



North Northamptonshire Council



Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers

Leader of the Council

22 September 2023



## Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

It certainly feels like it has turned autumnal very suddenly! As we work through the seasons it is now time for parents and carers to apply for a place at school and I have provided more information on this further below.

As we edge closer to Winter, I am sure we will all be thinking about the costs of heating our homes. On this subject, I have highlighted some government funding that is available for measures that can improve the energy efficiency of homes such as insulation and heating systems. Residents living in private homes, both owned and rented, who have a gross household income of less than £31,000 are encouraged to apply for a government grant to help improve the energy efficiency of their homes. ECO4 Flex is a government scheme funded by energy companies that supports households on lower incomes or those particularly vulnerable to the impact of living in a cold home. Please do help spread the word.

On the subject of spreading the word – I would appreciate your help sharing the fact that community grants up to £5,000 are now available. The scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, parish councils, charities, clubs and not-for-profit organisations. School PTAs, Friends of groups and health charities can also apply. We are encouraging applications which can demonstrate that funding will be used to support one or more of the council's priorities. These grants really can make a difference so please do read on to find out more.

I am pleased to highlight the fact that the council has worked to help strengthen the electric vehicle charging network with the installation of 32 new charge points. This is just one part of our wider approach to helping tackle climate change.

I have included information on a range of other important campaigns and initiatives below including information on:

- Global acknowledgement for pioneering women's safety initiative.
- Getting your two or three-year-olds protected with the free flu nasal spray.
- How you can share your views on tackling serious violence in Northamptonshire.
- Corby Library proud to support new parents and babies.
- Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership launch film to tackle child exploitation.
- Road safety community fund has been highlighted at a regional summit.
- Have your say on the Sustainable Travel to Education strategy for North Northants.

If there is anything you would specifically like me to cover in future editions, please do let me know.

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

## Forthcoming meetings

- **Executive:** Thursday 12 October from 10am.
  - **Full Council:** Thursday 26 October from 6pm.
- The agenda and papers will be published on the **Council meetings** section of our website in the week before the meeting.
- These meetings will be live streamed on our **YouTube channel**.



## It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2024

It's that time of year again and parents and carers are now able to apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a Year 3 place in a junior school or a Year 7 place in a secondary school for the September 2024 intake.

Parents must apply before the closing dates for their applications to be considered as being submitted on time.

Parents and carers can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years of age on or before 31 August 2024. The closing date for applications for places in reception and Year 3 (junior school) is Monday 15 January 2024 at midnight.

**The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is Tuesday 31 October 2023 at midnight.**

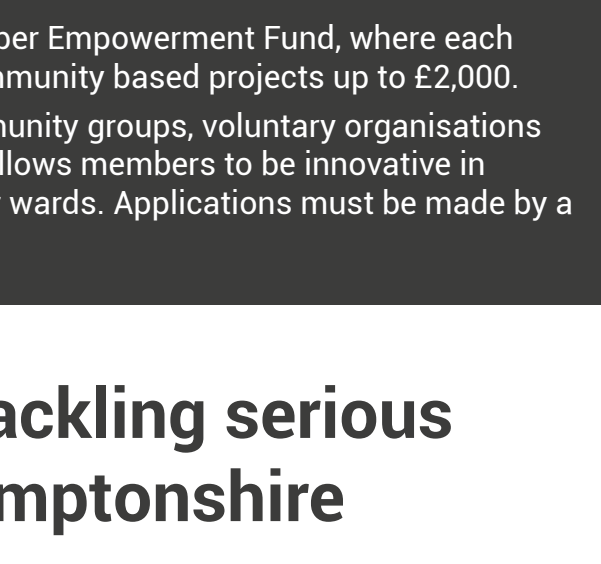
All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the closing date to be considered as on time. Late applications will not be processed until after the National Offer Day; they will be processed in monthly rounds.

All on time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on the National Offer Days - Friday 1 March 2024 for secondary places and Tuesday 16 April 2024 for reception places. Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process.

There is a separate application process for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the **SEND admissions** page.

An independent admission **appeals process** is available for families who wish to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied.

You can **find out more** about applying for a school place in North Northamptonshire and how to submit an application online.



## Community grants now available to help transform lives in North Northamptonshire

Voluntary and community groups are being encouraged to apply for small grants to help improve the lives of local residents before Monday 2 October.

The grants of up to £5,000 are being made available by North Northamptonshire Council.

The scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, Parish councils, charities, clubs and not-for-profit organisations. School PTAs, Friends of groups and health charities can also apply.

The council is encouraging applications which can demonstrate that funding will be used to support one or more priorities, including:

- The project should generally be in line with the councils stated aims, objectives and policies.
- Support volunteering, community involvement, neighbourhood and community led activities.
- Enable voluntary youth action and the development of services for young people including equipment
- Prevent homelessness, improve social mobility and tackle inequality; and promote social inclusion and community resilience.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of all people in North Northamptonshire and reduce health inequalities by enabling people to help themselves.
- The protection and enhancement of the environment.
- Community based projects such as community events, fayres and carnivals.
- Environmental improvements.

A full list of priorities, criteria for applying and how to apply can be found on the **Community Funding** section of our website.

Other grants available from the council include the Member Empowerment Fund, where each NNC Councillor is **allocated yearly funding** for small-community based projects up to £2,000.

Money can be awarded to parish or town councils, community groups, voluntary organisations and charities working in North Northamptonshire. This allows members to be innovative in formulating proposals for the benefit of residents in their wards. Applications must be made by a ward member.



## Share your views on tackling serious violence in Northamptonshire

Residents are being asked to have their say on how serious violence is tackled in Northamptonshire by taking part in a consultation which has recently launched.

The Serious Violence Duty was introduced in January 2023 and requires organisations across the public sector to work together locally to tackle, prevent and reduce incidents of serious violence, including knife crime and domestic abuse, and make local communities safer.

Serious violence includes:

- Personal Robbery.
- Possession of a weapon.
- Domestic Abuse.
- Sexual Violence and (but not limited to) violence against women and girls.
- Youth Violence – Under 25 specifically – (could include but is not limited to) Child exploitation and drug dealing where organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities into smaller towns and rural areas, this is called County lines.
- Night-time Economy Violence.

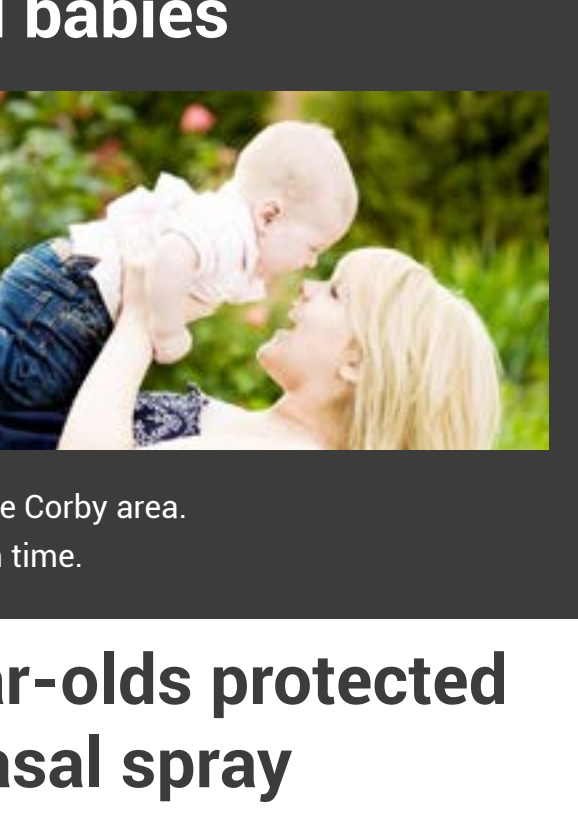
Anyone affected by serious violence in the last year is asked to share their experience in the survey and how this has affected them and their family, as well as the issues affecting their local community. All results are recorded anonymously and there is no obligation to provide any information that will identify anyone.

All feedback provided will help the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Alliance deepen its understanding of the views and experiences of residents across the county and identify the kinds of serious violence that happen in Northamptonshire, enabling the specified authorities to put effective schemes in place which focus on preventing crime and intervening early to reduce the chances of someone committing or becoming a victim of crime.

The specified authorities responsible for the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Alliance include Local Government Authorities, Criminal Justice, Health and Social Care, Police, and Fire and Rescue authorities.

The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Alliance will also be going out to communities and involving various stakeholders to collect information in addition to this survey. Dates and times of these public events for people to attend to find out more will be released at a later date.

The survey closes at midnight on Friday 27 October. Anyone who would like to share their views about serious violence in Northamptonshire can take part in the online survey via the **North Northamptonshire Council Consultation Hub**.



## Corby Library proud to support new parents and babies

Corby Library is now a donation point for Baby Basics Northampton - a charity which supports vulnerable mums-to-be with essential items for themselves and their baby.

Working with local midwives, health visitors and other professional, they provide starter packs that include a safe place for baby to sleep, as well as baby clothing, blankets and toiletries for baby and mother. The team are always looking for donations of items.

Baby Basics has donation points in Northampton and Kettering, but the new donation point will be the first for the Corby area.

Donations can be dropped off at Corby Library during term time.



## Get your two or three-year-olds protected with the free flu nasal spray

Parents and guardians across Northamptonshire are being urged to get their child vaccinated with the free flu nasal spray.

The call from the NHS in Northamptonshire and Public Health teams at North and West Northamptonshire Councils comes as the government prioritises flu vaccinations for toddlers who are amongst those groups who could have serious health implications from catching flu. That's why children are being prioritised to receive the flu vaccine to protect them and significantly reduce the chance of them needing hospital care for flu.

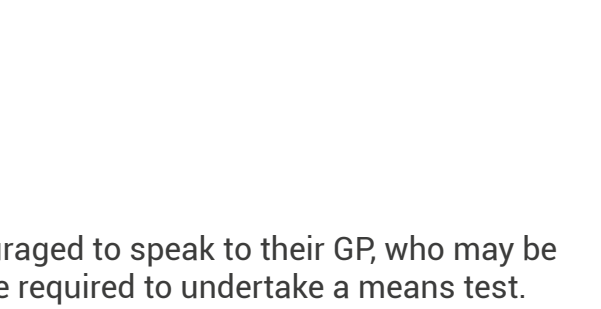
Last year Northamptonshire saw a significant decrease in children aged two and three being vaccinated from previous years, with only 38% of two-year-olds and 41% of three-year-olds receiving the vaccine, meaning a higher proportion of children this age are at risk from catching the flu. This year, both Public Health teams and the NHS in Northamptonshire are calling on parents and guardians to take up the offer of getting their two- or three-year-olds booked in as soon as possible, to ensure they are protected against the contagious infection.

From Friday 1 September, parents and guardians should start to receive invitations from their GP practice for their child / children to receive the flu vaccine.



## North Northamptonshire Council strengthens electric vehicle charging network with installation of 32 new charge points

North Northamptonshire Council has partnered with Believ, the UK's fastest growing electric vehicle (EV) charge point operator (CPO), to install 32 more EV charge points across 17 sites as part of an ongoing project to provide on-street public charging for residents without driveways or off-road parking, with these charge points going live in the next few weeks.



The latest installations, including the first charge points in Desborough, located in Victoria Street, add to the 22 charge points at 12 sites already available via the work with Believ, and the new batch is set to strengthen the council's efforts to facilitate a publicly accessible EV network that also contributes to lower emissions, widens choice, and improves air quality across the area. All locations include dedicated bays for EV charging only.

Believ is a specialist in delivering all speeds of charge point infrastructure at zero cost to local councils or taxpayers. It works in collaboration with partners, communities and the customers they serve, to develop and deliver an EV charging network that is accessible, reliable and future-proofed. The company will own, operate and maintain the charge points, which will be delivered via its strategic delivery partner Virgin Media O2.

## Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership launch film to tackle child exploitation

**'I'm Being Exploited'** is a powerful short film by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP), produced in conjunction with police and partners across Northamptonshire.

The film aims to raise awareness to parents of a growing issue in the UK known as 'Child Exploitation' (CE).

Child exploitation is when a child or young person is targeted by an individual or criminal gang and manipulated or coerced into committing crimes or sexual acts.

This new film seeks to help parents and other trusted adults spot the signs of a problem and highlight the crucial part they can play by taking appropriate action.

Child exploitation can involve bribery, intimidation, violence and/or threats. The child does not need to have met whoever is exploiting them - children can be exploited via the internet or using mobile phones. They can also be targeted on social media platforms and gaming forums.

People who exploit children use the fact that they have power over children, because of an age difference or some other factor like gender, intelligence, strength, status or wealth. A child may have been exploited even if it looks as if they have been a willing participant.

Evidence shows children are more likely to open up to an adult they have an existing and trusting relationship with. This can include parents, grandparents and extended family members, teachers or other school staff, sports or leisure coaches and community leaders.

We can all potentially make a difference to the safety of a child by knowing the signs to look out for. Some of the common signs shown in the film include changes in 'normal' behaviour, increased messages or calls, and having new belongings or money that can't be accounted for.

Other signs include:

- Being away from home more and being in places they wouldn't usually be.
- Spending time with older people.
- Committing anti-social behaviour / low level crime.
- Changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Unexplained injuries.
- New and expensive possessions.
- Deterioration in school performance or going missing from school.
- Having more than one phone.

Parents are encouraged to watch the film and consider if a child's change in behaviour could be due to exploitation. If something doesn't feel right, it might not be.

If you think someone you know might be being exploited, there are people you can talk to who can help. Contact Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Or contact CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. You can also contact NSPCC on 0800 800 5000.



## Global acknowledgement for pioneering women's safety initiative

A pioneering training package for all taxi and private hire drivers in Northamptonshire that aims to help keep women safe on nights out has been shortlisted for an **international award**.

The online tutorial is currently being rolled out in both North and West Northamptonshire Council areas to help taxi and private hire drivers spot signs that women may be in danger.

Drivers already play a big role in informally coming to the help of revellers who may find themselves vulnerable. The training aims to consolidate good practice and provide formal support.

The project is part of a package of measures intended to improve the safety of women and girls, particularly in public spaces and at night. The taxi training package and the wider programme of work has been funded largely through the Home Office Safer Streets Fund after a successful bid by the Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

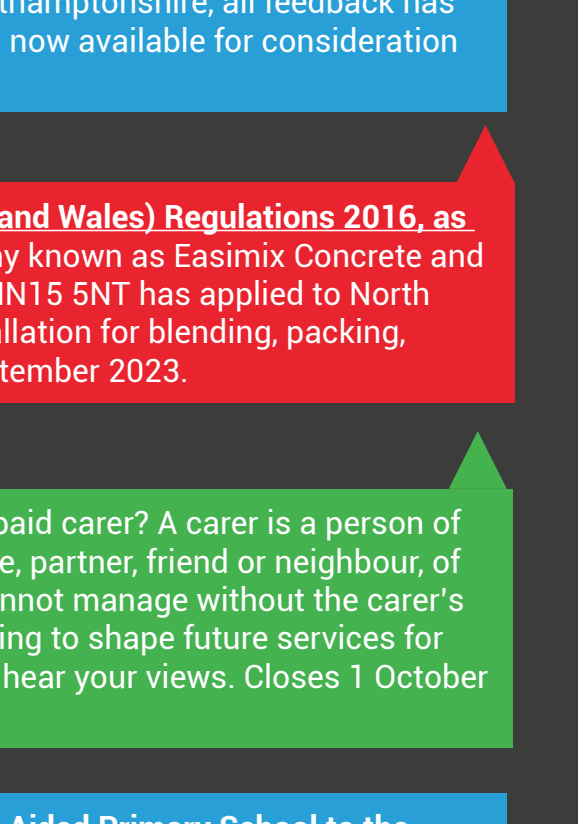
Now the training package has been recognised on the global stage, making the finals of the Music Cities Awards - a competition designed to acknowledge economic, social, environmental and cultural development in cities and places all around the world.

It will compete against entries from Bogota and Dallas in the Best Night-Time Economy Initiative category with the winners announced at a ceremony in Huntsville, Alabama, USA on Wednesday 18 October.

The training package will be disseminated to all new and existing drivers and comprises three short videos and a knowledge check for drivers to complete, primarily around women's safety.

The three videos cover drink spiking, sexual abuse and domestic abuse with training available in five languages: English, Turkish, Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu.

Over time, the intention is to factor this into both North and West Northamptonshire Councils' licensing conditions with the aim that it will eventually be mandatory for drivers to complete.



## Grants available to help residents heat homes and reduce energy bills

Residents living in private homes (both owned and rented) with a gross household income of less than £31,000 are encouraged to apply for a government grant to help improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

ECO4 Flex is a government scheme funded by energy companies that supports households on lower incomes or those particularly vulnerable to the impact of living in a cold home.

Funding is available for measures that can improve the energy efficiency of homes such as insulation and heating systems.

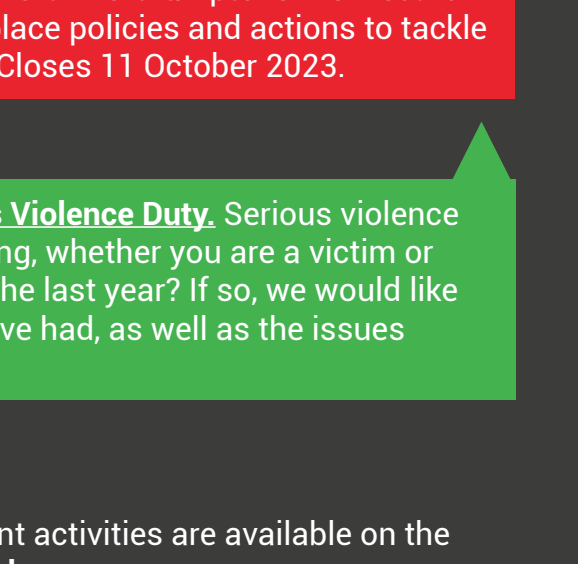
Improving the energy performance of properties could save residents hundreds of pounds in fuel bills each year. For example:

- Loft insulation - up to £500.
- External wall insulation - up to £350.
- Energy efficient boiler - up to £200.
- Cavity wall insulation - up to £250.

Residents who are more vulnerable to the cold are encouraged to speak to their GP, who may be able to complete an NHS Eco Flex referral. You will not be required to undertake a means test.

**Further information**

Please visit the **ECO4 Flex energy efficiency scheme** section of our website.



## Road safety community fund highlighted at regional summit

A Northamptonshire scheme allowing community groups to apply for grant funding to improve road safety has been highlighted at a regional safety summit.

The East Midlands and East of England Road Safety Summit took place in Lincolnshire on Friday 15 September, giving Police and Crime Commissioners, road safety experts and local transport officers a forum to discuss strategies to make our roads safer.

The event highlighted schemes from around the region that are being put in place to help cut the number of road accidents.

One of the projects on show is the scheme run by Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold, which allows local community groups to apply for grants of up to £5,000 to improve road safety in their communities.

The Road Safety Community Fund supports initiatives that positively affect the Commissioner's road safety priorities, including speed reduction, anti-social road use, distraction driving, and initiatives that improve road safety around school gates.

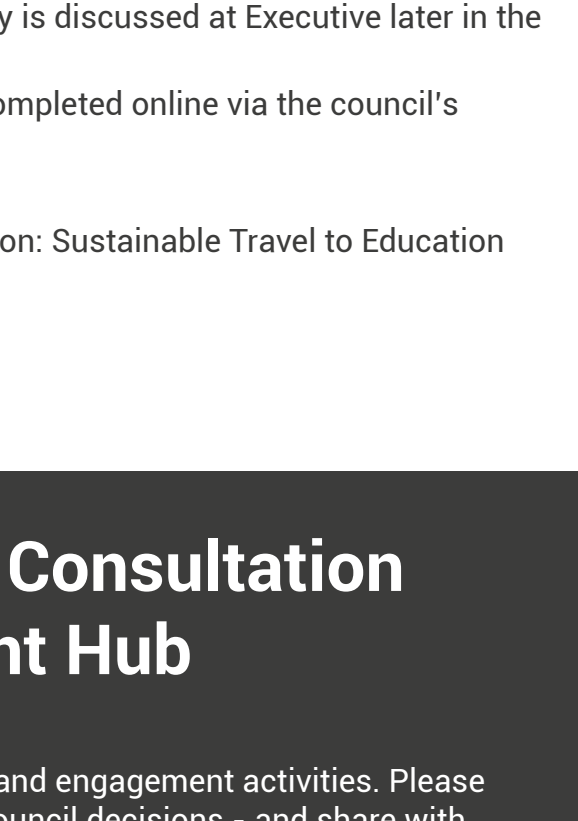
This year, community groups and parish councils have already received more than £25,000. This has enabled them to buy Vehicular Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicator Devices (SID), install traffic calming measures and has funded signage, parking buddies and lollipop provisions to improve road safety around some of our county's schools.

'Vision Zero', a strategy that has radically cut road deaths in Sweden since it was created in the 1990s, was also discussed at the Summit. Some areas of the UK, including Cambridgeshire, are already implementing Vision Zero and shared their experience with the other attendees.

To apply for a grant, click on the following link: **Grant Schemes – Northamptonshire Police & Fire Commissioner (northantspfcc.org.uk)**

Complete the application form and follow the guidance on supporting material. Email your completed application to [funding@northantspfcc.pnn.gov.uk](mailto:funding@northantspfcc.pnn.gov.uk).

(Source: **Northamptonshire Police & Fire Commissioner website**).



## Have your say on the Sustainable Travel to Education strategy for North Northamptonshire

Parents/carers, students, educational establishments and other stakeholders are being asked to share information on how children and young people travel to school and education to help shape a new Sustainable Travel to Education strategy for the local area.

A new draft strategy looks at how children and young people can travel to all educational settings in a more sustainable way, but North Northamptonshire Council are asking for input to gather a better picture on current habits and barriers to using more sustainable travel.

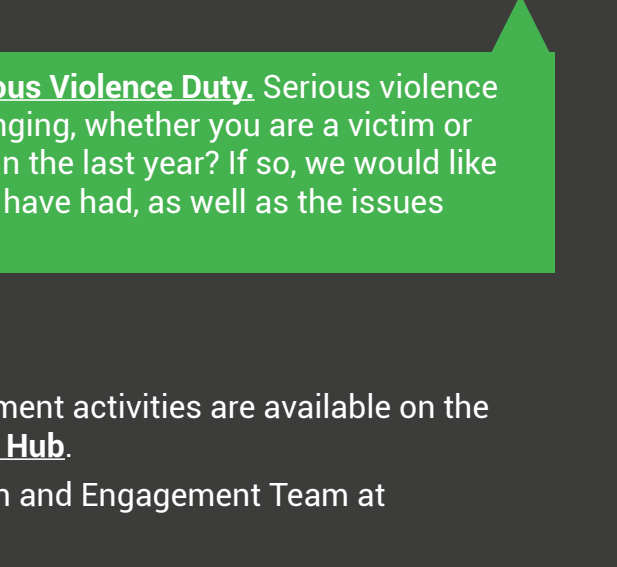
All Local Authorities are required to produce a Sustainable Mode of Travel to School Strategy, with the legacy strategy for the local area produced in 2015.

The proposed Sustainable Travel to Education strategy supports educational establishments, students and parent/carers to travel more sustainably for all journeys to education. It supports healthier and more active lifestyles for staff, students and parents to improve their health and wellbeing whilst bringing benefits to the wider community, including higher footfall for local businesses, tackling issues with parking, reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

The survey looks at how children and young people currently travel to all educational settings, why they use their chosen mode of transport, preferred methods of transport and methods that would encourage walking or cycling. Respondents can also provide comments on the draft survey, before all feedback is collated and the final strategy is discussed at Executive level in the year.

The consultation runs until 30 October 2023 and can be completed online via the council's **consultation hub** or by:

- Emailing: [marsha.brown@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:marsha.brown@northnorthants.gov.uk)
- Writing to: North Northamptonshire Council, Consultation: Sustainable Travel to Education Strategy, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX



## Open activities on the Consultation and Engagement Hub

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

**Corby Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.** Following earlier consultations with local residents and stakeholders North Northamptonshire Council (NNO) has drafted a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Corby, in collaboration with WSP and Brightwayz. Closes 27 September 2023.



**Public Spaces Protection Order (North Northamptonshire Council) (Dog Control) Order.** 2023. Following a recent consultation on the various Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) for dog control across the geography of North Northamptonshire, all feedback has been considered when creating a new draft PSPO which is now available for consideration and feedback. Closes 28 September 2023.

**Application under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, as amended - Easimix Concrete and Screen Ltd.** The company known as Easimix Concrete and Screen Ltd, 304 Station Road, Burton Latimer, Northants NN15 5NT has applied to North Northamptonshire Council for a permit to operate an installation for blending, packing, loading, unloading and use of bulk cement. Closes 30 September 2023.

**Have your say on support for Unpaid Carers.** Are you an unpaid carer? A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid help and support to a relative, partner, friend or neighbour, of any age, who has an illness or long-term condition and cannot manage without the carer's help. As an unpaid carer, your experiences are vital in helping to shape future services for unpaid carers in North Northamptonshire, and we want to hear your views. Closes 1 October 2023.

**Proposed relocation of Wilby Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to the Glenvale Park Development (new school), Wellingborough.** This formal consultation is about a proposed primary school relocation opportunity to move into a brand-new school building. Following North Northamptonshire Council receiving two completed expressions of interest applications to relocate, the panel met following a robust interview process and recommended that Wilby CE VA Primary School relocates to the Glenvale Park site. Closes 5 October 2023.

**Consultation on North Northamptonshire draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy.** Road traffic currently accounts for a considerable proportion of North Northamptonshire's overall greenhouse gas emissions impacting on air quality, health, and the environment. By 2030 there are projected to be 116,000 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) registered in North Northamptonshire, so it is vital that there is adequate electric vehicle infrastructure to support this transition and the journey towards net-zero. North Northamptonshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (NNEVIS), seeks to put in place policies and actions to tackle some of the current barriers slowing down the transition. Closes 11 October 2023.

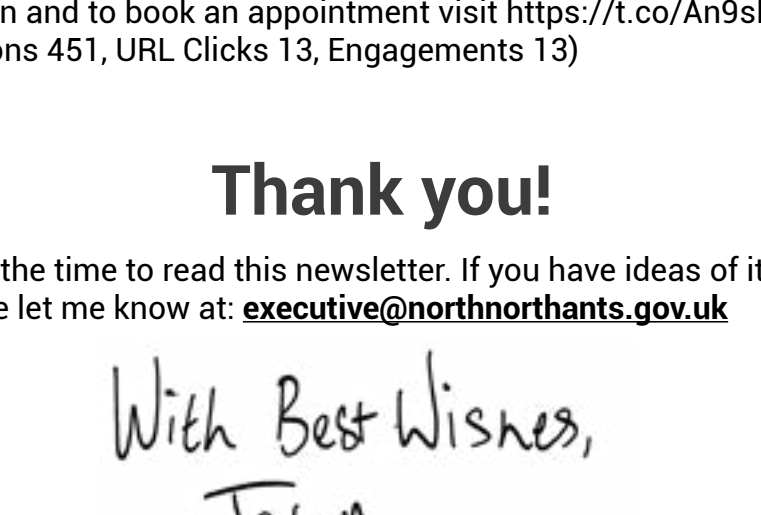
**Tackling violence and improving lives through the Serious Violence Duty.** Serious violence affects many communities. The impact can be life changing, whether you are a victim or a witness. Have you been affected by serious violence in the last year? If so, we would like to know about the experience you and your family may have had, as well as the issues affecting your community. Closes 27 October 2023.

**Further information**

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the **North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub**.

If you have any questions, please email the Consultation and Engagement Team at [CET@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:CET@northnorthants.gov.uk).

## Press releases



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

- **Have your say on the Sustainable Travel to Education strategy for North Northants**
- **Global acknowledgement for pioneering women's safety initiative**
- **Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership launch film to tackle child exploitation**
- **North Northamptonshire Council strengthens electric vehicle charging network with installation of 32 new charge points**
- **Get your two or three-year-olds protected with the free flu nasal spray**
- **Corby Library proud to support new parents and babies**
- **Share your views on tackling serious violence in Northamptonshire**
- **Community grants now available to help transform lives in North Northants**
- **It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2024**
- **Travelling sofa highlighting suicide prevention**

If you would like stay up to date with the council's media releases, please visit the **News** section of our website.

## Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts and share our **Facebook** and/or **X** posts when you can.



**Top Facebook posts so far this week (18 to 20 September)**

- Parents and carers - if your child will be 4 years of age on or before 31 August 2024, it's time to apply for a school place. The deadline for applications for places in Reception is Monday 15 January at midnight. Apply online: <https://ow.ly/QAPC50PzJm2> (Reach 2,880, Link Clicks 7, Engagement 74)
- Moving in, out or around North Northamptonshire? Let us know and we can update your records <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/counciltax/moving-home> (Reach 898, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 8)
- Our Health & Wellbeing Festival starts today! Taking place until 24 September, this year's focus is on Youth, with plenty of activities going on for the younger residents of North Northants. Find the full timetable of events and how to get involved at: <https://ow.ly/NWRVJ50PLXNR> (Reach 875, Link Clicks 17, Engagement 32)



**Tweets so far this week (18 to 20 September)**

- Waiting in phone queues is rubbish. That's why we've made it easy for you to report a missed bin collection, request a new one or arrange a bulky waste collection, all from our website. Don't waste time; let's click and tap, not call! <https://t.co/EmdLJ9ezk9> (Impressions 510, URL Clicks 1, Engagements 9)
- Start for life here to answer all your breastfeeding questions and support you when you need it - you're not alone! <https://t.co/9Mdc6Thszm> You can also find the details of lots of local breastfeeding and parenting support at <https://t.co/bDtkYQ2YBa> #NationalBreastfeedingWeek (Impressions 484, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 4)
- Stay protected this autumn and winter. If you are aged 65 or over, pregnant or you have a weakened immune system, you can get a free COVID-19 booster and flu jab. For more information and to book an appointment visit <https://t.co/An9sE1f5x8> (Impressions 451, URL Clicks 13, Engagements 13)

## Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have ideas of items to include in future updates please let me know at: [executive@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:executive@northnorthants.gov.uk)

With Best Wishes,  
Jason



Follow me on X  @SmithersJason

Contacting North Northamptonshire Council

 0300 126 3000

 [www.northnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)