



Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 5 | 14 July 2022



Welcome to the latest Town and Parish Briefing, bringing you a monthly round-up of news, activities and information about West Northamptonshire Council.

We hope you'll find this briefing informative, and we encourage you to share it widely within your organisations. If you have ideas and suggestions for future content, please email us at communications@westnorthants.gov.uk

Boundary review making progress

Update by Councillor Suresh Patel, Chair of the West Northamptonshire Council's Democracy Standards Committee and the Local Boundary Review Working Group

Our Council has recommended a reduction in the number of our councillors, as part of a review being run by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

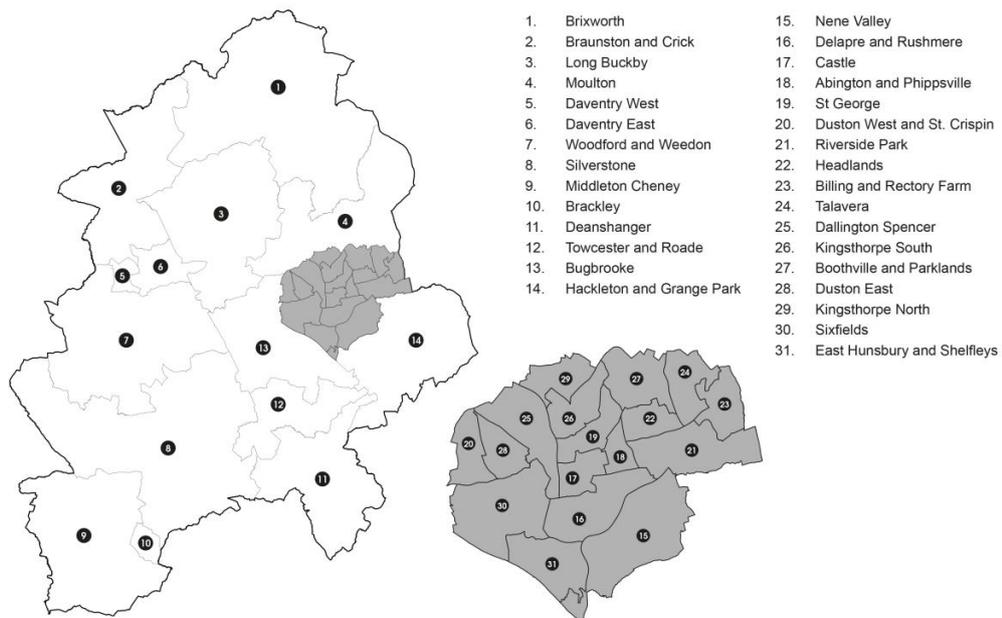
As you will be aware, WNC's current electoral arrangements are based on those of the previous county council, with 93 councillors serving across 31 wards.

The review is looking at our Council's size, wards and boundaries ahead of the next elections in 2025.

LGBCE is running it in two stages, firstly looking at the number of councillors, then looking at how many wards there will be and what they will be named. As part of the first stage, councillors were invited to [submit their recommendations for the future number of elected members](#)

The submission, which was prepared by a cross-party working group, [recommends a new council size of between 77 and 82 councillors.](#)

West Northamptonshire Unitary | Electoral Wards



The outcome of this first stage of the review will be known in late August, with the Commission then moving on to Stage Two to determine the new ward boundaries, which will involve consultation with residents throughout this autumn.

The review is expected to end in late 2023, once the LGBCE has made its recommendations to government and an Order is laid in Parliament to change the legislation and make the new electoral arrangements. We will keep parishes updated on the LGBCE's review including the various consultation stages and how to get involved as and when details are confirmed.

Help us spread word on cost of living support

Update from Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health

Parish colleagues can play a key role in spreading the word about our arrangements to distribute the latest round of Government funding to the most vulnerable in our communities.

WNC has been given around £2.6million from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund, with the aim of supporting those most in need of help to cope with the rising cost of living. Here's more information on how the latest round of funding will be distributed to those who need it across West Northants.



Food vouchers for families with children

Around a third of the money will support families with children, with more than 10,500 children receiving £20 per week food vouchers to use during the school summer holidays.

Distribution of these vouchers, which cover the full six-week school holiday period has now been completed ahead of the end of the school term.

Support for pensioners

Around 6,500 residents across West Northants who receive Pension Credit will each receive a £100 payment, while anyone who receives the Pension Credit Top Up for pensioners with severe disabilities will receive an additional £50.

WNC is working with the Post Office to provide these in the form of Payout vouchers (similar to a store voucher) which can be cashed in, paid directly into a bank account, or used to pay a utility bill.

Those residents eligible for the voucher will receive a letter in early August enabling them to claim the payment from any Post Office branch. To receive the voucher all they will need to do is take their letter to their local Post Office, along with official form of identification (further details will be provided in the letter). Please encourage elderly residents who are eligible to look out for their letter in early August.

Households in severe financial hardship

The Council is working with local voluntary and community groups and organisations across West Northants to ensure the remaining third of the funding goes to those households in severe financial hardship and most need of help towards significantly rising living costs.

WNC has partnered with Northamptonshire Community Foundation which is co-ordinating the distribution of hardship payments to families via around 35 local charity and voluntary organisations across West Northants. These organisations all work with our most vulnerable communities, so will be well-placed to identify those in most need. The Council is currently finalising the distribution process and robust controls that will be put in place to ensure the funding is distributed appropriately and fairly, with the aim of getting the distribution of these vouchers underway by the end of July.

New web area offers cost of living support

We have set up a new area on our website to help people access a range of support and advice to help them through the current cost of living crisis.

The page aims to offer a one-stop-shop, including information on:

- Accessing grants
- Debt advice
- Support getting money you're entitled to
- More information about the Household Support Fund

[Access cost of living support on our website](#)



New funding to boost economic prosperity

By Cllr Dan Lister, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth

Our Council has been allocated more than £7m in funding from the Government to boost the local economy over the next three years.

The money will help us ensure that residents, businesses and communities in West Northamptonshire have the support they need to grow and adapt to our changing economic landscape.

It is made up of £5.4m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the largest allocation in the South East Midlands, and a potential allocation of up to £1.9m in Multiply funding, which both replace previous strands of European social funding.

The Shared Prosperity Fund is intended to:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector
- Spread opportunities and improve public services
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging
- Empower local leaders and communities

Multiply funding is specifically targeted at improving numeracy as better education in this area has been shown to improve people's chances of progressing their careers. Its allocation is dependent on a robust business case. Its primary aims are to:

- Result in more adults achieving maths qualifications
- Improve outcomes for employers
- Increase general numeracy levels

Our Council will work with partners and providers to develop proposals to deliver these funds which will have the greatest beneficial impact for West Northamptonshire and support the local community.

We are dedicated to supporting and growing the local economy, particularly as it recovers from the pandemic. It is our vision to deliver economic prosperity in this area, making it a place where everyone will thrive. More information about the fund and the projects it will support will be published in due course.

Queen of Arts exhibition touring libraries

Entries to our Queen of Arts creative challenge can now be viewed as part of a digital exhibition which is touring the county's libraries.

Children and young people in Northamptonshire were asked to display their creative skills ahead of the Platinum Jubilee in June by taking part in the countywide activity. We received lots of fantastic entries, which can be viewed at the county's libraries between now and November.

The exhibition has visited Towcester Library and Daventry Library and will also be at:

- Northampton Central library, 12 July – 8 August
- Weston Favell library, 8 August – 12 September
- Wellingborough library, 12 September – 10 October
- Rushden library, 10 October – 6 November
- Corby library, 6 November – 28 November.



Community grant funding is available

By Cllr David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement, and Regulatory Services

Did you know that community and voluntary groups delivering important services across West Northamptonshire can apply for grants of up to £5,000?



Our grant scheme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, registered charities and not-for-profit organisations, for projects which support one or more of the council's corporate plan priorities:

- Green and clean: environment and wellbeing
- Improved life chances: health, social care and families
- Connected communities: transport and connectivity
- Thriving villages and towns: place shaping and homes
- Economic development: growth and prosperity
- Robust resource management: transparency and financial

probability

These grants allow us to support local community and voluntary groups who are providing vital services to our communities.

These groups are small, highly connected and can react quickly to specific needs. They are an important partner and we're delighted to be able to offer them this much needed funding which will help to support local communities as we recover from the pandemic.

Applications for this round of funding should be submitted no later than Sunday, 27 July 2022.

Groups can find out more on the [Community Grant Funding page on our website](#)

Unwanted garden waste bins to be collected

Update from Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways, Transport & Waste Services

Householders in the former South Northants area of West Northamptonshire who have not subscribed to the garden waste service will have the opportunity to have their unwanted bin taken away over the summer.

We are collecting the bins in phases, area by area. Each householder who has not subscribed to the service will receive an individually addressed letter through the post advising them when bins will be removed in their area and instructions on when to put them out.

Our Waste Services team will also contact town and parish councils, to inform you when collections are taking place in your area. Reminders will also be issued via our social media channels.

Households in the Northampton and Daventry areas who have an unwanted garden waste bins can contact our Customer Services team to arrange a removal separately. For those who have not yet signed up to the service, it is not too late to do so.

The annual subscription charge for the fortnightly service running to the end of March 2023 costs £42 per bin and [can be paid online via debit or credit card](#), or by calling 0300 126 7000.



Major planning consultations are underway

Update from Cllr Rebecca Breese, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs

We're encouraging residents to give their views as part of two important planning consultations for the West Northamptonshire Area.

In the South Northants area, people are being asked to help shape extra guidance for land allocated for commercial development. And in the Northampton area, residents can share their views on proposed modifications to the Northampton Local Plan Part 2.

It's important that we have effective planning policies in place which support our goals to boost our local economy by bringing new employment opportunities into the area.

"Our policies must be underpinned by clear and robust guidance for both local residents and developers to ensure future development of these sites is appropriate in size, scale and density.

"I would urge everyone with knowledge of these areas to get involved in this consultation to help shape guidance that will inform our future decision-making on these issues."

South Northamptonshire Supplementary Planning Document

As members will recall, the Council's Planning Policy Committee recently approved plans to seek people's views on a new draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for employment land allocations in the South Northants area, which would sit alongside the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 to help inform decision-making on planning applications.

The draft SPD aims to provide greater detail and certainty to the public and developers by setting out overarching design principles for the future development of the employment sites identified in the Local Plan, including guidance relating to size, scale and density of buildings.

A six-week public consultation on the SPD opened this week, giving people until midnight on Thursday, 18 August to give their views.

People can [find out more and have their say on our Consultation Hub](#), or by asking to view the draft documents at our offices at The Forum in Towcester, as well as the libraries in Brackley, Deanshanger and Roade.

There is also a chance for people to **find out more at drop-in events taking place at The Forum in Towcester on Wednesday 20 July from 4pm-7pm. A drop-in event will also take place at The Memorial Hall, Deanshanger Road in Old Stratford today (Thursday, 14 July) from 2pm-6pm.**



Northampton Local Plan Part 2

The Local Plan Part 2 is a major planning policy document that will help guide planning decisions throughout Northampton up to 2029.

Following public hearings in November 2021, the Government-appointed Planning Inspectors have recommended some modifications, before the Plan can be adopted by WNC.

People have until midnight on Thursday, 18 August to have their say on those modifications [by visiting our Consultation Hub](#).

Only comments on the modifications to the Local Plan Part 2 and the associated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessments can be considered.

Consultation and engagement update for July

Here's a handy overview of our recent consultation and engagement activities. Please remember that all of our consultations are published on the [Consultation Hub](#).

You can also [sign-up to receive alerts when new consultations are launched](#)



Open activities on the Consultation Hub

[Northampton Local Plan](#): Having been through several stages of public consultation previously, the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 is being examined by Government-appointed inspectors. People now have an opportunity to have their say on our proposed main modifications, so the inspectors can take those representations into account in writing their report about the Plan. Closes: 18 August 2022

[South Northamptonshire Local Plan](#): We are seeking people's views on a new draft Supplementary Planning Document for employment land allocations, which would sit alongside the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029. Closes: 18 August 2022

[Newnham Conservation Area](#): We are reviewing conservation areas in the Daventry area, as well as considering new designations. A draft appraisal and management plan has been prepared for the Newnham Conservation Area. Closes: 18 July 2022

[Gambling and licensing](#): Our council regulates gambling premises such as betting shops, bingo halls and amusement arcades, as well as gaming machines in clubs and pubs, and small society lottery registration. A review of the principles we follow to carry out these licensing functions must take place at least every three years. Closes: 21 August 2022

Recently closed activities

[ASC Unit at Hunsbury Primary School](#): To partially address the need for an increased number of autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) places in Northampton, we proposed that a new SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) unit be established at Hunsbury Park Primary School from September 2022 that will eventually provide 50 new places. Closed: 23 June 2022 and feedback is being analysed.

[New free special school](#): We identified a need to provide additional specialist school places for children and young people within reasonable travelling distance of Towcester, Daventry and Brackley. To address these needs, we propose a new special free school should open providing up to 250 places from September 2024. Closed: 10 June 2022 and feedback is being analysed.

[Whilton payphone](#): BT is proposing to remove the telephone equipment from the Grade II-listed K6 telephone box in Main Street, Whilton. The parish council has expressed a desire to adopt the box which would ensure its long-term maintenance. Closed: 7 June 2022 and feedback is being analysed.

Sharing outcomes – We asked, you said, we did

[Bus lane enforcement](#): We asked residents, commuters to Northampton and local stakeholders for their views on what hours the bus lane in St James should operate and whether the Council should continue to enforce these hours. [The results of the consultation can be viewed here](#)

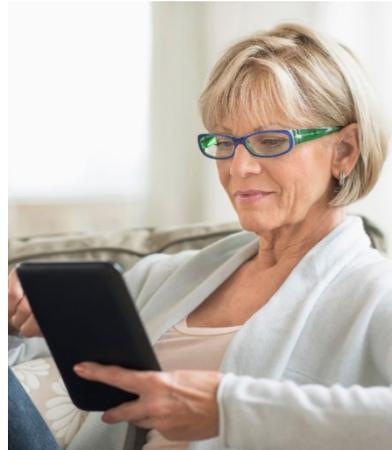
Annual canvass underway in West Northants

Canvass forms have been emailed to more than 80,000 people across West Northamptonshire so that residents can check their voter details are up-to-date.

The annual canvass, which must be carried out by law, allows our Council to ensure that information on the electoral register is current and accurate.

Adults must be on the register in order to vote in elections and referendums, while it is also used for jury service selection and to provide credit checks, such as when applying for a mortgage.

West Northamptonshire Council-branded emails have this week been sent out to residents who have provided their email addresses to us for this purpose.



**Don't lose
your voice at
future elections**

Look out for an email checking who's registered to vote at your address

westnorthants.gov.uk/canvass



The emails, which come from electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk contain step-by-step instructions on how to check, confirm and/or change their details online.

Anyone who is not on the council's email database will receive a letter in the post in early August.

Residents are also reminded to stay alert when it comes to phishing, scam or spam emails. The council will never ask people for their bank or other personal details via email. If in doubt, contact the helpline on 0300 126 7000.

While people must be on the Electoral Register to be able to vote, the canvass communication is not a registration form to vote. To register to vote, go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

[Find out more information about our Annual Canvass](#)

HMOs under review in response to concerns

By Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader of West Northamptonshire Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

We're reviewing the way our council deals with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in response to concerns, particularly in urban areas such as Northampton, where some people say they have a detrimental impact on local communities.

The aim of the Council's HMO review is to thoroughly investigate the issues concerning housing of this nature within West Northamptonshire. It will include a robust analysis of current policies concerning HMOs in Northampton, alongside looking at ways we can use best practice from elsewhere in the country.

As part of the review we will also be gathering comprehensive evidence and information from a range of stakeholders, including landlords; tenants; estate and letting agents; residents and residents associations; university and colleges; businesses; students; and key workers.

Once all this information has been gathered, a draft report will be prepared, with a further opportunity for stakeholders to then give their views. Recommendations will then be made to the Planning Policy Committee and we are expecting a conclusion in the autumn.

Previous measures already put in place towards addressing the issues include introducing Article 4 Directions across Northampton so that planning permission is now required to turn houses in HMOs and developing policies with the guidance of experts at Loughborough University.

Good progress on superfast broadband rollout

The Superfast Northamptonshire project is delivering high speed full-fibre broadband connectivity across West Northamptonshire, as well as encouraging commercial investment to extend plans further.



The Superfast Northamptonshire team work closely with Building Digital UK (BDUK); the agency which manages the government's intervention programme to improve broadband connectivity across the UK. They also regularly liaise with telecoms providers who are delivering major investments in broadband network upgrades in the area.

Over the last decade, great strides have been made to improve broadband connectivity across Northamptonshire. Superfast broadband (more than 30 Megabits per second, or Mbps) was available to just 72% of premises in the county in early 2013 compared to 99% now.

And full fibre coverage – which is considered the optimum technology - was at just 0.4% in 2013 compared to almost 48% countywide at the end of May 2022. ThinkBroadband.com has reported that 81% of Northants premises have access to ultrafast broadband, offering download speeds of more than 100Mbps.

Broadband in West Northamptonshire

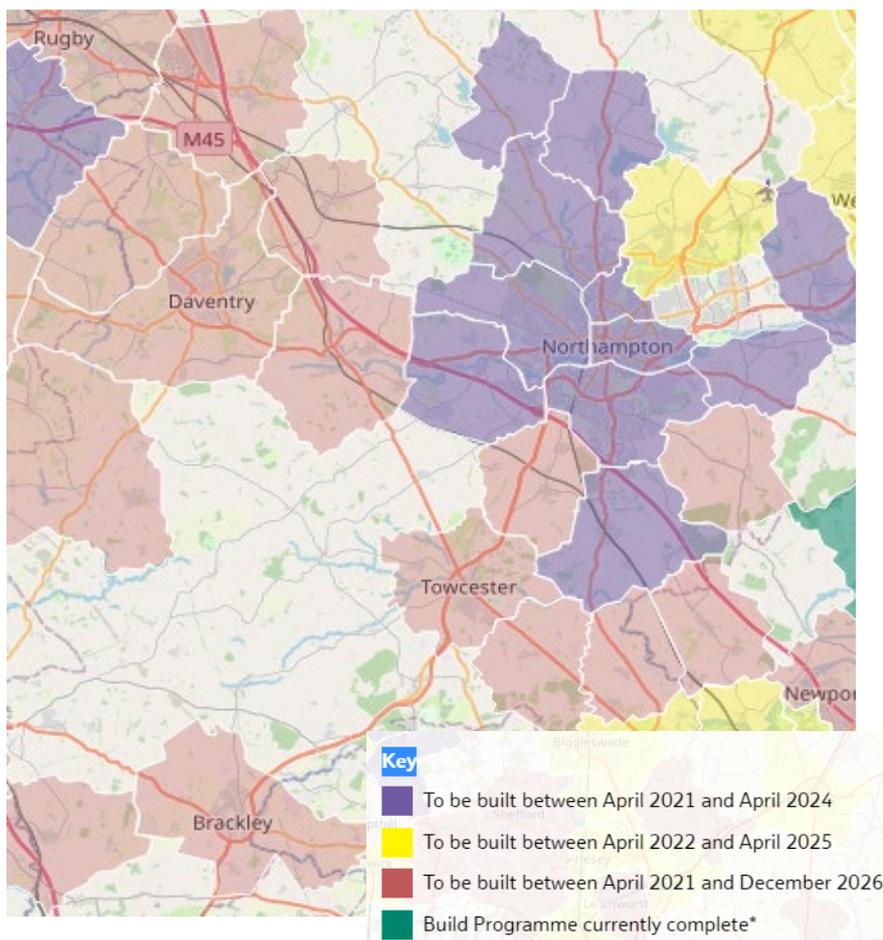
Coverage of high speed broadband in West Northamptonshire is healthy and continuing to grow. Virgin Media's network upgrade in 2021 has boosted gigabit capable broadband coverage, whilst Openreach, City Fibre and Gigaclear continue to expand their full fibre footprints in the urban and rural areas.

At the end of May 2022, over 72% of premises in West Northamptonshire had access to gigabit capable broadband, compared to 69.5% across England, and a massive 59.7% of premises had access to Full Fibre broadband which compares to just 35.1% on average in England.

Work continues to be carried out through the Superfast Northamptonshire initiative and Project Gigabit to increase coverage even further and ensure that communities are not left behind.

The latest map (June 2022) showing Openreach's commercial planned Fibre First upgrade areas is shown here.

This includes plans for full fibre in Daventry, Towcester and Brackley as well as Northampton and some more rural exchange areas like Crick, Weedon, Brixworth and the rural areas to the south of Northampton.



You can find out more and register an interest in [where and when we're building Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband here](#). You can also [find the list of exchanges announced by Openreach on the Superfast Northamptonshire News page](#).

Not all premises in these exchange areas will benefit from the full fibre upgrade as this is a commercial programme and some premises are expected to be too costly to reach. Others may not be possible to reach for other reasons including if Openreach is denied permission to access and lay infrastructure on private land. This requires agreement with the landowner.



CityFibre now have significant commercial full fibre coverage in Northampton and are continuing to build. They have been integral to boosting full fibre in the town which they report has reached 60% (May 2022). Longer term plans may see Brixworth and Roade benefit, although there are no timescales for delivery announced yet.

In the rural areas, Gigaclear are bringing full fibre to smaller communities in which other telecoms providers have historically shown no interest.

More than 36,000 rural premises in the county are already benefitting as a result, 6,000 of the hardest to reach properties as

a direct result of public funding via the Superfast Northamptonshire project.

This footprint has been a catalyst for Gigaclear continuing to expand their commercial roll out of full fibre. Delivery plans are due to complete at the end of 2022/23 and include network build in **Ashton, Blisworth, Deanshanger, Halse, Hulcote, Puxley** and **Stoke Bruerne** to name a few.

New plans to serve **Brockhall** have also just been confirmed.

[View a list of the villages served by Gigaclear for the Superfast Northamptonshire project](#)

Super slow broadband? Let Us Know!

If you have a very poor internet connection (speeds of less than 10Mbps) then Superfast Northamptonshire want to hear from you. Email bigidea.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk

People can find out the estimated line speeds available at their property by going to the [Openreach speed checker](#) Other network coverage by [CityFibre](#), [VirginMedia](#) or [Gigaclear](#) may be available.

Social tariffs

Social tariffs can provide a safety net for eligible households who are struggling to afford broadband or phone services. Some providers offer social tariffs which are only available to customers who receive certain government benefits. [Find out more information on cheaper broadband and phone packages](#)

Find out more

For an update on the government's Project Gigabit and Lot 12 progress, which includes coverage in much of West Northamptonshire, visit the [Superfast Northamptonshire website](#)

You can also [follow Superfast Northamptonshire on Twitter](#)

Covid-19 cases on the rise across Northants

An update from Sally Burns, Director of Public Health for West Northamptonshire

This is messaging I wasn't expecting to write. As a Public Health team, we were, and are, focused on providing advice on how to get as fit and well as possible before the next expected Covid-19 wave in the Autumn and Winter.

However, two subvariants of the Omicron strain of the virus, known as BA.4 and BA.5 have appeared. More importantly these appear to be more infectious than other more recent variants such as BA.2. Rates are on the rise in Northamptonshire, in both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire. Sadly, an increase in cases inevitably leads to an increase in hospital admissions, something we've already started to see in the county's hospitals.

We know that people in general are far less interested in hearing about COVID-19, having been bombarded by messaging for over two years. But part of my remit as Director of Public Health is to provide the public with expert, objective advice on health matters so we need to repeat some of that messaging to help keep Northamptonshire residents as safe as possible.

Advice to guard against Covid-19



So, this is a reminder that Covid-19 hasn't gone away. With any increase of mixing, we are likely to see an increase in the numbers of cases, which is why we need to remain vigilant. Meet in outdoor environments where the risk of transmission is lower and ventilate homes and workplaces when meeting indoors.

Handwashing regularly and covering your nose or mouth when you sneeze or cough may seem obvious, but they remain important, yet simple methods of keeping the spread of Covid-19, as well as lots of other viruses, at bay.

Wearing a mask in crowded indoor spaces is also a good idea. And, of course, do isolate if you have a positive test result, or if you have any Covid-19 symptoms.

We'd also like to talk about re-infections. Just because you have had Covid-19 once doesn't unfortunately mean that you won't get it again. At the start of the pandemic reinfections were rare but have become increasingly common as the years and months roll on, particularly since Omicron's arrival. So, this advice stands for all in Northamptonshire even if you've had Covid-19 before.

Vaccinations

Covid-19 vaccination provides a substantial added layer of protection against reinfection by boosting people's immune responses.

Those currently eligible include people aged 75 and over and those who are immunosuppressed. We would urge those who have yet to act on the invite to get their Spring Booster dose to do so as soon as they can.

Getting the jab now will also mean there will have been enough time between doses ahead of a further autumn dose to extend protection over winter.



It's not too late, Spring booster jab appointments can be booked quickly and conveniently on the [NHS website](#) or by phoning 119.

New integrated care system is established

Northamptonshire formally established its new statutory integrated care system on 1 July. This is a new legal requirement not just for our county, but for the whole of England across 42 local areas.

An integrated care system is a partnership of local health and care organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined-up services and to improve the health of people who live and work in the area.

Our integrated care system is called Integrated Care Northamptonshire. It replaces and builds upon the partnership work undertaken over the last few years by Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership.

How will it operate?

Integrated Care Northamptonshire operates under the combined leadership of two statutory (legally required) bodies: NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB) and Northamptonshire Integrated Care Partnership (NICP).

NICB is responsible for local NHS services, functions, performance and budgets. This body replaces the old NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). It is made up of local NHS trusts (our two general hospital trusts and Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, our community and mental health service provider), primary care providers (including GPs), and local authorities.



NICP is a statutory committee made up of local health services, local government, the voluntary and community sector, as well as other public sector partners.

Together these bodies oversee the delivery of health and care services to ensure they meet the needs of local populations – for the county as a whole, at ‘place’ level (aligned with our unitary council boundaries), and even more locally in communities and neighbourhoods.

What will Integrated Care Northamptonshire do?

Being an integrated care system means we can formalise the joint-working arrangements that have already been in place for some time in Northamptonshire.

It will simplify the way health and care organisations work together and improve their ability to make decisions, providing better and more joined-up services.

The four aims of Integrated Care Northamptonshire will be:

- To improve health for all
- To reduce health inequalities
- To make the best possible use of public funding
- To contribute to the economic and social development of Northamptonshire.

Find out more

Visit the new Integrated Care Northamptonshire website at www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk. The website has lots of information about who we are, what we do and about health and care services in our county. You can also register to receive updates on our work or sign up for engagement and involvement opportunities.

£6.2 million project to tackle flooding

Update by Cllr Pinder Chauhan, Assistant Cabinet Member, Flooding

Residents and businesses in the area around Wootton Brook are to benefit from part of a £6.2 million Government-funded project to tackle flooding. This project is called RAIN and we will be reaching out to communities soon, starting with Parish Councils to gain advice on how best to reach their residents.

Our Council, in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), has secured funding from DEFRA to run a five-year project until April 2027 to test new ways to improve communities' resilience to flooding.

Information about the project

Wootton Brook and Harpers Brook in Northamptonshire were chosen as there have been approximately 350 flood incidents reported since detailed records started in 2012 and traditional hard engineered flood schemes are not considered viable in the areas.



The area around Wootton Brook includes Collingtree, Wootton, East and West Hunsbury, Hunsbury Meadows and Hackleton as these are some of West Northamptonshire's most affected areas.

The overall aim of the project is to engage with landowners, communities and individuals throughout these two catchments, to test new approaches to improving flood resilience. As a funded innovation project, we will be evaluating how effectively these measures work in combination with each other.

The funding from DEFRA was originally bid for by Northamptonshire County Council as part of the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Project (FCRIP).

Working with communities

At community level we will work with communities to help them minimise the consequence of flooding, and at property level we will work with owners to help them understand their risk and what they can do to minimise disruption and costs of flooding.

We are urging you and residents across this area to support the project when and where you can with the following actions:

- Be curious, participate in our engagement events and find out if you are at flood risk
- Take five minutes to consider 'what if': if I do flood, what will be damaged and how might that affect me/my community?
- Chat though the impact of a flood with your neighbours – what would they do if water came into their home, or flooded their drive/road?
- Consider whether you (or someone you know) could be a flood warden for your community
- Share with us any knowledge and records you have about previous flood incidents in your community

If you would like any further information, you can contact the Innovative Flood Resilience team at WNC by email at Innovative.FloodResilience@westnorthants.gov.uk, and please look out for information from RAIN to be part of this exciting project.

More information about flooding across Northamptonshire can be found on the [online Flooding Toolkit](#)

We're on track to deliver new leisure facility

Good progress continues to be made on the new Northampton Bike Park, completion of which is expected in August.

The £725k project will deliver a range of facilities for all ranges of ability, from a skills area usable by children on balance bikes, right up to the most demanding trails for experts in the sport, all of them free.

The new facility, which is being built on the former Nine golf course west of Brackmills Industrial Estate, will comprise:

- A multi-user green trail – an easy, dual-direction cycle route across the site, connecting Houghton Hill to the underpass for the A45
- Blue (moderate), red (difficult) and black (severe) off-road mountain bike trails for different abilities - dual tracks will allow head-to-head riding
- Five gathering spots where riders can meet to discuss the next section of track, and coaching can be provided
- A mountain bike skills area.



The total budget is made up of £250,000 from Sport England, on behalf of the Places to Ride programme – a partnership between British Cycling, Sport England and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) – with the rest from the council.

New car park will increase spaces in Towcester

A derelict supermarket will be demolished in a £785,000 project which will see 80 new parking spaces created to serve Towcester town centre.

The supermarket in the Sponne Arcade, which included 70 parking spaces, has stood empty since September 2018 and fell into disrepair before being bought by South Northamptonshire Council in July 2020.

Our Council's Cabinet gave the go-ahead last month for the demolition of the supermarket and the creation of a further 80 short stay parking spaces.

The new car park will increase accessibility to shops and services and will help future-proof the town centre for the growing population.

In addition to the demolition, and expansion of the car park, the project will see the reconfiguration of the existing parking spaces to conform with modern standards.

The number of disabled and family parking spaces will be increased as part of the project, which also includes the provision to expand upon the existing electric charging points installed in 2021.

Additional lighting, CCTV, landscaping, and work to walkways will also make the car park safer and more accessible.

The work is expected to last for six-months, during which time the car park will be closed for public use. We will continue to work with nearby businesses and residents to keep them fully informed of the project.

Once complete the short stay parking spaces will align with short stay restrictions elsewhere in the town: three hours free parking between 8am and 6pm, no return within three hours.

Progress on ambitious plans for Weston Favell

Proposals for a swimming pool, cinema, library, and a new home for health and social services in Weston Favell have taken another big step forward.

Council members agreed recently to support the regeneration project with £25.1 million, provided we are successful in an application for £20 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

The project would see a range of outdated community buildings turned into a new health and wellbeing hub, featuring a range of facilities including:

- A leisure centre with new swimming pools, gym, exercise studios, sports hall and changing rooms
- A library with quiet study areas, exhibition space, meetings rooms and staff areas
- A two screen cinema
- Community hub with a lobby area, public seating, café, meeting and consultation rooms
- Adult services with office space, activity rooms, sensory rooms, and function space
- Children services with contact and family rooms, baby rooms, meetings and interview rooms, and an outdoor play area
- GP practices with access to additional clinical space and a minor operations room
- A dental practice
- The opportunity for additional services such as maternity and physiotherapy services.

Cllr Daniel Lister, our Cabinet Member for economic development, town centre regeneration and growth said: "It is right the public money should be invested where it is most needed, and this area was laid out when ideas on design and planning were very different.



"It will be very far from a like for like replacement, this will deliver genuine improvements to the access and quality of vital public services and its impact will be felt throughout the community in the east of Northampton.

"Improving the look and feel of the area is just the start, better health facilities mean better outcomes and a higher quality of life for those who need the most help."

The catchment area for the Hub includes 90,000 people. Extensive consultation and feasibility studies have already been undertaken which identified the facilities required within the new hub.

Weston Favell is just one of several projects chosen for LUF applications, as they were already underway and at a stage where there was enough detail required for a successful application. Other areas in need are earmarked for future funding applications.

Our financial backing for the proposals will be submitted alongside the LUF application this month with a decision from the Government expected late 2022.

Families invited to join reading challenges

By Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

Two exciting summer reading challenges have launched at libraries across Northamptonshire

Children aged 4-11 are being asked to sign-up to read six books this summer as part of Gadgeteers, Summer Reading Challenge 2022.

As children read or listen to books, they will receive special stickers, some with mysterious smells. By adding these stickers to their collector's poster, young readers will help the Gadgeteers to understand the science behind a whole range of interests from fashion and technology to cooking and music. When they complete the challenge, they will receive a certificate and medal.



And adults can get involved too, by signing up to the 'For the Love of Books – Summer Six' challenge. Those who complete the challenge can enter a prize draw to win a £20 voucher for bookshop.org which supports independent bookshops.

There is also a whole programme of free, fun activities planned in libraries for families to take part in over the summer and you can book a place at your local library.

The second series of the LibraryPlus podcast "For the Love of Books – the LibraryPlus podcast" will also run for the duration of the summer and is available from all major podcast platforms. The monthly episodes celebrate books and reading, and feature guests who use books and reading in different ways.

Reading is both an essential skill and a fulfilling pastime, and activities like the Summer Reading Challenge aim to instil a love of books in people of all ages.

In the modern world it can be difficult to find time to sit down and get lost in a good book, however our LibraryPlus service offers a wide range of digital and audio books in addition to physical copies, ensuring that even more people are able to get involved with this fantastic challenge.

[Find out more about the summer reading challenges](#)

Prestigious award for volunteer-run shop



Congratulations go to the volunteers from Sulgrave Village Shop, after they received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service recently.

The award aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to benefit their communities.

It is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

Representatives of the Sulgrave Volunteers will receive the award crystal and certificate from the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire later this summer.

The award is recognition of the dedicated work to run the shop by countless numbers of volunteers over many years.

Specification for new special school published

Update from Cllr Fiona Baker, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Proposals for a 250-place special needs school took a step forward in the last month after we published more details for academies who might bid to run it.

The new school will be an 'all-through SEND' school, meaning it will cater for children aged four to 19 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Specifically, it will cater for pupils with autistic spectrum condition, speech, language and communication needs, and severe learning difficulties.

The old St John's site in Tiffield near Towcester has emerged as a possible location for the school and it is hoped it will see its first intake in September 2024.

The pressure for SEND places is intense. As they are, mainstream schools simply do not have the capacity to take on more SEND pupils and the private sector has also reached its limit.

Sending children across county borders is not the best for them and in the longer term, not financially sustainable. There's a well-regulated process which we must now follow, but I am urging anyone with the necessary skills and experience to study these specifications and step forward to support your community.

The plan for a new special school is just one of two phases within our Council's SEND sufficiency strategy which will also see the establishment of 259 places within SEND units attached to mainstream schools and extensions to existing special schools located within West Northants.

The publication of the [Proposed New Designated Free Special School Specification](#) follows the start of the 'free school presumption' process in May 2022 during which the council gained broad support for the new from the special education sector in the region.



Thank you for your feedback

By Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of West Northamptonshire Council

During May we asked all town and parish council clerks for feedback on their interactions with our services at West Northamptonshire Council. We received 85 responses and are reviewing the detailed commentary.

Your feedback has been instrumental in helping us better understand the areas causing you the most frustration, as well as the aspects we are getting right. On top of the responses to the survey, we have had over 25 follow-up conversations, so thank you for making the time to be honest with us.

We also thank you for the feedback you provided about this publication, and we have included a number of new articles this month in direct response to your requests, including information about new consultations, articles focussing on planning issues, and a feature on flooding alleviation.

Now we have your feedback, we are exploring the themes outlined with the services you contact most frequently. In addition, we are exploring the mechanisms to facilitate effective contact with our services and give you confidence in our processes.

A43 set for major improvement works

Highways England have advised they will be carrying out essential maintenance work to the A43 this summer.

The works will take place on the southbound carriageway of A43 between the Towcester roundabout and the Northampton Road roundabout at Brackley.

The work will see damaged drains repaired and replaced, the carriageway resurfaced, damaged kerbs renewed, road markings refreshed, road studs installed and vegetation cleared.

Once completed, Highways England say road users will benefit from improved road safety and a smoother driving experience.

When is the work taking place?

Work is planned to start on 25 July for about three months. To keep the programme for these works as short as possible and to minimise disruption to the local community, works will take place overnight between 8pm and 6am, Monday to Friday.

There are no plans to work Saturday or Sunday nights at present, however Highways England said planned works are subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances, such as clashes with other emergency work on the diversion routes.

To maintain a safe environment for the workforce and motorists, the southbound carriageway will be closed, with fully signed diversion routes in place. A 50mph speed restriction will also be in place on the northbound carriageway.

Carriageways will be open as normal from 6am to 8pm.

Highways England will have a dedicated Public Liaison Officer on hand to answer any questions throughout the period of work.

Free plaques on offer for Queen's Green Canopy

Town and Parish councils planting a tree for the Jubilee can now get a free commemorative plaque from our Council.

Across West Northamptonshire, a total of 5,686 trees were planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative during the last official planting season.

The next planting season starts in October, so organisations can still get involved in the scheme, with the Woodland Trust once again offering free trees to schools and community groups.

To request a pack for delivery in November, please visit [The Woodland Trust website](#).

Town and parish councils and schools wishing to have a commemorative plaque (one per organisation, on a first come first serve basis) should email queensjubilee@westnorthants.gov.uk

Find out more information about the work taking place locally in support of the [Queen's Green Canopy](#) project.



Our Council in the news

Here's a monthly roundup of the news releases and updates published by our Council in recent weeks. Don't forget you can keep up-to-date with these and search the news archive by [visiting the News section of our website](#)

In the past month, we issued press releases on:

- [New highways contract to deliver improvements from this autumn](#) – 13 June
- [Huge boost for business, skills and communities](#) – 13 June
- [Grow your business with new e-commerce app](#) – 13 June
- [Funds from Sixfields loan recovered](#) – 13 June
- [Planning referendum taking place in Pitsford next week](#) – 14 June
- [Cost-of living support for West Northants' most vulnerable residents](#) – 15 June
- [Bike park plans On Track for completion this summer](#) – 15 June
- [One month to go until the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay](#) – 16 June
- [Council publishes 'specification' for new special needs school](#) – 16 June
- [West Northamptonshire to celebrate Refugee Week 2022](#) – 17 June
- [Public asked to have their say on modifications to Northampton's Local Plan](#) – 17 June
- [Are you West Northamptonshire's Business of the Year?](#) – 20 June
- [Windrush Day 2022: When is it and how will it be marked in West Northamptonshire?](#) – 21 June
- [Employment park plans to proceed after Government review](#) – 21 June
- [Return of Merged Futures event showcases visionary digital technology](#) – 21 June
- [West Northamptonshire Council launches a review into Houses in Multiple Occupation](#) – 21 June
- [New planning guidance aims to help shape future employment sites](#) – 22 June
- [Make LibraryPlus your destination this summer](#) – 22 June
- [Council to discuss recommendations to change its number of councillors](#) – 23 June
- [Celebrating Armed Forces Day](#) – 24 June
- [Residents urged to check travel plan ahead of the British Formula One Grand Prix](#) – 28 June
- [Fresh call for people to get their COVID-19 vaccinations](#) – 29 June
- [Northampton Commonwealth Games Batonbearers revealed](#) – 29 June
- [Message from the interim director of Public Health for West Northants](#) – 30 June
- [£45.1 million plan to level up Weston Favell takes a step forward](#) – 1 July
- [West Northants businesses celebrated on Independents' Days](#) – 1 July
- [Parkrunners celebrate a centenary in Towcester](#) – 1 July
- [Armed Forces get-togethers kick-off at the home of Northampton football](#) – 1 July
- [Museum welcomes HRH The Duke of Gloucester](#) – 1 July
- [Northampton Forward seeks champions for communities](#) – 1 July
- [Have your say on West Northamptonshire Council's Gambling Policy](#) – 4 July
- [West Northamptonshire remembers Srebrenica](#) – 5 July
- [Jim Moir, aka Vic Reeves Surreal Spectacle at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery](#) – 7 July
- [Funding for West Northants community and voluntary groups is now available](#) – 7 July
- [Residents called to help shape future employment sites in south Northamptonshire](#) – 8 July
- [Public asked to have their say on modifications to Northampton's Local Plan](#) – 8 July
- [Double joy for Towcester Centre for Leisure at ukactive Awards](#) – 8 July
- [West Northants put on heatwave alert as urgent weather warning issued](#) – 8 July