study and route options by the end of Q1,2022, and then hope to complete the build of the shared paths by Q1 2023. We could seek Government/Sustrans Funding and any other sources of funding. I was just seeking her advice as to how best to take this forward.

On 8 September, Michelle sent me a brief e-mail:

“The key question in taking forward a feasibility study is has any funding been identified? Unfortunately, the highways service does not have revenue budgets to undertake feasibility work on potential schemes, which is one of the challenges we face in bringing things forward.”

So, I seemed to have exhausted Highways support in this matter and I then wrote to Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council asking him to advise me on how best to proceed. As a Council, we will need to highlight how we can meet our own net zero carbon targets in line with COP 26 and the UK rigorous minimum criteria before implementing plans to achieve them. Projects such as this could assist us in this matter. I will give you an update in due course.

### **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> September, I told you about the Bus Services Consultation, which closed on 10 October 2021. Residents, parish councils, businesses and groups in Northamptonshire were being invited to share their views on the improvements they would like to see in bus services across the county.

I encouraged all of you that have spoken and written to me about the lack of bus services to participate in this survey and have your say to help shape the future of bus travel in your area.  
<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../bus-service.../>



Improvements could be made to bus services. (File picture).

This was very important because on 12 October 2021, Cabinet considered an outline of the WNC Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Having committed to form an Enhanced Partnership, the Council now must publish a final local Bus Service Improvement Plan, detailing how we propose to use our powers to improve services, by 31 October 2021 and develop an Enhanced Partnership by April 2022. From that date, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership

or where a franchising scheme has been made. However, an outline is provided, which follows the headings required by the government’s guidelines and it is proposed that a final version of the BSIP is agreed under delegated authority to enable it to be submitted by the 31 October deadline.

Key areas that are being developed for inclusion in the BSIP include:

- The need to return patronage to pre-COVID levels before considering expansion
- Patronage growth will mainly come from enhancing existing commercial services
- Filling gaps in evening and Sundays on the most frequent services

- Reinstating withdrawn services in rural areas, and the need to consider reinstating a bus subsidy budget
- The need for improved bus priority to improve journey times and reliability
- The need for better roadworks liaison to improve journey time reliability
- Introducing zero-emission buses to tackle air quality and decarbonisation issues
- Improved information for bus passengers
- Publish a Bus Passenger Charter

The Bus Service Improvement Plan provides a means for the Council to secure significant additional funding for bus service improvements. However, to maximise the impact of improving our bus services in West Northamptonshire, the Council must consider options for match funding, particularly for Manifesto priority areas such as the reinstatement of rural bus services. As such funding would be beyond current budgets, the final BSIP will make clear that options for funding would need to be considered as part of the Council's budget for 2022-23 and beyond and included in the public consultation thereon. Because of this, delegated authority is sought from the Executive Director and Cabinet Member for Finance, in addition to those with responsibility for Transport.

If we are to try to make sure that there is a focus on reinstating withdrawn services in rural areas, and the considering reinstating a bus subsidy budget, then you needed to complete the survey and let me know which services you need reinstated.

## **POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER**

### **Nick Adderley, Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police**

I thought you might like to hear the following from Nick Adderley, Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police:



"In March this year, Sarah Everard was tragically murdered by a man who, at the time, was a serving officer with the Metropolitan Police Service. Wayne Couzens was handed a whole life term after the court heard how he used his police credentials to abduct Sarah from a London street, before going on to rape and murder her. His despicable actions have not only robbed a vibrant young woman of her life, and utterly devastated her family and friends,

they have also shaken public trust in policing to the core. I know you will all share my horror at the actions of this man. Police officers and staff who want to protect the public are sickened by his crimes. We understand how deeply concerning his actions are and want to let you know about the measures we're taking to help the people we protect and serve, feel confident in us and the vital work we do. Police officers always carry identification and can always be asked for verification. They are used to providing that reassurance. I have reminded all my officers of the need for them to be proactive in providing evidence of who they are, including producing their warrant and identity card. It would be extremely unusual for an officer in plain clothes to be working alone, and if they are, as standard practice they should be calling for



assistance with other officers arriving very soon. Here in Northamptonshire, going forward I have ordered that all plain clothed officers operating on patrol or who will be approaching members of the public without prior appointment will do so in pairs. If you are stopped by one of our officers and still wish to check their identity after they have shown you their warrant card, they will assist you to call our Force Control Room on 101, where the call handlers can independently verify their details to you. If people still feel things are not quite right or you are in imminent danger you must seek assistance, if that means shouting out to another member of the public, flagging a car down or even dialling 999 then do that. Our officers are dedicated to keeping you safe as they fight crime across our county, and I want you to know that we will be working hard to ensure you have trust and confidence in us as we do this. Thank you”

### **Hackleton and Grange Park Ward-Beat Bus**

Our new Beat Bus will be out and about in the Hackleton and Grange Park Ward on Wednesday 13 October

2021 giving you the perfect opportunity to come and meet your local neighbourhood team. The first Beat Bus Stop will be Grange Park Community Centre between 8.30am and 9.30am before moving to Hackleton and Cogenhoe and several villages.



They have plans to visit other villages and other wards in the next few months, so please do not worry if you are missed. If you cannot visit the Beat Bus in person you can still email them on [NT-SouthNorthants-Towcester@northants.police.uk](mailto:NT-SouthNorthants-Towcester@northants.police.uk) or report on-line at [www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk) or by calling 101. Remember all emergencies must be reported on 999.

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