

District Councillor Helen Howell for Stanwick & Hargrave

Chairman of East Northamptonshire Council 2020/21



East Northants residents urged to check they are registered to vote

Residents across East Northamptonshire are being warned not to lose their voice on decisions that affect them by making sure their electoral registration details are correct.

The annual canvass ensures that East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) can keep the electoral register up to date, identifying any residents who are not registered to vote and encouraging them to register, so they can have their say in future elections, including those taking place in May 2021.

Having been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, elections for the new North Northamptonshire Council, Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner and local town/parish elections, will now take place in May 2021. The annual canvass is an important opportunity for residents to make sure they can use their democratic right to vote on these upcoming elections.

Cllr Steven North, Leader of East Northamptonshire Council said:

“It’s important that residents keep an eye out for messages from East Northamptonshire Council, so we can make sure we have the right details on the electoral register for you and your household.

“We are required by law to complete the annual canvass, regardless of the wider situation, and ask that the public help us by providing the necessary information when it is needed. This will avoid the need for a canvasser to visit your home, which will be more difficult given the current circumstances.

“If you’re not currently registered, your name will not appear in the messages we send and you may be unable to vote in any upcoming elections. If you want to register, the easiest way is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote”

Any residents who have any questions about the annual canvass can contact ENC’s Elections team by emailing elections@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk or by visiting www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/elections.

East Northamptonshire Council looking to re-open doors next week

East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) is set to re-open its doors to the residents and businesses of the district following the coronavirus pandemic.

It is anticipated that from Monday, 6 July, visitors who require a face-to-face appointment at ENC’s Thrapston offices will be asked to book via an appointment system.

Anyone requesting a face-to-face service will be asked a series of questions to identify how staff can best help with their request, and minimise visits to Council offices where possible. If residents require an appointment, officers will book this for a convenient date and time and advise of the process for visiting the office.

With public health at the forefront of the changes to service provision, this interim process is designed to ensure maximum safety of both the public and frontline staff at ENC. Customers will be asked to adhere to safety measures in line with Government guidance.

Cllr Steven North, Leader of East Northamptonshire Council said:

“Whilst the re-opening of our offices has been a priority, we need to be mindful of public health and the safety of our frontline staff and residents. This interim measure is just the start of a recovery phase the council is going through and I want to thank our customers for adapting to the new way of working.

“I would like to thank the staff at ENC, in particular the frontline workers who have been assisting the residents and businesses of the district during the pandemic. The last few months have shown how resilient the council can be during a crisis and I’m incredibly proud of how we have handled this unprecedented time.”

Council offices at The Rushden Centre and Fletton House in Oundle will remain closed for the time being as it is more difficult to make those offices Covid-safe. We will let everyone know when we have a definite re-opening date.

Customers are encouraged to contact the council using one of the following options to access our services while staying in the safety and comfort of their home:

- Go online at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk
- Email customerservices@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk
- Telephone 01832 742000

Customers who require a face-to-face appointment should visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/reopen or call 01832 742000 for further details and guidance on what is expected of them when visiting the offices.

Collaboration is key to creating North’s new unitary council

Closer partnership working is the key to ensuring the new North Northamptonshire Council has better, joined-up services for residents, councillors heard last night.

At their latest online meeting, members of the North Northants Shadow Executive endorsed a fresh collaborative approach with the existing councils towards managing land, buildings and finances in the run-up to the new unitary’s creation on 1 April next year.

It means that the five councils of Corby, East Northants, Kettering, Wellingborough and the County Council have agreed to share their future investment plans with the North Shadow Executive so they can assess any impact on setting up the new unitary council.

At the meeting yesterday evening, Members also heard that the Future Northants Programme – the work to develop the new North Northamptonshire Council with improved services for residents – remains firmly on track and within budget, keeping on course to deliver future significant savings for taxpayers.

Councillor Russell Roberts, Leader of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive said: “It’s great to hear that we are all working together to make such good progress towards setting up our new Council.

“Councils in the North already have an excellent track record of coming together to deliver improved outcomes for our residents and I am confident this approach will further cement this spirit of partnership working.

“These are very difficult times as we continue to help residents through the Covid crisis, but with all councils and strategic partners working together as one team, we are rising to this challenge.”

You can view a recording of the latest meeting on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH_JAaHaMtgHDeMQEVXi2g/

Enterprise Centre East Northants celebrates major milestone

Enterprise Centre East Northants.

Construction on the flagship Enterprise Centre East Northants has been underway since summer 2019, and this week East Northamptonshire Council celebrated a major milestone - officially receiving the keys to the centre.

Leader of East Northamptonshire Council, Cllr Steven North and Chairman of the Enterprise Centre Working Party, Cllr Glenvil Greenwood-Smith, marked this moment at the site on Monday (8 June) with representatives from ASHE construction, SEMLEP and BizSpace attending a handover the key ceremony.

Leader of East Northamptonshire Council, Cllr Steven North, said:

“We have been working with our partners to deliver this flagship project since last summer, and we are delighted to see the hard work of all those involved come to fruition as we celebrate this major milestone.

“We would like to thank ASHE for all their hard work as we officially receive the keys for the buildings and transfer the day to day operation to BizSpace.

“We look forward to opening the centre this summer, and working with local enterprises over the coming years to not only succeed in their fields, but to also lead and drive economic recovery across our district.”

Business Development Director at ASHE Construction, Andrew Morris, said: “We are delighted to have been involved in the realisation of this fantastic project. Now, more than ever, flexible workspaces such as these will offer start ups and established companies environments in which they can grow and work differently.

“Whilst new businesses might see this as a first step into an office/workshop environment, more established businesses may see these premises as an opportunity to maximise their new ways of flexible working between employees homes and an established office set up. Whoever they maybe these buildings offer the very best accommodation in which they can nurture and grow their operations.”

Lucinda Young, SEMLEP Local Growth Fund Manager said “Enterprise Centre East Northants will undoubtedly have an important role in helping local businesses to grasp opportunities as we respond to current economic challenges.

“Having worked so closely to the team delivering the Centre, I’m really proud to be here today celebrating this important milestone with them.”

Khalid Aziz, Marketing Director at BizSpace, said: “SMEs make an important contribution to the economy of East Northamptonshire and the Enterprise Centre marks a significant step for the area. These uncertain times emphasise the need for flexible workspace and this centre can accommodate the region’s SMEs and entrepreneurs as they sculpt their businesses to a new working culture, in a safe and secure space.”

ASHE construction has been constructing the offices and studios, completing the project on the 2 June whilst continuing to work safely throughout the pandemic following government guidance and carrying out regular risk assessments. ENC is working with Total Project Integration (TPI) and R H Partnership Architects to deliver the £8 million project. ENC, which is funding the project, received £1.695 million support from the SEMLEP’s Local Growth Fund in order to deliver the centre as part of Enterprising East Northants, the council’s economic plan for sustainable job creation and business growth.

To register your interest or for more information please call: 0808 1787 060 or visit: <https://www.bizspace.co.uk/spaces/ecen>

North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive sets up task groups to focus on the creation of the brand new council

Future Northants Programme

Councillors on the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive met last night for the first time to agree the scope of a suite of task groups that will help to deliver a new unitary council in the north of the county.

Over 150 councillors met online last week for the very first North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority meeting. Last night's meeting saw the 10 executive members agree a set of task groups that will ensure progress in areas such as Council Tax harmonisation, budgets, vision and culture, equalities and transformation.

Russell Roberts, Leader of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, said: "Setting up these groups is a key step on the journey to the new council and I'm delighted to have these councillors, who bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience from the five councils in the north, around the table.

"There's a lot of do and together we will oversee the creation of this brand new organisation that will provide key services for our residents and communities."

Members of the shadow executive also received a really positive update on the recruitment of the senior officers that will head up North Northamptonshire Council. A national campaign to find the best candidates has been launched along with a dedicated website www.shapethefuturenorthants.co.uk which sets out the roles available and the ambitions of the new council.

Cllr Roberts added: "So far, we have seen a high level of interest in the roles and I'm pleased that the health pandemic does not seem to have deterred potential candidates from considering these exciting new opportunities. These important positions will be filled by professionals of the highest calibre."

Interviews are scheduled to take place in July and August. Legislation requires that by the end of December this year, a permanent Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer (Section 151) must be in place ready for North Northamptonshire Council to go live on 1 April 2021.

A recording of the North Northants Shadow Executive meeting can be viewed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH_JAaHaMtgHDeMQEVXi2g/videos

I am heavily involved in shaping the new North Northants Council. I have been appointed to one of the task and finish groups responsible for Governance. This involves the following tasks for the:

Shadow Authority

- Ensure that all elements of the Structural Changes Order and associated Regulations have been implemented for the Shadow Unitary Authority. This will include: Constitution, code of conduct, members' allowances etc.
- Ensure that support and committee management system arrangements are in place, including arrangements for virtual meetings.
- Review the operation of the Shadow Authority's governance arrangements and make any necessary recommendations on amendments to the Shadow Authority.

Unitary Authority

- Ensure that all elements of the Council's governance framework are in place. This will include: Constitution, code of conduct, members' allowances etc.
- Oversee the development of a Member training and development programme for the Unitary Authority.
- Ensure that support and committee management system arrangements are in place.
- Ensure Statutory Boards are set up with terms of reference.

I have also been appointed to the main interview panel for the new authority's Director for Adult Social Services (DASS). The training and interview process will start in late July with the interviews being conducted in early September. The interviews panels will be an important part of the recruitment process ensuring that North Northamptonshire has the very best senior officers in place to deliver an exemplar

council with a strong customer based vision for the future. So as you can see we are very busy and have been even throughout the current pandemic.

I am still available to help residents within the Ward so please do not hesitate to contact me if you need my assistance in any way. In the meantime **Stay Alert & Stay Safe.**

My usual contact details are: hhowell@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk please include the suffix **(action)** in the subject heading. You can also leave a message for me at ENC on 01832 742000.

I am happy to make virtual visits via Zoom if it helps.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Helen'.

Cllr Helen Howell

Chairman of East Northamptonshire Council