

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT DECEMBER 2021



E Newsletter Issue 7/2021

Northampton City Bid

Submitted

8 December 2021

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NEWS REPORT DECEMBER 2021

I have great pleasure in presenting my seventh Monthly News Report for the Parish Councils and residents of Hackleton and Grange Park. I am thrilled to be out and about after my second eye operation and to have met some of you over the past week. Until I have my post-operative assessment, in January, I won't be driving. But that's all right as my wife is still driving me to all my appointments. As I said last month, I won't be able to help with Litter picking for a bit. I am sorry about that; I just need to avoid any dusty environments for now. I have seen the great work that Leigh Mitchell, Hackleton Wombles and Julie Bainbridge, 'Bertie the Bottle Campaign' Grange Park continue to do. I will be out with all of you in the New Year.

I was pleased to support the Mud Kitchen Café, Cogenhoe this week and their Christmas raffle in aid of Cynthia Spencer Hospice. So far, they have raised £380. If you haven't got your raffle tickets yet please pop along and get some for the chance to win an amazing hamper full of goodies, whilst supporting such a good cause.

It has been another busy month with committee activity and dealing with residents' casework. In Hackleton and Grange Park, the main issues this month have been Adult Social Care charges, surface water drainage, fly tipping, planning matters, speeding and parked cars causing obstruction, affordable housing, S106s, and dealing with the impact of the Spatial Strategy Consultation on West Northamptonshire.

I am pleased to hear that Councillors are to re-think Garden Waste Collection Charges. The Cabinet decision to approve a £42-a-year opt-in subscription service for the whole authority area will now be reviewed by the council's Scrutiny Committee on 14 December.

This month, I have been working on several issues with Highways including the Brafield, Chapel Lane problem and other matters on the A428. I have also had a few meetings with Matt Taylor our PCSO involving the Beat Bus, Brafield and then with him and the other Councillors on the issues across the entire ward of Hackleton and Grange Park.

West Northamptonshire Councillors voted unanimously on 2 December to support a bid to gain city status for Northampton. A successful bid would further raise the profile of Northampton, helping to attract investment into the entire West Northants area. The bid was submitted by 8 December, with the winning cities to be announced early next year.

The inaugural meeting of the new WNC Planning Policy Committee will take place on 16 December 2021. As Chairman of the South Northamptonshire Local Area Planning Committee, I have been invited to attend. I will provide you with more information as things progress.

I have received my booster shot ahead of winter to protect myself and those around me. In the light of the Omicron variant, I would urge others to do the same. It is quick, effective and provides important protection against the waning of the protection provided by the first two injections. Thank you so much for the support you gave me during my recent eye operations. Now that I am much better, I look forward to catching up with you all again soon.

I wish you peace, joy, and prosperity throughout the coming year. Thank you for your continued friendship and support. I look forward to supporting you in 2022.

All the Best, Steve

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

The Farmers Market & Craft Fair at Cogenhoe

Raffle tickets are on sale at The Mud Kitchen Cafe in aid of Cynthia Spencer Hospice. They have a huge hamper that will be filled to the brim with prizes and bakes for one lucky winner. All the lovely stallholders at the Farmers Market on Sunday 5th December kindly agreed to donate a prize each. They also had a lovely donation on behalf of John Lewis. Tickets are £1 each and all proceeds go to the Cynthia Spencer charity.

The Farmers Market, which was held at Cogenhoe and Whiston Village Hall, was very well attended



on 5 December 2021. Well done to the Mud Kitchen Cafe for organising this monthly event. I look forward to seeing you all next month.



Traffic Meeting at the Memorial Hall, Brafield on the Green

I attended a Traffic Meeting that had been scheduled at the Memorial Hall, Brafield on the Green on 15 November 2021 by Matt Taylor, PCSO. The purpose of the meeting was to address some serious highway issues that had taken place outside the Hall. There are several users of the Hall including a Play Group and Nursery. It was agreed at the meeting that I would discuss with Highways a few improvements.

The Community and the Parish Council are to engage residents in the initiative in order to improve the safety of this very difficult road layout.

I contacted Highways and I received the following

response from Michelle Johnson, Senior Officer Improvements, Highways:

“Whilst we recognise the desire of Brafield on the Green Parish Council to see a reduced limit on Church Lane, I should make you aware of our current position on 20mph restrictions. Any request for a change of

speed limit would be referred to our Speed Limit Review Panel for consideration – this includes various officers from the Road Safety and Traffic Engineering Teams, and a representative from the Police’s Safer Roads Team who has delegated authority from the Chief Constable regarding agreeing changes to speed limits. The Panel is keen that any new 20mph restrictions should be self-enforcing, in order to deliver the expected benefits to residents. Usually reports of regular excessive speeds indicate that residents feel people are not adhering to the current 30mph limit, however in the case of Church Lane I would imagine this is not the case due to the reduced road width and sharp bends etc. Given the layout of the road it is highly likely that vehicles are already travelling close to 20mph. If this is the case it would be a great shame to spoil the beautiful rural characteristics of the area with the road signage which would be required for the installation of a 20mph speed restriction.”



“The evidence supporting 20 mph signed only schemes is inconclusive in terms of the benefits delivered particularly in relation to the primary objectives of reduced speeds and casualties. The Department published the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study into the effectiveness of 20 mph speed limits for Transport in November 2018. It assesses the outcomes of introducing 20 mph speed limit schemes (i.e., reducing speed limits from 30mph to 20mph) in residential areas, village environments and town centres. This research is indeterminate and provides no clear insight for local authorities into the value or positive changes created by a 20mph scheme. In taking a pragmatic view we therefore remain cautious in terms of implementing 20mph speed restrictions. We have relatively few 20 mph limits in the county and those currently in place were mainly implemented prior to the formation of our Speed Limit Review Panel in 2014. The majority of those that are currently accepted are generally within new developments around the county where road design and associated infrastructure will clearly achieve a self-enforcing outcome.”

“Whilst a permanent change of speed limit may not be the best approach, we are currently working on a pilot scheme to introduce advisory 20mph limits. Once we have worked through the pilot project, we hope to be able to roll the scheme out more widely. The details of the scheme can be found in our Network Management Plan page 191. If the problem is more to do with inappropriate driving on Church Lane, then Northamptonshire Police run an initiative called Operation Snap. This has been set up to help keep our county’s roads as safe as possible. It allows members of the public to report driving offences in the Northamptonshire area by filling out a form and uploading video evidence they have captured. Submitted footage and reports are then examined by roads policing officers and can be used to take action against drivers found to be breaking the law.”

Further details can be found on Northamptonshire Police’s website.

<https://snap.northants.police.uk/snap>

I have since met with members of the Parish Council at their last meeting on 22 November and I followed up with their question about Day-Glo signs with Highways. Highways have confirmed that they can offer the use of their temporary signs which are plastic correx signs, A3 in size and can be cable tied to existing signs / streetlights. They have several different messages such as 30 SLOW DOWN, Unsuitable for HGVs, School slow down, Please Park Safely etc. You may well have seen some of them on the network when you are out and about. They also offer their mobile VAS (vehicle Activated signs) project; these are mobile signs, which flash when vehicles approach them if they are travelling too fast. Highways have confirmed that they will work with Parish Councils to guide them through the process of purchasing their own sign. Brafield Parish Council must now clarify which signs they are referring too so that I can direct their request to the most appropriate person.

Majority vote in favour of Hackleton Neighbourhood Plan on 2 December 2021



A referendum was held on 2 December 2021 to decide if the Neighbourhood Plan for Hackleton Parish was to be used as part of the formal planning process by West Northamptonshire Council. The results of the referendum were as follows:

- 316 voted yes (91%)
- 29 voted no (9%)

This now means that the neighbourhood plan will be used as well as the local plan and regional ones by Planners and Councillors when deciding upon planning applications in this area.

This plan covers the period up until 2029 when a new plan will be needed.

Background Papers

http://www.hackletonparishneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Hackleton_Neighbourhood_Development_Plan_21.10.21-2.pdf

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. I am progressing the matter with West Northamptonshire Council and SEGRO. I have heard from WNC that the S106 should be signed and sealed within the next few days. As a result, the first tranche of the Community Fund will then be due to be paid immediately. Further information on the application process to access the Community Fund can be obtained from the S106 Team at WNC South Northants Area. The email address is Section106.snc@westnorthants.gov.uk

I am delighted to have reached a satisfactory conclusion with this.

Denton Christmas Fair

I went to the Denton Christmas Fair on 20 November 2021 in aid of Deafconnect. All funds raised are used to continue to support the deaf community in Northamptonshire. Established in 1874, Deafconnect is the only charity in Northamptonshire supporting deaf people of all ages.

There were lots of stalls, a raffle and refreshments. A special visitor arrived at 12 o'clock-Father Christmas. I managed to meet Rob Blayney and buy one of his calendars of local buildings in watercolour - thank you Rob Blayney; they are beautiful watercolours of places on our doorstep.



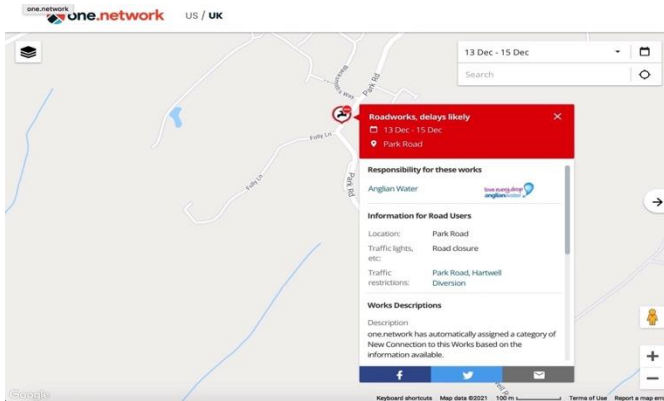
Little Houghton Coffee Morning in aid of the Hope Centre



Thank you, Julia, for arranging the Coffee Morning in aid of the Hope Centre on 20 November 2021. I enjoyed meeting you all including, Jennie, John, Julia and Alice and others at Little Houghton Village Hall. Northampton Hope tackles poverty and exclusion. Their work helps people experiencing the most acute problems of disadvantage and marginalisation, including homelessness, addiction and mental health. As well as giving practical support, they focus on helping people to help themselves, provide support and services that will enable individuals to take back control of their own lives, and campaign with them against the causes of their disadvantage.

Road Closure, Park Road, Hartwell

Anglian Water intends to install a new water connection outside 49 Park Road in Hartwell. To undertake the work safely it will require that the road is closed for up to three days from 13-15 December 2021.

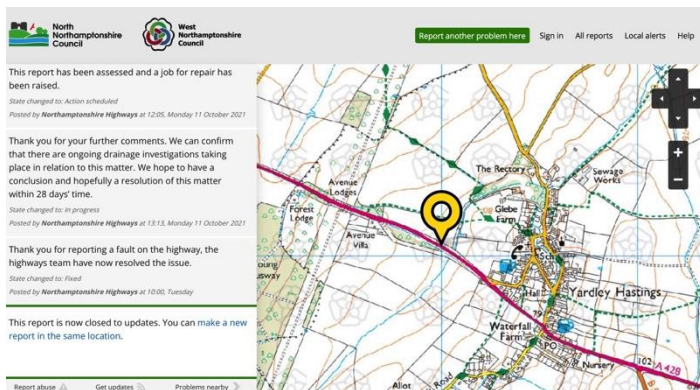


The closure and the diversion can be viewed using the link below.

If you require more information about the works, please contact Tom Jackson on 02838 448139.

<https://one.network/?tm=123966705>

Yardley Hastings Fix My Street-Drains

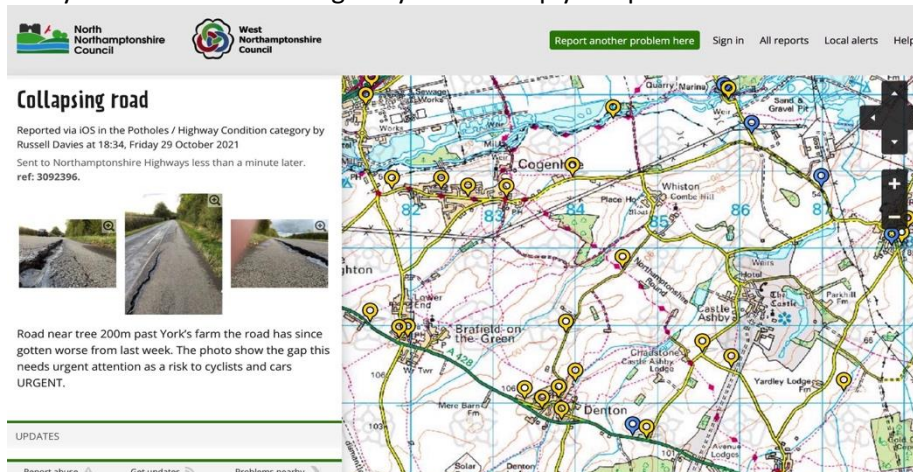


I escalated the Chase Park Storm Drain matter to Fix My Street as I understand that Yardley Hastings Parish Council were concerned at the lack of attention given to it, despite a categorisation of "Emergency Crew to attend." There is a broken storm drain in Chase Park Road Ref 2520777 and repeated flooding 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.

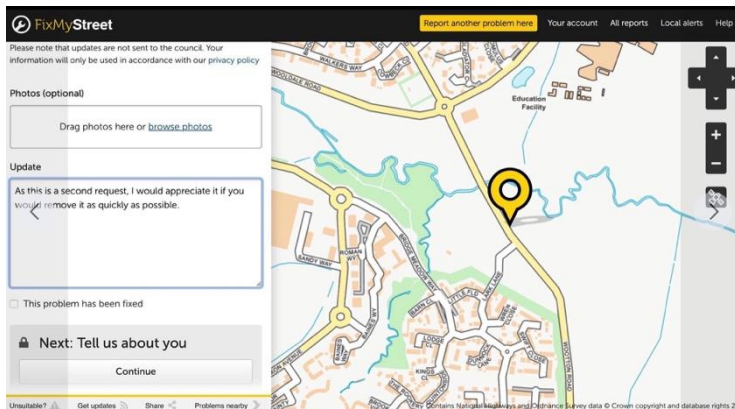
On 11 October I received feedback from Fix My Street as follows: "Thank you for your further comments. We can confirm that there are on-going drainage investigations taking place in relation to this matter. We hope to have a conclusion and hopefully a resolution of this matter within 28 days' time." I heard from Highways on Tuesday 7 December 2021 that this matter had been resolved.

Whiston Road, Cogenhoe

I am concerned that this matter on Whiston Road, Cogenhoe is still unresolved, and I have escalated it today 14 December with Highways. I will keep you updated.



Quinton Road, Grange Park



I have escalated a dumped mattress in a ditch, Quinton Road, Grange Park on 9 December as it has been reported twice already. I will keep you updated.

FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

WNC Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022 to 2023

The LCTRS was approved at the Council meeting on 2 December, and it will be in place by 31 January next year. The scheme applies to working age claimants only, as the government prescribes the scheme for those of pension age, which provides up to 100% support based on the circumstances of the individual.

1. At the Cabinet meeting of 14 September 2021, members received a report providing an update on the LCTRS for the year 2021-2022 and were asked to endorse no change to the minimum Council Tax contribution of 20% for working age claimants and to agree, for consultation purposes only, two proposals to the current scheme.
2. At their meeting on 9 November 2021, Cabinet members received a report on the results of the consultation and agreed to recommend to Council a LCTRS for the financial year 2022-2023.

Progress on Council's Transformation

The Council's Transformation Team continues to work with services and colleagues across the Council to help design services, which are modern, sustainable and effective.

Disaggregation

The process of disaggregating former county-wide services is progressing at pace, with the Learning, Independence, Volunteering and Employment (LIVE) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) services in the final stages, and the work to separate Waste Disposal and Emergency Planning well under way. It is hoped that these will all be disaggregated by 31 March 2022. Planning is underway for those remaining services, which will disaggregate later into next year too.

Aggregation

The process of combining former sovereign teams is also well under way, with the Revenues & Benefits and Executive Support services operating under new structures. Bringing teams together in this way clarifies line management responsibilities, giving certainty to colleagues, and putting the service in a better position to refine their policies, procedures and ways of working to provide services more effectively. The changes

to the Revenues & Benefits service are expected to save £200,000 while the change to Executive Support is anticipated to save £158,000.

Inter-authority agreements

Inter Authority Agreements which set out how we work with North Northamptonshire Council to deliver hosted services are being detailed further within a 'service plan' or schedule 3. In September, performance indicators were trialled for: Minerals & Waste Planning, Libraries and Learning & Development as part of a pilot, and these have now been adopted. The first formal performance report will be presented at the Joint Committee meeting in December. Throughout November, work has focussed on creating more service plans such as Adult Learning, Public Health Intelligence, the Archaeological Resource Centre, and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By mid-December, performance indicators for Virtual School, the Northamptonshire Travellers Unit and several place services including Digital Infrastructure and Street lighting PFI contract will be live or in the final approval stage.

Future Ways of Working

Earlier this year, the project team looked at the space available at our four main office locations to see how it was being used and consider changes that could help teams work more effectively, consolidate space or reduce our carbon footprint. All job roles across the council have been placed into one of four categories – field/operational, flexible, and part flexible or fixed – according to how they need to work to do their job. This level of detail around how we work helps inform decisions around how we need to configure our offices in the future and the type of IT equipment that colleagues will need to do their jobs effectively. These findings have been shared with trade unions and work to analyse them continues.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Northampton City Status

West Northamptonshire Councillors voted unanimously on 2 December to support a bid to gain city status for Northampton. The decision at the meeting of Full Council follows a public engagement campaign, which attracted overwhelming support from communities, the media, and partner organisations.

A successful bid would further raise the profile of Northampton, helping to attract investment into the entire West Northants area. The bid was submitted by 8 December, with the winning cities expected to be announced early next year.

Christmas and New Year opening times



Please see our Christmas and New Year opening times at <http://ow.ly/orbN50H62Jn>.

Some of the council's statutory services including children's services and adult social care will be operating as normal on 29, 30 and 31 December.

You can continue to access a range of services around the clock on our website.

Food Safety in Catering



Achieve your 'Food Safety in Catering Level 2' qualification at one of our courses in the New Year:

- Daventry - 17 January
- Northampton - 24 January

Training is delivered by our experienced food safety officers and costs just £75 per person.

Find out more and book your place at

www.westnorthants.gov.uk/trainingcourses

Buy Toys Safely this Christmas



Buy Toys Safely this [#Christmas](#)

Not everything sold on an online platform is supplied by them.

If the actual supplier is not based in the UK, you may face heightened risks. [#SafeToys2021](#)

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 -Dismissed.
- Yardley Gobion, land at Asana Lodge Appeal-Inquiry 8 February 2022 for 3 days starting at 10:00am
- Yardley Gobion, land East of Northampton Road Appeal Hearing date TBC

Blisworth Appeal dismissed 23 November 2021

I heard from the Planning Inspector on 23 November 2021, that the appeal by Manor Farm Developments (UK) Ltd & CBC Meats Ltd, Site Address: Land off Northampton Road, Blisworth, Northamptonshire, NN7 3DW. Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/21/3270614 has been dismissed. His conclusion is that the appeal site's location conflicts with the Council's adopted settlement strategy included in WNJCS Policies SA, SS1, SS2 and RH1 and Policy LH1 of the LPP2 and would have medium to adverse landscape impacts to warrant harm. Whilst the appeal site can be distinguished from the one in Milton Malsor by reason of both the position of the village within the settlement hierarchy and the amount of development proposed, the principles which underpin the Council's settlement strategy and landscape policies hold firm.

He acknowledged that the appeal scheme could result in benefits. These include additional housing. Other benefits include a biodiversity net gain and economic benefits in the short term through the creation of construction employment and in the longer term through increased spend on local services arising from

new residents. Furthermore, the appeal scheme would result in a policy compliant amount of affordable housing, which he accorded with significant weight. Whilst the Undertaking included a few measures designed to mitigate for the impact of development and which addressed the Council's second reason for refusal, he gave them neutral weight, as they were required for the development.

The site's development would adversely impact on the landscape surrounding the existing settlement and undermine the settlement strategy predicated on reducing the need to travel, combatting congestion and reducing social exclusion. These are important principles on which he placed substantial weight, which was consistent with the Framework.



Whilst the 5-year housing land supply is not being treated as a ceiling it is sufficiently robust and founded on a strategic approach that the Government priority to deliver its target of 300,000 dpa would not be undermined.

For the above reasons, he concluded that the benefits of the proposed scheme would not outweigh the harm that he had identified and the conflict with Policies SA, SS1, SS2 and RH1 and Policy LH1 of the WNJCS and LPP2 respectively.

For the above reasons, the appeal was dismissed.

West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, Spatial Options Consultation

The deadline for consultation responses has now been extended to 12 noon on Friday 24 December 2021. West Northamptonshire Council is preparing a new Strategic Plan for the area. This will replace the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and guide development in the period up to 2050.

The Spatial Options Consultation is the second stage in preparing the new Plan [after the Issues Consultation], no decisions have been made yet and the purpose of the consultation is to seek views on a Vision, Spatial Objectives and Development Options at this stage. WNC have produced a Spatial Options Consultation document, which includes a series of questions on which we would like your views. You can view and download the document from

<https://westnorthantsplan.inconsult.uk/WNSPOptions/consultationHome>

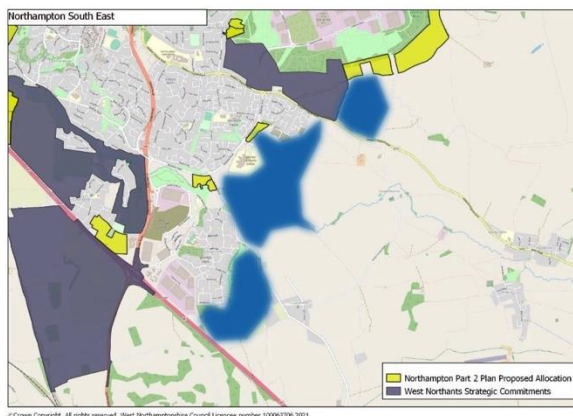
Call for Sites

There is also an additional opportunity to put forward ideas for potential development sites through a further 'call for sites' exercise. If you have any suggestions for potential locations for new development, then please submit these using the online form.

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. The plan sets out the following strengths and weaknesses.

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. The plan sets out the following strengths and weaknesses.

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.

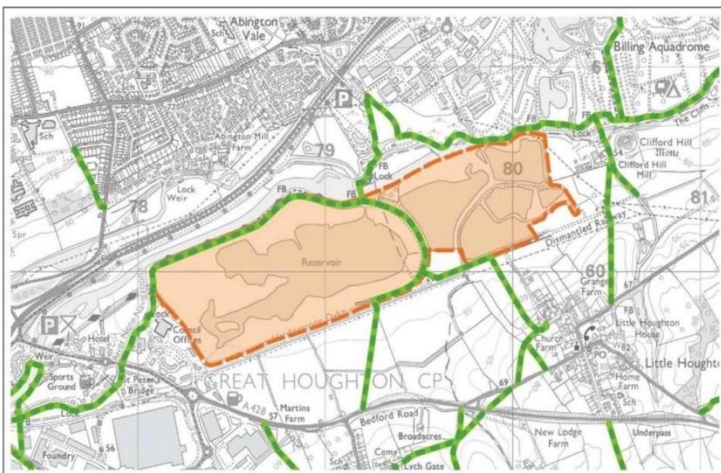
Planning Policy Committee

The inaugural meeting of the new WNC Planning Policy Committee will take place on 16 December 2021. I have received confirmation that as Chairman of the South Northamptonshire Local Area Planning Committee, I have been invited to take part. I will provide you with more information when I have it. In the meantime, I will write to Rebecca Breese requesting that she adds several of my concerns to the meeting agenda.

Views to be sought about visitor impact on former gravel pits

Public views are being sought on plans to limit the impact recreational use on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) to the east of Northampton. The area lies between Brackmills Industrial Estate and Riverside Retail Park and is part of a series of former gravel pits running along the length of the River Nene between Northampton and Thrapston.

15 November 2021



Public views will soon be sought on plans to limit the impact recreational use has on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) to the east of Northampton.

On Tuesday 9 November Cabinet agreed that the WNC Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA Mitigation Strategy could go out for public consultation. The strategy will help safeguard birds such as the golden plover and lapwing, which are protected by national and international legislation, and which over winter at the gravel pits. Adoption of the mitigation strategy will allow WNC to put measures in place and to educate visitors about the wonderful wildlife they would like to protect. New development within 3km of the area will add visitor pressure and the strategy sets out the financial contribution developers will have to make for measures needed to protect wildlife, including fencing, signage, and wardens. Signage would encourage

visitors of the need to keep dogs on lead to avoid bird disturbance along with information on nearby green spaces where dogs can be exercised off lead.

The strategy is similar in nature to others around the country, which seeks to protect important habitats such as the Thames Basin Heath and the New Forest. The consultation will run for eight weeks from 13 December to 7 February. Details can be found on our Consultation page from 13 December onwards.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../views-be-sought...>

A copy of the mitigation strategy can also be found on the WNC website from 13 December.

CCN Report calls for new planning model to address infrastructure pressures

The government should rapidly implement a new strategic planning model as part of forthcoming reforms to the planning system to closer align house building and infrastructure, a new report suggests. The new report from the County Councils Network and Catriona Riddell Associates puts forward the case for strategic planning to bring together local partners to set out ambitious visions for their areas, and to help ensure that local infrastructure is not overburdened by new housing development.



The study suggests that strategic planning could be delivered in a new model - 'Accountable Strategic Planning Bodies' - which would be made up of senior councillors in an area. It comes as a new survey of county authorities, released in the report, reveals almost 60% of those local authorities say the pressure on their local infrastructure – roads, health centres, schools, public services – is 'excessive' because of new housing development.

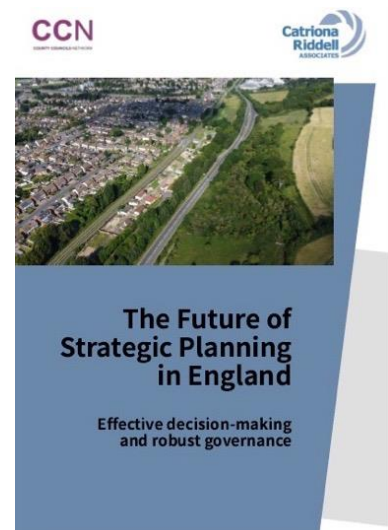
These bodies provide the means to effectively plan for housing and jobs and ensure that infrastructure is properly planned for and financed to cope with these new developments, whilst taking climate and health considerations into account.

Strategic planning is commonly viewed as a more collaborative mechanism to encourage local authorities to work together particularly in county areas, where a county council is responsible for infrastructure across the whole county and several district councils are responsible for housing in their area. However, strategic planning has not been a formal part of the planning system since the late 2010s, and currently the only informal tool to encourage those councils to work together is the 'Duty to Co-operate' – which the government is looking to scrap in its planning reform agenda.

CCN says that its new model could re-introduce strategic planning back into the system and has called on the new Levelling-Up Secretary Michael Gove to implement these arrangements as part of the government's revised planning reforms, due next year.

This model would work as follows:

An 'accountable strategic planning body' should be set up across each county area. This body would be made up of senior councillors from all councils in the area, working on a majority voting system, and the chair is recommended to either be a councillor from a county authority – like Growth Boards – or a directly elected leader, if such arrangements are made in specific devolution deals.



This body would set out a vision for their area, including testing locations for housing, economic growth, or larger regeneration, and then matching these with the right infrastructure. This 'Strategic Growth Plan' would provide a framework but not supersede individual councils' Local Plans.

Their proposals would be scrutinised by a 'strategic planning advisory body' made up of local councillors and business, health, climate, and civic leaders. They would test and advise the 'accountable strategic planning body' on whether the shared vision in the 'Strategic Growth Plan' is being delivered. This body would work very similarly to the London Assembly, which scrutinises the London Mayor's London Plan. In the short-term, this new model could be piloted through forthcoming county devolution deals, with the government currently negotiating with a cohort of areas across the country.

ENVIRONMENT

Christmas 2021 waste and recycling collection arrangements

There will be no changes to the days on which your bins are collected over the festive period. You can check your collection day at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/bincollections

Additional recycling can be presented alongside your bins or boxes in clear sacks or in additional boxes.

It can also be taken to your local Household Waste Recycling Centre. Centres will open as normal except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, when they will be closed, and Christmas Eve when they will close early at 2pm. Find your nearest at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/hwrc



Garden waste collection services across West Northants will be suspended from 27 December until 7 January. Real Christmas trees will be collected in the weeks beginning 10 and 17 January.

If you live in the South Northants area, please place your trees next to your garden waste bins. To help our collection crews, please ensure trees over 6ft tall are cut up into manageable pieces. Find out more. Download your 2022 bin collection

calendar and check your collection day at

www.westnorthants.gov.uk/bincollections

Check what goes in each bin or box, plus general information about waste and recycling at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/waste

Any missed collections can be reported via our online self-serve system

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-street->



Christmas Recycling

Please recycle as much as possible this Christmas. Non-foil wrapping paper, Christmas cards (no foil/glitter), toy boxes, cans and wine bottles can all be recycled in your recycling bin or

recycling boxes. Extra recycling in clear sacks will also be collected.

Bin Collection Days



Your collection days will not change over Christmas and New Year. You can download your 2022 bin collection calendar and check your collection day at <http://ow.ly/4B0F50H3Xv8>



Real Christmas Trees Recycling

WNC will be collecting real Christmas trees on weeks beginning 10th and 17th January.

Please place your tree next to your garden waste bin if you live in Daventry and South Northants or next to your recycling bin if you live in Northampton.

Please ensure any trees over 6ft tall are cut in a half. Residents on sack collection rounds can present their trees beside their recycling boxes and green sacks on their collection day.

Fly Tipping on Private Land

Did you know? Private landowners who are the victims of fly-tipping can apply for grants of up to £1,500 to help cover the cost of removing it. Local authorities do not remove fly-tipped waste on private land, as it is the responsibility of the landowner to clear. But under this scheme, farmers and private landowners can apply for a grant towards the cost of having the fly-tipped waste cleared away and to support them in putting prevention measures in place that will make the land less vulnerable to fly-tippers in the future. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner run the scheme, with support



from the West and North Northamptonshire Councils.

Grants of up to £1,500 are available and landowners can find out more on our website:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../funding-remove-fly...>

Councillors to re-think Garden Waste Collection charges in West Northamptonshire

Councillors are to re-think garden waste collection charges in West Northamptonshire. The Cabinet decision to approve a £42-a-year opt-in subscription service for the whole authority area will now be reviewed by the council's Scrutiny Committee. Council Taxpayers in Northampton and Daventry are already paying to have their garden waste collected fortnightly. The service is still free in Towcester and across the

former South Northamptonshire District Council area, which was also absorbed by the new unitary authority earlier this year.

Proposals to bring together garden waste collections for West Northamptonshire, which were considered



and approved by the Cabinet, have now been 'called in' for further review following a request by several councillors for the authority to revisit the decision. Under the rules of the council's constitution, the Scrutiny Committee has now called in the decision for review. Once it has considered the call-in and the reasons given, the committee will have options which would involve either referring it back to Cabinet for further consideration or deciding to take no further action — in which case the original Cabinet decision will be effective immediately." The next Scrutiny Committee meeting is set for this evening, December 14.

West Northamptonshire currently runs three different collection schemes for garden waste, inherited from the old district and borough councils. Fees for Daventry were 'levelled up' in June to bring them into line with the £42-a-year Northampton residents have paid since the

charge was first introduced there in 2020. Plans to ask South Northamptonshire residents to pay the same from next April were met with criticism.

Alternative actions to improve the decision, as a minimum to incorporate all or any of the list below: -

1. To allow for a lower cost than the £42 proposed whilst being cost neutral overall
2. To await the outcome of the DEFRA consultation before placing reliance on the income stream proposed
3. To clarify if the Christmas Tree Collection service is open to all residents or just those signed up to the garden waste collection scheme
4. To open the Household Waste and recycling centres 7 days a week to allow residents not in the scheme to dispose of their garden waste
5. To amend any proposed scheme to allow for payment by instalments
6. To amend any proposed scheme to allow for those in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme support to have a lower cost or nil cost.

Forestry England Woodland Partnership

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership offers long-term leases with guaranteed income for public and private landowners to create new woodlands. The partnership scheme supports government plans for woodland creation, nature recovery and progress towards net zero targets. Forestry England are looking for sites of at least 50 hectares suitable for woodland creation for leases of between 60 and 120 years, and landowners will receive a guaranteed annual rent throughout the lease period.



Forestry England will design, plant and manage every woodland created, ensuring each is resilient to a changing climate, supports wildlife, and provides wider ecosystem services. All woodlands created through the partnership scheme will be open to the public, providing valuable health and wellbeing opportunities for communities. Part of the Nature for Climate Fund to support the government's tree planting commitment, the Forestry England Woodland Partnership aims to create at least 2,000 hectares of predominantly broadleaf woodland over the next five years. Applications are open all year round. Full details and brochures for public and private landowners are available on the Forestry England website.

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation>

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

RSN Response to the Adult Social Care White Paper

In the RSN initial response to the Social Care White Paper, which they issued the day after the White Paper was published; the Rural Services Network welcomed the ambition of the Government in the Social Care White Paper 'People at the Heart of Care'. In particular they agreed with the Social Care Minister Gillian Keegan who stated in her speech, "We cannot be serious about Levelling Up unless we are also serious about social care".

However, they expressed concern about whether the Government will be able to deliver on their promises and fix the broken system.

The White Paper is based on 3 core principles,

- Everybody has choice, control and support to live independent lives
- Everyone can access outstanding personalised care and support
- Adult social care is fair and accessible for everyone who needs it

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/people-at-the-heart-of-care-adult-social-care-reform-white-paper>



RSN commented:

"These are bold promises from the Government and recent research by the Rural Services Network and the County Council Network, The State of Care in County and Rural Areas, highlighted particular challenges for rural and county areas which would need to be specifically addressed in order to achieve these core principles.

These challenges are:

- **Resource:** Government funded support for adult social care service costs is significantly lower in county and rural areas
- **Workforce:** The higher average age alongside ageing population projections within county and rural areas places a high burden on these local authorities
- **Self-Funders:** The balance of adults self-funding their care is higher in rural areas and likely to be more sensitive to reforms made to the funding system
- **Care Homes:** The proportion of residential care homes situated in rural locations is higher than in metropolitan areas, often encouraging service user inflow to counties
- **Sparsity:** Geographical challenges in providing adult social care in large and remote rural areas, particularly the time and costs involved in delivering personal care over large distances

Local Authorities in rural areas are suffering from years of historic underfunding compared to urban areas. They will be looking for financial reform to bridge the funding gap for Social Care budgets to ensure that they can meet growing demands on the service and current levels of unmet need. During the Social Care Reform Statement in Parliament on 1st December, Jeremy Hunt MP, Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee highlighted his concerns over the lack of solutions to address the funding to local authorities for their core responsibilities and an 'end to the workforce crisis'.

The announcements in relation to investment in a range of supported housing options, training for the social care workforce, and a practical support service to make changes in people's homes so that they remain independent are all welcome, but need exploring in more detail to see how they will be rolled out in rural areas"

In this further paper RSN commented on some of the funding issues for local government. In doing so they draw on some comments from Pixel Financial Management, the RSN's Local Government Finance Consultants. These comments are general and not rural specific.

1. Criticisms of the white paper mainly focus on whether there is sufficient funding to make the proposals realistic – and to make social care financially viable.

2. There is absolutely no mention in the White Paper of the formulae used to distribute Government Grant to Local Authorities. Urban areas receive 16% more per head of population in Government support for social care services than rural areas. The gap has increased from 4% in 2017. This is even though it costs more to provide services across rural areas.
3. The white paper starts to show how the £1.7bn will be used:
 - “At least £300 million to integrate housing into local health and care strategies”
 - “At least £150 million of additional funding to drive greater adoption of technology and achieve widespread digitisation”
 - “At least £500 million for the social care workforce
 - “A new practical support service to make minor repairs and changes in peoples’ homes to help people remain independent and safe in their home, alongside increasing the upper limit of the Disabilities Facilities Grant for home adaptations” (£570m for DFG).
 - “Up to £25 million ... to support unpaid carers”
 - “£30 million to help local areas innovate around the support and care they provide in new and different ways”
 - “A new national website to explain the upcoming changes and at least £5 million to pilot new ways to help people understand and access the care and support available”
 - “More than £70 million to increase the support offer across adult social care to improve the delivery of care and support services”
 - “Continue to invest in the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) funding with £210m available” over the next 3 years.
4. Some of this funding has already been announced, or is for existing grants, and the values are imprecise (the phrases “at least”, “up to” and “more than” are used liberally). It suggests that ministers have yet to decide how to use some of the £1.7bn in detail.
5. The approach taken by DHSC also suggests that there will be new specific grants, possibly with new burdens or strings attached, and possibly with different allocation Authorities might even find that they must bid for some of these funds. It seems very unlikely that local government will receive any of this funding simply to use as they see fit to support existing financial pressures. As ever, ministers tend to want to attach strings to new funding.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

COVID-19 update

COVID-19 cases in South Northamptonshire rose rapidly even **BEFORE** the Omicron variant was identified. Nearly 200 people in localities stretching from Silverstone to Brackley tested positive over seven days to 3 December. Seven-day case rates in Brackley North soared to 1,506 and in Silverstone, Syresham and Helmdon to 1,434.5 per 100,000 people, according to official figures. The rate across all of England is 493.3. Around 13,400 people live in the two areas.

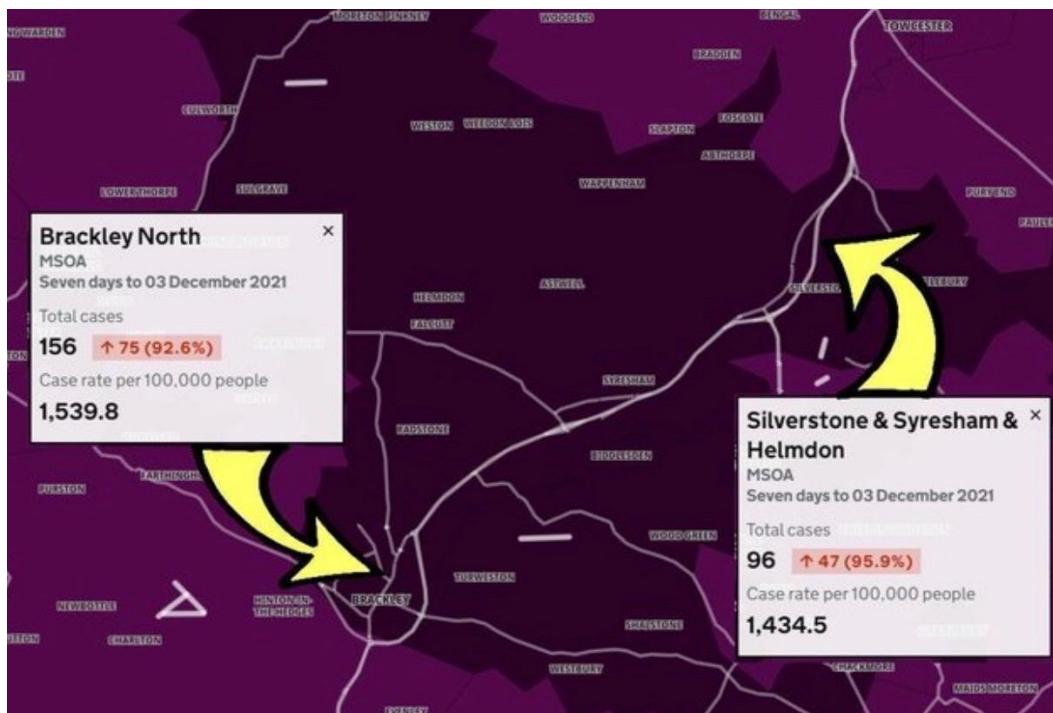
Local health officials say the rise in infections is down to community transmission and advised people county-wide to heed government guidance over face masks and working from home even before the rules become enforceable. UK Health Security Agency is leading an investigation into 28 Omicron, which had been identified in the Brackley area by Wednesday 8 December —



more than double the number revealed on Saturday — with another 55 cases said to be 'highly probable.'

Lucy Wightman, Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire said: "It is now clear that the variant has spread within the community, mainly through a series of events and within households. Currently known Omicron cases have only been detected in a reasonably young age range and to date no one locally has been hospitalised. "However, we are still learning about Omicron and the related risks. So, the sensible option is to keep calm, exercise caution, and follow the new Government Plan B rules announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Christmas parties and nativity plays should still go ahead — if the guidance is followed. A mobile PCR testing unit has been set up at Brackley Leisure Centre for anyone with symptoms or close contacts of Covid 19 cases, although tests MUST be booked online or by the 119-phone service. Around 4,500 people positive tests were recorded in Northamptonshire during the seven days to 8 December, according to government figures — up by around 50 percent from last month.

Anyone with coronavirus symptoms — a continuous cough, high temperature or loss or change in taste or smell — should book a PCR test immediately and self-isolate until seeing a negative result. Those without symptoms who could still be carrying the virus are advised to take a lateral flow test twice weekly at home.



Mrs Wightman added: "Testing is a really important tool in our armoury.

"Around one in three people with Covid-19 do not have symptoms and these rapid lateral flow tests — which can be picked up from local pharmacies ordered online — help find people who are still infectious and can give the

virus to others. Therefore, it's also important to take a test before going out and mixing with people in crowded indoor places or visiting someone who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from Covid-19."

"Regular and thorough hand-washing remains an essential part of good hygiene and prevents the spread of many viruses, colds, flu and stomach bugs.

"And finally, vaccination provides powerful protection against severe illness so getting the jab is still the most important thing you can do to protect yourself."

Plan B Guidance

Here is a run-down of the new Plan B guidance:

1. Face masks will be mandatory in most public indoor settings, including theatres and cinemas — but not bars and restaurants — beginning on December 10
2. People should work from home, if they can, for a "limited period" starting on December 13

3. Nightclubs and other large venues will require proof of COVID-19 vaccination of at least two doses beginning December 15
4. Daily tests for those who encounter COVID-19-positive individuals, instead of self-isolation

Suicide Prevention grant fund – Department of health & Social Care

The government has launched a £5 million fund to support the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector on suicide prevention services. Recognising the increased pressures, a £4 million grant fund



opened on 2 December 2021 for applications from VCSE organisations that support suicide prevention. The support will be targeted at high-risk groups who have struggled most during the pandemic, such as people with a pre-existing mental illness, children and young people, NHS and social care staff that has faced enormous pressure over the last 18 months, and people in contact with the criminal justice system. The funding will provide organisations with additional resource that will enable them to either set up new projects or expand or sustain

current services to ensure people are supported. The other £1 million of the funding has been set aside to support existing and ongoing voluntary sector suicide prevention programme.

<https://www.gov.uk/.../5-million-launched-to-support...>

Appointment of a Director of Public Health



Directors of public health are responsible for determining the overall vision and objectives for public health in a local area or in a defined area of public health, such as health protection. They are accountable for delivering public health objectives and reporting annually on the outcomes and future work. They may be from any background but must be qualified specialists in public health and registered with the General Medical Council or General Dental Council or UK Public Health Register.

On 7 December Cabinet agreed to change the previously approved blueprint and move from having a single shared Director of Public Health (DPH) across West Northants Council, North Northants Council and the new Integrated Care System (ICS) to two DPHs employed by West Northants and North Northants respectively, but both working in conjunction with the ICS to ensure our residents health inequalities are addressed.

The role of the Director of Public Health (DPH) is a critical one for the Council. The DPH is the figurehead and senior statutory role responsible for Healthcare Public Health, Health Improvement and Health Protection. The importance of the role and leadership in these areas has never been more clearly demonstrated than during the COVID pandemic when the shared DPH has had to oversee the most significant public health issue the country has seen.



The DPH has also had an increasingly key role in the development of the design of our new Integrated Care System (ICS) and the underpinning principles since the government introduced the Integrating care – building strong and effective integrated care systems legislation earlier this year. These design principles of the ICS were agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 13th July 2021 and included the development of Population Health Management capabilities

and a wider system outcome framework to be led by the DPH.

The creation of the unitary Councils also presented a significant opportunity to join up thinking and services across public health, adults, children, housing, communities and leisure in a way that was not possible when we operated as two-tier Local government. The original Blueprint design had a shared Councils/CCG DPH and intelligence team but always planned that the Public Health Grant and wider Public health team would be split, with a dedicated North and West service and some specialist technical leads shared across the county. While the original design recognised the value of a shared role between the two Councils and the CCG it has become clearer over time that the benefits of the shared role may undermine the focus on the specific statutory responsibilities, populations' needs, areas of inequalities and ability to join up thinking and services for the benefit of each Council area. The differences in localities and areas of required improvement in North and West Northants, in terms of public health outcome measures, require different responses and alliances. This is recognised in the planned ICS designs using place based (Unitary footprints) as the focus of future service delivery.

Discussions between the Councils have concluded that in order to ensure the right level of population focus for each area, to ensure that our separate statutory duties and accountabilities are met and to ensure we maximise the benefits of closer public health working with other services we should amend the previously agreed blueprint and each Council should appoint its own dedicated DPH overseeing the team and budget below. This report therefore recommends that the blueprint is amended and each Council proceeds with securing its own dedicated and employed DPH. The Council has also confirmed that it will continue to support a shared intelligence team so that the wider system health and wellbeing strategy and partners continue to benefit from the capabilities and specialisms that Public Health bring when setting County wide initiatives. These commitments to the ICS will form part of the updated Job Description for the role and duties of the DPH alongside the continued collaboration with partners

The role of the Director of Public Health is a critical one for the Council as the senior statutory role responsible for:

- Healthcare Public Health - Clinical effectiveness, Service planning, Clinical governance, Equity of access, Audit and Evaluation.
- Health Improvement – Inequalities, Education & employment, Housing, Health education & empowerment, Community development, Healthy lifestyles & Surveillance & monitoring of specific risk factors & diseases.
- Health Protection - Infectious disease prevention/reduction, Outbreak management, Environmental health hazard reduction, Emergency response, Screening and Vaccination.

EDUCATION

Consultation on School Admissions Arrangements

West Northamptonshire Council's School Admissions Team is co-ordinating a formal consultation on the admissions arrangements, which will apply for mainstream schools within the county for the September 2023 intakes (Primary, Junior and Secondary). This consultation period allows parents, schools, religious authorities and the local community to comment on proposed admission arrangements.



CONSULTATION will take place between 8 November 2021 and 19 December 2021.

DETERMINATION of school admission arrangements by admission authorities must be completed by 28 February 2022.

PUBLICATION of admission policies should happen as soon as possible after 28 February and must be completed by 15 March 2022 (published on schools' websites and copies to LA)

To view the consultation, please visit School Admissions | West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)

If you would like to respond to this consultation, then please email School Admissions Consultation at:

Schooladmissionsconsultation.NCC@northnorthants.gov.uk

Alternatively, please put your response in writing to:

Jan Baines, School Admissions Manager

West Northamptonshire Council

One Angel Square

Angel Street

Northampton, NN1 1ED

Application for School Places

Parents and carers should have applied 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>

Time has run out to apply for September 2022 for Year 7 places to start secondary school in September 2022. If you have missed the deadline your application will not be processed until after the National Offer Day on 1 March 2022 and you may miss out on the school place you want for your child.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/secondary-school-places>

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

Funded School Holiday Clubs over Christmas

Funded school holiday clubs are running over the Christmas school holidays in Northamptonshire. If your family receives benefits-related free school meals, you might be eligible for HAF Northants. Find out more at: <http://ow.ly/AEmu50H1RZ8>



SEND Inspection Autumn 2022

The Council will be due a SEND inspection in the Autumn 2022 and work is underway with partners to consider current performance and to develop a self-assessment and action plan. An experienced SEND consultant is supporting the work and all partners are engaged and attend a SEND Accountability Board. Work is also underway with the Parent Care Forum to ensure they are fully involved in the work. It is also planned that the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance will undertake a peer inspection of the SEND provision in the spring.

of

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Free Car Parking in Northampton for Christmas Shoppers

Shoppers in Northampton will be able to park for free in all council car parks in the town from 3pm every day and all day at weekends from 20 November through to 1 January.



Funding for West Northants community groups

The next funding round for the Community Funding Grant Scheme, which is for grants up to £5,000 will open on 10 January 2022 and close on 13 February 2022.

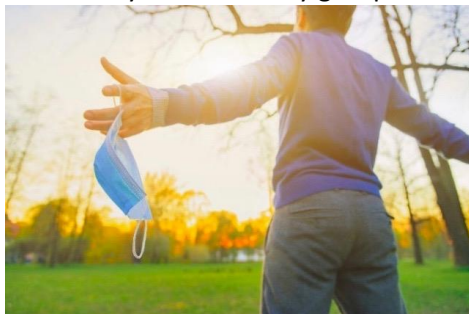


These grants allow WNC to support local community and voluntary groups who are providing vital services to our communities. We know how difficult the last year has been for many community groups, who have

seen demand for their services increase. We're delighted to be able to offer these groups much needed funds, which will help to support local communities as we recover from the pandemic. The scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, registered charities and not-for-profit organisations, with priority given to projects that support the council's key priorities and the strategic aims. If you are interested in applying for a Community Funding Grant, you will need to complete an expression of interest form, which is available on the WNC website. If you would like to speak to the Community Funding Officer about your eligibility to apply for a grant, please call or email: Peter Worth. Email: peter.worth@westnorthants.gov.uk Telephone: 01327 3222
<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../community-funding...>

New Councillor COVID Support Fund

A new £232,500 Councillor Covid Support Fund will provide members with £2,500 each to allocate to community and voluntary groups that need support.



The new fund, which was agreed on 12 October Cabinet meeting, will enable Councillors to efficiently and effectively allocate money within their wards to make a positive impact on the areas they represent, helping them to empower residents to be active in their communities' recovery from COVID-19. Please let me have your recommendations for a community or voluntary group in need of support.

Social Enterprise Support Fund – National Lottery Community Fund

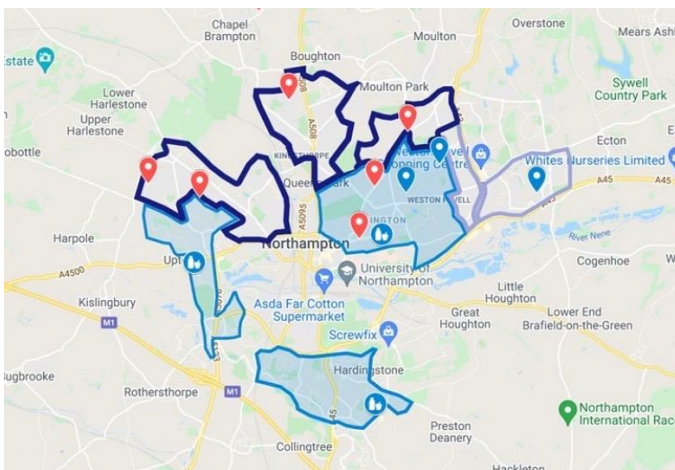
This fund is open for applications now. It provides grants to help social enterprises rebuild from COVID-19. The National Lottery Community Fund and five social enterprise support agencies established it in partnership. Grants between £10,000 and £100,000 are available to social enterprises in England. They want to reach the most marginalised communities and to promote inclusion. They want to support social enterprises that are helping communities affected by COVID-19 to recover, and to help social enterprises themselves to recover and rebuild their trading.



The deadline for applications in Round 1 is 21 December 2021. Round 2 will open on 28 February and close on 24 March 2022.

<https://socialenterprisesupportfund.org.uk>

Starship Robots expansion Plans



Starship robots will be delivering to even more homes across Northampton as the service announces expansion plans on the anniversary of its introduction. The six-wheeled autonomous robots currently provide same-day food deliveries in the three areas of Northampton highlighted in light blue in the map enclosed.

Northampton became the second town in Britain (after Milton Keynes) to host the robots when a pilot scheme launched in Wootton in November last year. And a year on, the service is expanding into the purple and dark blue highlighted areas on the map. The robots are electrically powered and emit zero emissions. They are also 25 times more energy-efficient than a single-car shopping trip, and proved a benefit to many during lockdown, providing a socially distanced way of delivering groceries. The Northampton trial involved a signed collaboration agreement between the former county council and Starship. WNC gave the go-ahead for the expansion of the scheme, which operates at no cost to the council. To use the robots, customers order items using the Starship mobile app, choosing a time for delivery. They can then track the movement of the robot through the app and retrieve their item(s) by unlocking the lid of the robot by pressing the 'unlock' button on the Starship mobile app



Supporting Those at Risk (STAR) Fund

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), Public Health Northamptonshire and The Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum have been awarded £635,500 from central government to help local charities and groups

across West Northants who have been supporting the most vulnerable members of society during the pandemic. The Supporting Those at Risk (STAR) Fund is to help address the long-term impact of COVID-19 by supporting organisations that provide local services to the most at risk residents in West Northamptonshire. Charities and groups will need to explain what they intend to spend the money on and how it will benefit at risk people. These may include:

1. Existing schemes which support people struggling to afford food and other essentials,
2. Projects advising and providing information to people to help them access longer term support, such as benefits,
3. Projects that provide targeted support in areas of greatest need and deprivation, including rural areas.

WNC particularly welcomes applications from groups showing collaborative working, those working together to support specific local communities, minority groups and those most in need or at risk.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../star-fund-supporting...>

New Multi-Storey Car Park at Northampton Railway Station

Plans to make it easier to park at Northampton Railway Station, by building a new 1,198 space multi-storey car park, took a step forward after being agreed at the WNC Cabinet meeting on 7 December. WNC have been working closely with Network Rail and its development partner blocwork to bring forward a plan, which would lead to the replacement of the decked car park currently on the site. This plan will enable the wider site – which is part of the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone – to be developed for residential, hotel, office and retail use. Network Rail has also agreed to address the lack of a ramp at the front of the station building, which we know has been a frustration for both cyclists and those with mobility difficulties.



If all goes to plan, the new multi-storey car park will be operational by April 2023.

The Circular Future Fund – John Lewis Partnership



In partnership with Hubbub, the John Lewis Partnership has launched a £1 million fund to support trailblazing ideas and innovations that can accelerate the transition towards a more circular economy. Whether it's rethinking waste with new products or materials, finding creative ways to shift consumer mindsets or developing new business models and services, they would like to hear from you.

The fund will provide grants between £150,000-£300,000 and the deadline to apply is 9 January 2022. They are looking for

innovators with pioneering new approaches to challenge the 'outdated, take, make, dispose, model.' If you feel you have a circular solution in the areas of food, textiles or household products, technology or services they would like to hear from you.

<https://www.circularfuturefund.co.uk>

Arnold Clark Community Fund

In March 2020, Arnold Clark launched their first ever Community Fund in order to provide financial help to community groups and charities that had been significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. This winter, the Fund will focus on the following categories: poverty relief, food banks, toy banks, housing and accommodation.



The Arnold Clark Community Fund is open to UK registered charities and local community groups. The fund is also open to community interest companies, charitable incorporated organisations and social enterprises. Grants up to £1000 are available and the Fund will suspend taking new applications on 31 December 2021.

<https://www.arnoldclark.com/community-fund>

HOUSING

Resettlement of people from Afghanistan

A range of teams across the council and other statutory agencies, North Northamptonshire Council and voluntary/community sector partners continue to deliver a comprehensive package of wrap around support to people who have fled Afghanistan who are currently being accommodated in hotel-type accommodation booked by the Home Office within West Northamptonshire.

As of 19 November, 48 families are accommodated in the Hotels comprising of 113 adults and 136 children – a total of 249 people

The number of families that have moved into permanent accommodation 14, comprising of 32 adults and 36 children – a total of 68 people

WNC will continue to periodically receive new family groups via the Home Office

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

North West Relief Road

The Authority's bid for Levelling Up Funding to cover the budget gap was not amongst the successful bids announced on 27th October. WNC are therefore considering options in line with the cabinet paper in June and will report very soon on a way forward.

Active Travel

WNC have secured money from the Department for Transport for funding to help develop a new Active Travel strategy for West Northamptonshire. This strategy can be used to identify improvements to our active travel schemes, which in turn ensure that we can prioritise key routes across our area, creating a network that will encourage more walking and cycling thereby reducing congestion and contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets.

Bus Lane Consultation

On 7 December, Cabinet will be asked to approve a recommendation to take the necessary steps to amend the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) governing the bus lane in St James' Road so that it is operational during the morning peak only (07.30am – 09.30am) and that at the same time as changing the order, the revision also permits private hire taxis and scooters to use the bus lane. In order to amend the TRO, it is necessary to follow a statutory process which involves publishing a proposed revised order and consulting on the contents, however given the responses to the consultation recently undertaken it is not expected that this will prevent the TRO from being amended.



It is recommended that WNC remove the camera from its current location, to be re-sited either at an alternative position on the Weedon Road / St James Road bus lane or at an alternative suitable location within the West Northamptonshire area. Enforcement utilising the camera in its current location will cease following the expiration of the call-in period relating to this report.

This recommendation recognises the results of the public consultation, which was carried out between 6 October 2021

and 2 November 2021 in order to gauge the views of residents, businesses and interested organisations. The consultation asked for respondents' opinions regarding the enforcement of bus lanes in general and specifically concerning the enforcement activity at St James' Road. 2725 responses were received. Responses from the consultation show that 50% of respondents believe that the bus lane on St James' Road should continue to be enforced to some degree. However, of those that responded in favour of enforcement continuing 62% said that this should be limited to 7.30- 9.30am only.

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Neighbourhood Policing team

It was good to be able to meet up with two members of our Neighbourhood Policing team whilst they were in Cogenhoe. PCSOs Jen Harrison and Matt Taylor attended the Farmer's Market event at Cogenhoe Village Hall so that residents could discuss any issues that they might have.

There are 4 Officers that cover Hackleton and Grange Park. Sgt Greg Taylor, PC Chris Bird, PCSO Jen Harrison and PCSO Matt Taylor. Their current focus "A Matter of Priority" puts a spotlight on the four crime types: Serious and Organised Crime, Knife Abuse, Domestic Abuse and anti-Social Behaviour



Jen, Matt and I had a good discussion about several current issues.

Safer Nights Out Van

A new service has been launched to help keep people safe on nights out in Northampton. The SNOvan – or Safer Nights Out van – is a customised minibuss that will be staffed by vetted volunteers in the centre of Northampton between 10pm and 5am every Friday and Saturday. Providing a haven for anyone who feels vulnerable or in need of help for any reason, the SNOvan can provide water and warmth, a phone charger, basic first aid or emotional support – whatever is needed to ensure that someone stays safe and can return home without harm. The volunteers, who include the Street Pastors, Northampton Guardians, and police officers, will be around the town centre on the lookout for people who may need help.

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold has launched the scheme in partnership with WNC, the Community Safety Partnership and Northants Police. Both the Commissioner and WNC have received almost £800,000 of funding between them from the Home Office to help achieve this.



Over the coming months work will get underway that will see improvements such as better lighting and walking routes so people can feel safe either on an early evening stroll or a night out on the town. And there will be campaigns to raise awareness of unacceptable behaviour, backed up by enforcement activity.

Alongside enforcement to tackle potential offenders and raising awareness of simple safety measures, we recognised that there was a need to provide simple support to someone who finds himself or herself in need of help on a night out. We want to

reduce the risk that someone will come to harm as well as helping create a calm and comfortable atmosphere in Northampton's night-time economy.

We want people to feel safe in our town centre whatever time of day or night it is; unfortunately, we know that this is not always the case. The SNOvan will provide a sanctuary to anyone who is feeling unsafe, with professionals on hand to make sure they get home safe and sound.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage – DCMS and the National Lottery Heritage Fund

On 5 July 2020, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced a £1.57billion package to protect the UK's culture and heritage sectors from the economic impacts of COVID-19. To date, over £1.2b has been allocated from the Culture Recovery Fund, reaching around 5,000 individual organisations and sites.

The Heritage Fund is distributing Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage in partnership with Historic England, on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS).



Heritage
Fund



At the 2021 Budget, the Chancellor announced an additional £300million to support the Culture Recovery Fund in 2021/22, to continue to support key cultural organisations; bridge the sector as audiences begin to return; and continue to ensure a vibrant future for the culture sector as the nation recovers from the pandemic. The Heritage Fund, in partnership with Historic England, is distributing this funding based on criteria set by DCMS. The Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage: Emergency Resource Support is for organisations that are in severe need. This strand was originally open from 7 July 2021 to 30 September 2021. To continue to support the sector throughout the winter period, the Emergency Resource Support programme has been reopened. This will give more organisations at imminent risk of financial failure an opportunity to bid for support, protecting even more organisations so that they can continue to create jobs and contribute to the economy. This scheme will be open until noon on 11 January 2022.

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/.../culture-recovery-fund...>