



# Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers  
Leader of the Council



3 November 2023

## Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

The council is organising a third climate change conference that will showcase sustainability and environmental projects in North Northamptonshire. NNClimate23 will take place online to reduce the carbon footprint of the event. It will be broadcast live on YouTube on Wednesday 22 November.

Christmas is coming, and so is the 'Hi Santa Stops' trail - the festive element of our Hi Street campaign. It will be an interactive audio experience linked to QR codes hosted in 56 local businesses, in 14 North Northamptonshire towns. The trail will launch mid-November and run during the lead up to Christmas.

Last week, Chester House Estate celebrated two years since it opened its doors to the public. The nationally significant heritage site has gone from strength to strength and has welcomed over 250,000 visitors. The website details their latest offering and forthcoming events.

Following a review of our new Home to School policy, we can confirm that school children under the age of 16 in Thrapston and Islip can continue to benefit from statutory free bus travel to Prince William School in Oundle. The new policy means that younger generations can continue to follow in their family's footsteps.

Congratulations to the nine local schools that were the first to achieve the new North Northants Healthy Schools Bronze Award. The schools gained the award for their 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing, healthy eating and physical activity, and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

North Northamptonshire Council and the National Autistic Society have agreed to a 6-month extension to the services provided which include residential care, supported living and learning arrangements. This will allow both parties to find a more permanent, long-term solution for support users in North Northamptonshire.

The next Discover Adult Social Care showcase event will take place on Wednesday 8 November from 10am to 3pm at Corby Library. This is one of a series of events to promote and raise awareness of adult social care services across the local area between now and next Spring.

On Sunday 12 November, communities across North Northamptonshire and the nation will come together to remember the service and sacrifice of those who have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life. There are a number of events taking place in towns across North Northamptonshire. Please visit our website for details.

The Armed Forces Community Hubs are an informal and welcoming space for any members of the Armed Forces community and are a great source of advice and support. The November dates and locations are detailed below.

A North Northamptonshire Hackney Carriage de-zoning and byelaw review consultation has been launched to review the existing taxi zones across North Northamptonshire. Residents are also invited to have their say on revised plans for pedestrian and cycle routes between Corby town centre and train station. Full details of these, and other current consultation and engagement activities, are on the Your Voice Matters website.

North Northamptonshire's annual bonfire and fireworks display returns to Corby tonight (Friday 3 November). I hope that you and your family and friends will be able to join us for this spectacular evening of entertainment.

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

## Virtual climate change conference to showcase North Northamptonshire sustainability and environmental projects

North Northamptonshire Council's annual climate change conference will take place this month showcasing projects aimed at improved sustainability and helping the environment.

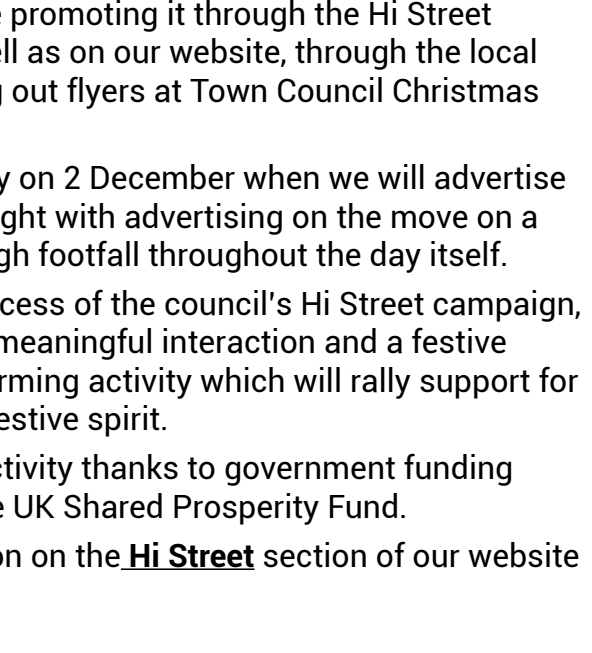
NNClimate23 will be broadcast live on YouTube on Wednesday 22 November starting at 9:30am.

The day will focus on three sessions:

- Farming and Sustainability
- Towards a New Green Economy
- Youth and Community.

The conference will be virtual, taking place online to reduce the carbon footprint of the event. It will be broadcast live on YouTube for anyone to watch.

This is the third such forum that the council has convened, building on the success of conferences over the past two years.



## Christmas is coming, and so is the 'Hi Santa Stops' festive trail

The festive season is a time for celebration, spreading joy, and coming together as a community. In North Northamptonshire, Christmas spirit will come to life with the launch of the 'Hi Santa Stops' trail.

This interactive trail is the festive element of the Hi Street campaign and will not only be a fun-filled adventure for children, adults, and families, but also a meaningful endeavour to support local businesses, engage the community, and promote the campaign in 14 local towns.

The trail is designed to spotlight local businesses and encourage residents and visitors to the area to use them during the lead up to Christmas. Whether that be shopping, socialising, or using business, health, hair or beauty services, there is something for everyone, and the trail is an entertaining activity which provides a fun opportunity for people to explore different towns and enjoy time out and about together.

### How 'Hi Santa Stops' works

'Hi Santa Stops' is an interactive audio experience linked to QR codes hosted in 56 local businesses, in 14 North Northamptonshire towns.

People taking part will choose an area and explore different businesses there to find and scan the QR code to unlock a magical festive audio message from Santa Claus which will include a letter.

They will need to collect 8 letters to make up a Christmas word, which they will then submit online for a chance to win vouchers to use at local businesses to the value of £500.

The trail will launch mid-November and run during the lead up to Christmas, giving people plenty of time to explore and complete it at their leisure. Participants will be invited to collect a sweet bag of festive treats as a reward for doing the trail, sourced from two local confectionery businesses.

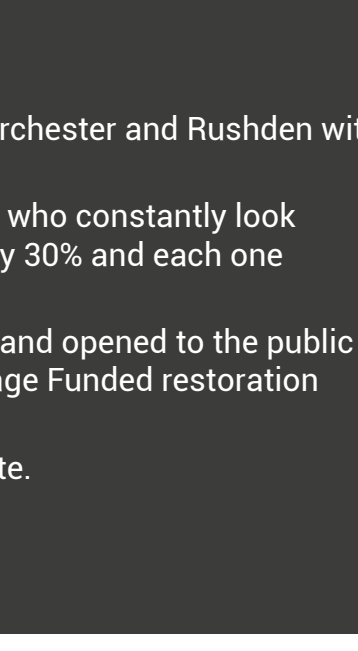
Everyone is invited to take part in the trail, and we will be promoting it through the Hi Street and Council campaign channels and social media, as well as on our website, through the local businesses taking part, in school newsletters, and giving out flyers at Town Council Christmas events.

There will also be promotion on Small Business Saturday on 2 December when we will advertise the trail, and put supporting local messages in the spotlight with advertising on the move on a digital Ivan, which will travel to various locations with high footfall throughout the day itself.

The 'Hi Santa Stops' Christmas trail will build on the success of the council's Hi Street campaign, bringing the brand to life in town centres by providing a meaningful interaction and a festive talking point. It promises to be an exciting and heart-warming activity which will rally support for local businesses and foster a sense of community and festive spirit.

We are able to deliver this exciting Christmas-themed activity thanks to government funding awarded to North Northamptonshire Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Look out for the launch of the trail and further information on the **Hi Street** section of our website - coming soon!



## Chester House Estate celebrates two years of visitors

Last week, Chester House Estate celebrated two years since it opened its doors to the public.

In a short space of time, the nationally significant heritage site has gone from strength to strength and has welcomed over 250,000 visitors.

The Chester House Estate is now firmly embedded into the community, with on-site businesses thriving and visitors flocking to the events.

### Highlights

- Over 40 events (Halloween, Christmas, outdoor music nights, Roman re-enactments and children's events throughout the school holidays).
- 4,000 pupils attending events, archaeological digs and educational trips in the past year.
- Storyboards showcasing the site's 10,000 years of history.
- Memorial garden for Queen Elizabeth II.
- Escape rooms.

Two pedestrian bridges over the River Nene now link Wellingborough, Irchester and Rushden with the estate, and have greatly improved local access.

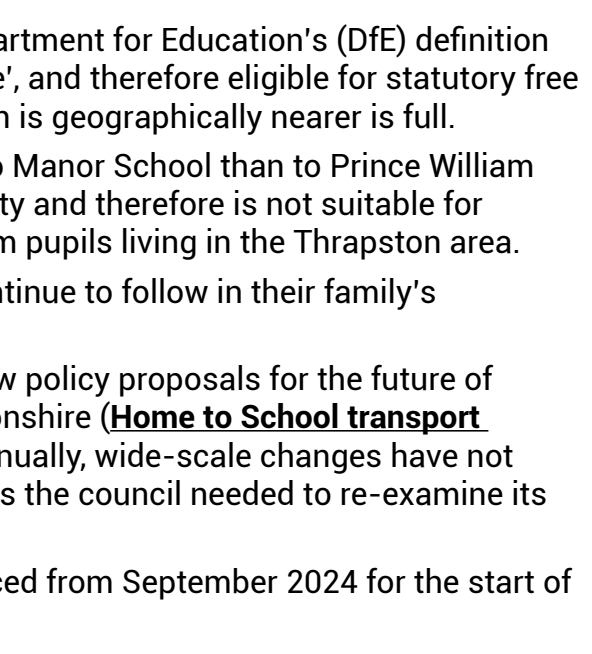
The continued success is thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers who constantly look to innovate and develop the offering. The volunteers base has grown by 30% and each one becomes part of the 'Chester House Estate family'.

Chester House Estate is overseen by North Northamptonshire Council and opened to the public in October 2021, following an extensive £17m Nationally Lottery Heritage Funded restoration project.

The council has ambitious long-term plans to further develop the estate.

### Further information

Please visit the [Chester House Estate](#) website.



## Secondary school children in Thrapston and Islip to keep statutory free bus travel to Prince William School

Following a review of our new 'Home to School' policy, we can confirm that school children under the age of 16 in Thrapston and Islip can continue to benefit from statutory free bus travel to Prince William School in Oundle.

It was recognised that children of secondary school age at Thrapston and Islip have historically been sent to Prince William School. It is, however, a school which is not geographically nearest and, in line with the new policy, free transport was at risk.

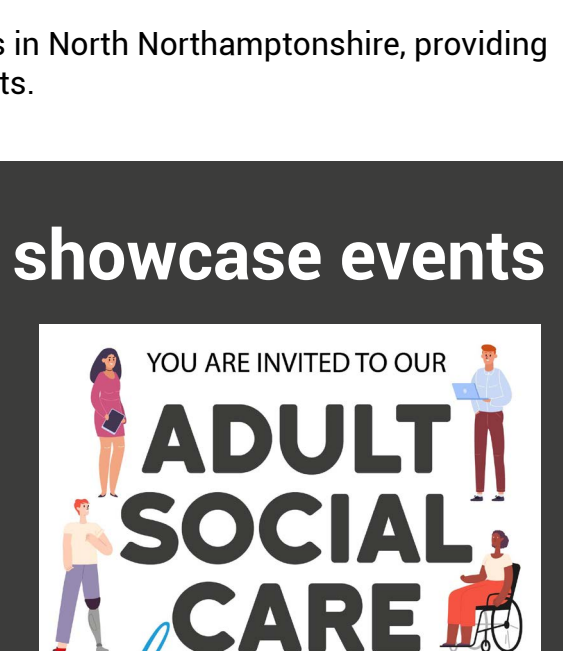
The council reviewed the new policy in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) definition and confirmed that a school may be considered 'suitable', and therefore eligible for statutory free transport, under the admissions criteria if a school which is geographically nearer is full.

It has been recognised that whilst Thrapston is nearer to Manor School than to Prince William School, Manor School regularly has limited spare capacity and therefore is not suitable for supporting the significant demand for school places from pupils living in the Thrapston area.

The new policy means that younger generations can continue to follow in their family's footsteps.

Earlier this year, people were asked for their views on new policy proposals for the future of Home to School transport provided in North Northamptonshire (**Home to School transport policy review consultation 2023**). Although refreshed annually, wide-scale changes have not been introduced for about a decade, and with rising costs the council needed to re-examine its approach and the amount it can afford to subsidise.

The new Home to School policy changes will be introduced from September 2024 for the start of the 2024-2025 academic year.



## North Northamptonshire schools celebrate Healthy Schools Award success

Teaching staff from across North Northamptonshire met recently to share their success in achieving the new North Northants Healthy Schools Bronze Award.

Representatives from the nine schools, who are the first to complete the award in North Northamptonshire, were presented with their certificates from the Healthy Schools Team at Chester House Estate.

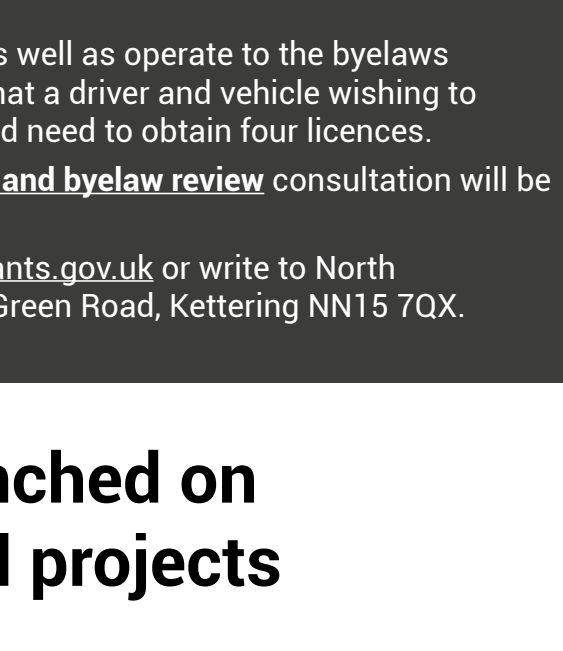
To achieve the North Northants Healthy Schools Bronze Award, the schools had to provide evidence of a 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing, healthy eating and physical activity, as well as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

The nine schools are:

- Denfield Park Primary School, Rushden
- Grange Primary Academy, Kettering
- Higham Ferrers Junior School, Rushden
- Leatlands Primary School, Kettering
- Meadowlands Primary School, Burton Latimer
- St. Mary's C.E. Primary Academy, Burton Latimer
- Studfall Infant School, Corby
- Studfall Junior School, Corby
- Whenn Spinney School, Kettering

Another 44 schools are in the process of working towards their Bronze Healthy Schools Award, which is available free of charge to all schools in North Northamptonshire.

If you are a staff member or a headteacher at North Northamptonshire school, the Healthy Schools Team would love to hear from you. Please email the team at [healthyschools@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:healthyschools@northnorthants.gov.uk).



## Discussions held with National Autistic Society

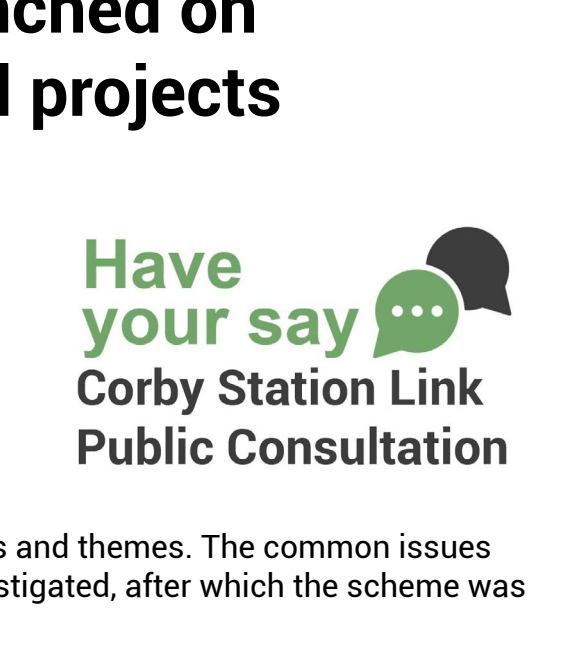
Representatives from North Northamptonshire Council met with senior staff from the National Autistic Society recently to discuss the future of support services in the local area.

The two organisations agreed to a 6-month extension to the services provided, allowing for both parties to find a more permanent, long-term solution for support users in North Northamptonshire.

The council will be working closely with those impacted to identify the most suitable route forward and to ensure that the process is a positive and smooth one.

Our priority has always been those who use these services and their families and to ensure they are receiving the right care in the appropriate setting.

The National Autistic Society delivers services to 25 adults in North Northamptonshire, providing residential care, supported living and learning arrangements.



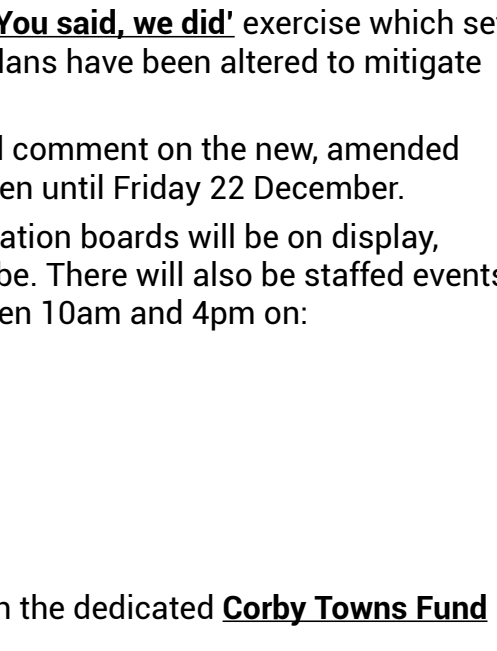
## Discover Adult Social Care showcase events

North Northamptonshire Council is holding a series of Discover Adult Social Care showcase events to promote and raise awareness of adult social care services across the local area.

Members of staff will be on hand during the events to provide information and advice and answer general questions.

The events will take place from 10am to 3pm on:

- **Wednesday 8 November 2023**  
Corby Library, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG
- **Tuesday 16 January 2024**  
Irthlingborough Library, High Street, Irthlingborough, Wellingborough NN9 5PU
- **Thursday 15 February 2024**  
The Hub at Fletton House, Oundle PE8 4JA
- **Wednesday 20 March 2024**  
Rushden Library, Newton Road, Rushden NN10 0PT.

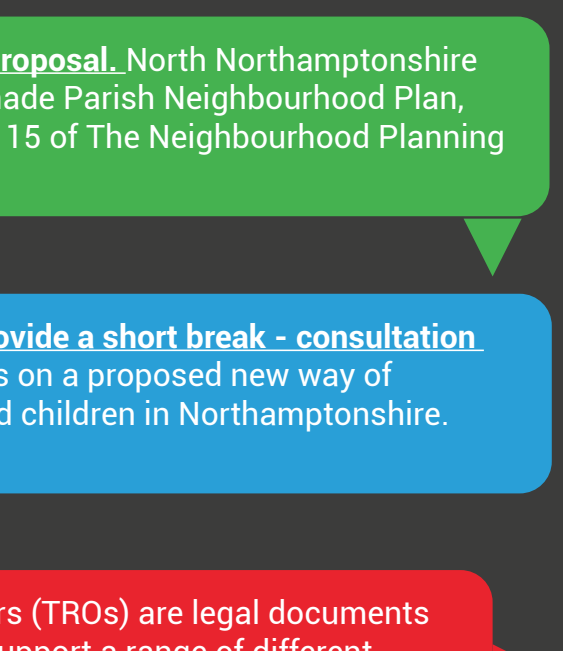


## Remembrance Day 2023

On Sunday 12 November, communities across North Northamptonshire and the nation will come together to remember the service and sacrifice of those who have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life.

There are a number of events taking place in towns across North Northamptonshire: in Burton Latimer, Corby, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Kettering, Oundle, Raunds, Stanwick, Thrapston and Wollaston.

Please visit the **Remembrance Day 2023** section of our website for further information about the events and the temporary road closures.



## Armed Forces Community Hubs - November dates

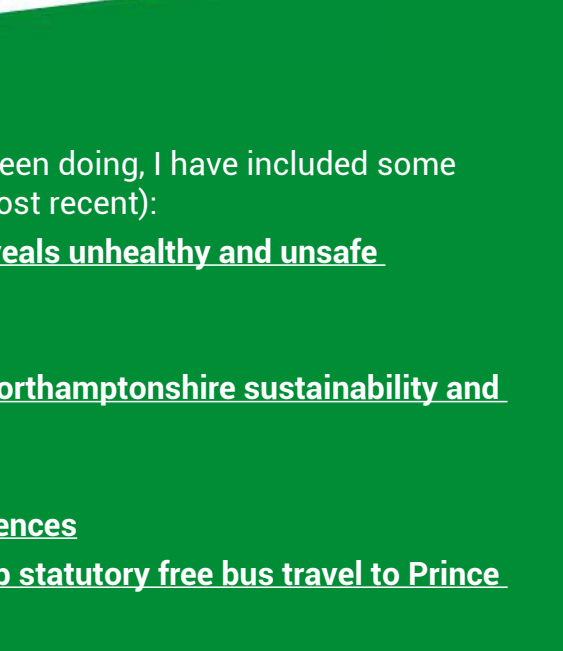
Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on support services available within the family for the Armed Forces community and their families.

The Community Hubs offer the chance to have a cup of tea and a chat with friends - and an opportunity to seek help and advice in a relaxed setting.

- **Thursday 16 November**  
2pm to 3:30pm at Kettering Library, Sheep Street, Kettering NN16 0AY
- **Friday 24 November**  
10am to 12 noon at Brackley Library, Manor Road, Brackley NN17 1QG.
- **Tuesday 28 November**  
10am to 11:30am at Brixworth Library, Spratton Road, Brixworth NN6 9DS.

### Further information

Please visit the **Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire** website, email [Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk) or call 07741 684647.

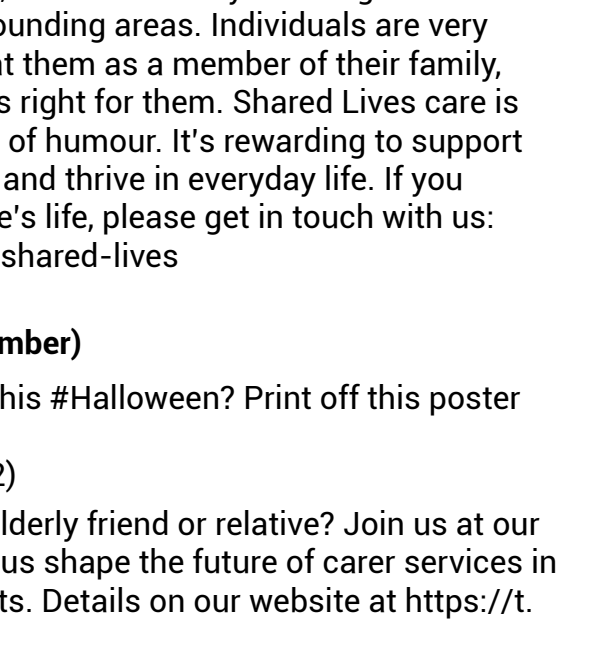


## Forthcoming meetings

- **Executive:** Thursday 16 November from 10am.
- **Full Council:** Thursday 7 December 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.



## Have your say on taxi de-zoning

A consultation has been launched to review the existing taxi zones across North Northamptonshire.

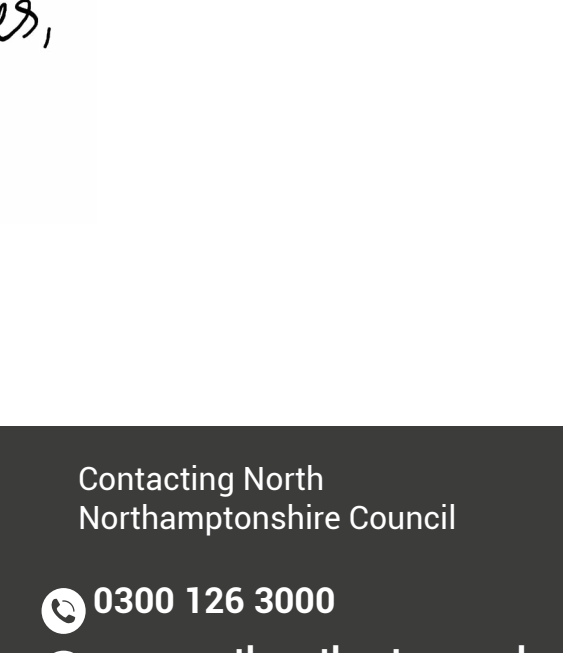
Earlier in 2023, North Northamptonshire Council's Executive approved a consultation to consider whether the four current zones should be retained or replaced with one zone for North Northamptonshire.

When North Northamptonshire Council was formed, for the purposes of taxi licensing, the previous former authority area zones were retained: Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.

Each zone continues to licence its own taxis and drivers as well as operate to the byelaws currently in existence for that former area. It also means that a driver and vehicle wishing to operate across the whole of North Northamptonshire would need to obtain four licences.

The **North Northamptonshire Hackney Carriage de-zoning and byelaw review** consultation will be open until 21 January 2024.

Alternatively, you can email [taxilicensing.kbc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:taxilicensing.kbc@northnorthants.gov.uk) or write to North Northamptonshire Council (Kettering Licensing), Bowling Green Road, Kettering NN15 7QX.



## Consultation launched on Corby Towns Fund projects

Residents are invited to have their say on revised plans for pedestrian and cycle routes between Corby town centre and train station.

The Corby Station Link Road and Smart and Connected Corby are two of the projects within the Corby Towns Fund which North Northamptonshire Council was awarded £19.9m from the government to deliver.

In September 2022, residents were asked for their views on the proposed, original designs after which the comments were received and collated into common issues and themes. The common issues and comments were evaluated, and alternatives were investigated, after which the scheme was revised and an alternative plan put forward.

In May 2023, North Northamptonshire Council completed a 'You said, we did' exercise which set out the comments and themes received and how the initial plans have been altered to mitigate these issues.

Now, residents and stakeholders are being asked to view and comment on the new, amended plans. The current Corby Towns Fund consultation will be open until Friday 22 December.

From Wednesday 1 November to Friday 22 December, information boards will be on display, alongside paper copies of the questionnaire, at the Corby Cube. There will also be staffed events, where residents can speak to staff and ask questions, between 10am and 4pm on:

- Tuesday 28 November
- Thursday 30 November
- Monday 4 December
- Wednesday 6 December
- Friday 8 December

For those unable to attend, feedback can be provided through the dedicated **Corby Towns Fund** website.

Alternatively, you can email [townsfund@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:townsfund@northnorthants.gov.uk) or write to: Corby Towns Fund/ Station Link, The Corby Cube, George Street, Parklands Gateway, Corby NN17 1QG.

The information will be gathered in early 2024 to identify any issues and comments which can be addressed as detailed design work continues. It is currently anticipated that work will start on the sensor network in Winter/Spring 2024.

This project is funded by the UK Government through the Towns Fund.



## Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other current open activities. Please visit our newly rebranded **Your Voice Matters** website and have your say to shape our future.

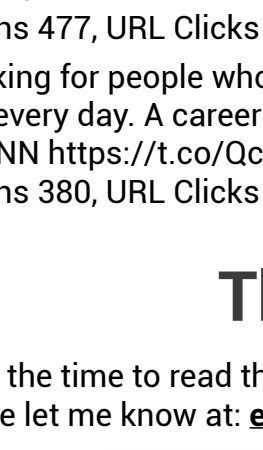


**Duddington with Fineshade Parish Neighbourhood Plan Proposal.** North Northamptonshire Council has formally received the Duddington with Fineshade Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which has been submitted in accordance with Regulation 15 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Closes 3 November 2023.

**Activities and respite for children with disabilities that provide a short break - consultation.** 2023. Northamptonshire Children's Trust is seeking views on a proposed new way of delivering activities and respite (short breaks) for disabled children in Northamptonshire. Closes 19 November 2023.

**Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).** Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are legal documents developed by the Traffic Authority which are required to support a range of different measures, which govern or restrict the use of public roads. Closes 31 March 2024.

## Press releases



North Northamptonshire Council  
**LATEST NEWS**

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):

- **Burton Latimer cattery loses licence after inspection reveals unhealthy and unsafe environment for cats**
- **Consultation launched on Corby Towns Fund projects**
- **Virtual climate change conference to showcase North Northamptonshire sustainability and environmental projects**
- **Have your say on taxi de-zoning**
- **Business owner fined over £17,000 for food hygiene offences**
- **Secondary school children in Thrapston and Islip to keep statutory free bus travel to Prince William School**
- **Chester House Estate celebrates two years of visitors**
- **North Northants schools celebrate Healthy Schools Award success**
- **Discussions held with National Autistic Society**

## 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 (30 October to 1 November)

1. Have your say on taxi de-zoning: <https://ow.ly/QGle50Q23sS> (Reach 2,803, Link Clicks 51, Engagements 270)
2. Happy to have the little monsters at your door this #Halloween? Print off this poster and have your treats ready! (Reach 1,253, Link Clicks 0, Engagements 40)
3. We have many people with shared support needs who are looking for short or long-term support through our Shared Lives scheme, and we're always looking for new carers in North Northamptonshire and the surrounding areas. Individuals are very carefully matched with suitable carers who treat them as a member of their family, meet their needs and provide the support that is right for them. Shared Lives care is based on shared interests, lifestyles, and sense of humour. It's rewarding to support someone to become confident, learn new skills and thrive in everyday life. If you believe you could make a difference to someone's life, please get in touch with us: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/housing.../shared-lives> (Reach 915, Link Clicks 13, Engagements 75)



### Top Tweets so far this week (30 October to 1 November)

1. Happy to have the little monsters at your door this #Halloween? Print off this poster and have your treats ready! (Impressions 550, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 2)
2. Do you care for someone with dementia or an elderly friend or relative? Join us at our upcoming workshops for unpaid carers to help us shape the future of carer services in the area. Choose from in-person or online events. Details on our website at <https://t.co/DooenFE8KB> (Impressions 477, URL Clicks 1, Engagements 7)
3. We are looking for people who align with our key values and are ready to make a difference every day. A career in care is like no other. Meet new people and change their lives #ASCNN <https://t.co/Qcquz17lJM> (Impressions 380, URL Clicks 1, Engagements 2)

## 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



North Northamptonshire Council

Follow me on X



@SmithersJason

Contacting North Northamptonshire Council



0300 126 3000



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