

Leader's Update

10 January 2025

Issue: 91

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- English Devolution White Paper.
- Statement on child sexual exploitation.
- Public Health contract awarded to deliver services for children, young people, adults and families.
- North Northamptonshire Youth Advisory Council elected.
- How to increase physical activity levels in North Northamptonshire on Executive agenda.
- Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans.
- NHS in Northamptonshire declares a critical incident.
- Charity concerts for Teamwork Trust.
- Northamptonshire names on New Year Honours List 2025.

In addition, you will find below some useful information about forthcoming meetings, Your Voice Matters (our consultation and engagement hub), all the latest press releases and our top social media posts.

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

English Devolution White Paper

The Extraordinary meeting of Full Council was held on the evening of Thursday 9 January 2025 to consider proposals contained in the English Devolution White Paper published on 16 December 2024. The report sets out the next steps in relation to the potential creation of a Strategic Authority.

In September 2024, North Northamptonshire Council along with Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Luton and West Northamptonshire councils, submitted an expression of interest for creating a non-mayoral combined authority based on the South Midlands geography.

The report and debate at council on Thursday 9 January focused specifically on the need to keep the dialogue going on the potential establishment of a new Strategic Authority. If established, the Strategic Authority would sit between the existing councils in the South Midlands Area and central government. Strategic Authorities would have a range of powers and funding transferred from central government and such arrangements have the potential to deliver significant benefits to those areas that adopt them.

It is important to note that North Northamptonshire Council would remain as it currently is in such arrangements but could benefit significantly from the greater flexibilities and funding that devolved government can provide.

I feel that it is important that North Northamptonshire Council supports devolution. Being part of the South Midlands Authorities bid is important in delivering the best for our residents and businesses and how we can create the conditions to bring increased prosperity to our region.

This is a very exciting time to be working collaboratively with neighbouring unitary councils and the move towards devolution fits perfectly with our BIG50 aspirations to create a proactive, proud and prosperous area for all of us.

The recommendations were approved at Full Council on Thursday 9 January and they outline our commitment to be part of discussions on the creation of a Strategic Authority for the South Midlands as well as being part of the Devolution Priority Programme to accelerate these ambitions.

The council will now aim to submit an expression of interest to create a Strategic Authority and progress negotiations with a further report to go back to Full Council later in 2025.

You can find out more here: [Agenda for Council on Thursday 9 January 2025](#).

Statement on child sexual exploitation

At the meeting of the Extraordinary Council, held yesterday (Thursday 9 January), I addressed all members of the council with the following important statement:

This council notes the deep concerns raised across North Northamptonshire and the wider country about the failures of all governments to address the crimes of child sexual exploitation, particularly those associated with grooming gangs, and recognises the devastating and long-lasting impact on victims, their families, and communities.

We acknowledge the bravery of those who have come forward to expose this and recognize that those affected deserve justice, and we believe that only a thorough, independent, and wide-ranging national investigation across all agencies can address the systemic failures in identifying, preventing, and prosecuting such crimes throughout the United Kingdom, and to understand the impact in Northamptonshire.

I ask that members support me in writing to the Prime Minister, urging the government to launch a comprehensive national inquiry into grooming gangs, and ensure that the findings and recommendations are made public and urgent action taken in the interest of transparency, justice, and preventing such horrific crimes in the future.

Today, we gather not only as colleagues, friends, or community leaders, but as fellow human beings compelled by empathy and a shared sense of justice.

We acknowledge the profound suffering endured by countless victims who have been subjected to the most horrific experiences imaginable. We stand with them. We stand with those who bravely seek justice, those whose voices have been silenced, and those whose wounds may never fully heal. In this moment of unity, I ask that we rise together in collective solidarity, offering our unwavering support and commitment to ensuring that all victims have the chance to receive the justice and compassion they deserve.

Public Health contract awarded to deliver services for children, young people, adults and families

The North Northamptonshire Public Health Team has led a rigorous commissioning process to identify the best providers to deliver Public Health services for children, young people and families, and an integrated, all-age sexual health service.

The contract has been awarded to the Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT).

Following consultation with the public and key stakeholders, the team has developed three new service models tailored to local needs in North Northamptonshire:

- Best Start in Life service for children aged 0 to 11 and their families.
- Thriving in Life Service for children and young people aged 11 to 19.
- An all-age Integrated Sexual Health Service.

North Northamptonshire Council will work in partnership with NHFT, Family Hubs and the REACH collaborative to ensure that the services meet the needs of the local population.

The REACH collaborative consists of five agencies who offer free, professional and confidential counselling for young people aged between five and 25 across North and West Northamptonshire. It is funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Public Health. The collaborative also provides additional support services, including drop-in sessions available Monday to Saturday and dedicated LGBTQI+ groups.

North Northamptonshire Youth Advisory Council elected

North Northamptonshire Council has appointed 10 young people as members of the newly formed Youth Advisory Council (YAC).

The Youth Advisory Council will promote the interests and needs of young people from their own localities, and the development of services and activities for young people across North Northamptonshire.

It will offer consultation services to the council, statutory and community organisations. It will also lead social action projects for young people alongside the UK Members of Youth Parliament, who will be elected next month.

The Youth Advisory Council has gained cross-party support from Cllr Scott Edwards, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, Cllr Zoe McGhee, Cllr Emily Fedorowycz and Cllr Melanie Coleman - all of whom have been proactive in the selection process.

The inaugural meeting of the Youth Advisory Council took place earlier this week and was an opportunity for all members to meet informally for the first time.

Next week, they will meet formally in the Council Chamber at Bowling Green Road in Kettering. This will be the first of the pre-scheduled monthly meetings where members will be able to discuss agenda items as presented to the council.

Further information on the [Youth Advisory Council](#) can be found on our website.

How to increase physical activity levels in North Northamptonshire on Executive agenda

The council's Executive members will meet next week to discuss a new Active Communities Strategic Framework designed to boost physical activity levels in the local area.

The report sets out the priorities for the next five years and will feed into and influence other plans across the council.

The vision for North Northamptonshire Active Communities is: "Creating cohesive communities where everyone can live active, happy and connected lives".

The Executive will be asked to approve and adopt three new strategies which sit within the framework:

- **Active Communities Strategy** which provides an overarching vision for the future of physical activity, leisure and sport in North Northamptonshire.
- **Leisure Facilities Strategy** which looks at planning for appropriate leisure facilities to meet the needs of the increasing population in the area.
- **Playing Pitch Strategy** which provides evidence on the supply and demand for sports pitches to ensure there is suitable provision in the future.

If approved, the strategies will provide evidence to help with gaining external funding, including S106 (developer) funding, to help make projects and the actions identified a reality.

Have your say on North Northamptonshire Council's spending plans

There is still time for you to have your say on the key new proposals which will set the council's spending agenda for the next financial year (2025/26).

It is important that our residents get the opportunity to comment on these proposals and it would be great to hear from as many people as possible from a variety of backgrounds.

- Please tell us your views by completing this questionnaire: [North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2025/26 Consultation](#).
- You can also write to Budget Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering NN16 8TL.

The council's draft budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2025/2026 and outline the medium-term financial forecast for the following three years.

The focus is on protecting and investing in local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty.

This consultation will close on Friday 24 January.

Please feel free to share the link with family and friends who may be interested in having their say.

NHS in Northamptonshire declares a critical incident

This article was originally published on the Integrated Care Northamptonshire website on Tuesday 7 January: [NHS in Northamptonshire declares a critical incident](#).

The NHS in Northamptonshire has been managing ongoing pressures since December and today it has reached the point where the decision has been taken to declare a critical incident.

The ongoing pressure is being seen mostly at Northampton General Hospital, Kettering General Hospitals and East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS). The combination of patient demand, increased attendances and admissions to hospitals due to viral infections including flu and wider environmental factors across the region, has led to this level of escalation.

Dr Naomi Caldwell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, NHS Northamptonshire ICB said "This has been one of the most challenging winters we have ever experienced in the NHS, and we have taken this step today to ensure we can continue to deliver a safe level of care to our local population, while we work together to resolve it.

"We are today asking local people to help us by choosing which service to access when they are unwell, and only calling 999 or attending A&E if it is a life-threatening emergency."

Maria Laffan, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Northamptonshire ICB added: "If you need urgent health support, please continue to come forward as needed and don't wait if your condition is becoming worse but please access alternative services where possible and continue to use 111.nhs.uk for 24-hour help and advice.

"We would like to reassure the public that all our emergency services remain open, and we thank them for their co-operation, patience and understanding."

Charity concerts for Teamwork Trust

Chair of the Council, Councillor Lora Lawman, is hosting two charity concerts.

All profits will go to her [nominated charity Teamwork Trust](#) - a Northamptonshire day service provider for adults with learning disabilities, autism and/or mild mental health issues.

Tickets (£15 per person) can be purchased directly via the links below.

Teamwork Trust Charity Concert headlined by Northants Sings Out (Friday 31 January - Core Theatre in Corby)

The concert will be headlined by the outstanding Britain Got Talent Finalists, Northants Sings Out Choir, performance from Deep Roots Tall Trees Choir (under direction of Gareth Fuller) and the Tresham Musical Student Choir. [Book tickets for Teamwork Trust Charity Concert](#)

Northants Rocks for Teamwork Trust (Sunday 9 March - Castle Theatre in Wellingborough)

The fantastic Rock Choir will headline a charity concert for Teamwork Trust at the Castle Theatre in Wellingborough. There will also be performances from Tresham Musical Student Choir, the brilliant Tenor Joshua Daniel and an opening song by the fabulously talented Catherine - a superb late Sunday afternoon of entertainment and showcasing local talent. [Book tickets for Northants Rocks for Teamwork Trust](#)

Northamptonshire names on New Year Honours List 2025

The honours system recognises people who have made achievements in public life and committed themselves to serving and helping the UK.

The [New Year Honours List 2025](#) includes several people from Northamptonshire:

- **Martin Pratt**, Executive Director, Supporting People, Camden Council, and Chair of Trustees, Young Camden Foundation. Awarded a CBE for services to children, to young people and to families in London.
- **Sandra Currie**, Chief Executive, Kidney Research UK. Awarded an OBE for services to sufferers of kidney disease.
- **John Smith**, Chief Executive Officer, GB Railfreight. Awarded an OBE for services to rail freight transport.
- **Duncan Farrington**, Farmer and Founder, Farrington Oils. Awarded an MBE for services to agriculture and to the food and drink industry.
- **Paul Newman**, Chief Executive, Greensleeves Care. Awarded an MBE for services to health and social care.
- **Reverend Dr John Smith**, Founder and Patron, Cransley Hospice. Awarded an MBE for services to palliative care both in hospice and in the community in North Northamptonshire.

Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our 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.

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub, [Your Voice Matters](#).

- [North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2025/26 Consultation](#). Closes 24 January.
- [Great Addington Parish Neighbourhood Plan Proposal](#). Closes 4 February.

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 16 January from 10am.
- **Budget Executive** - Thursday 6 February from 10am.
- Thursday 13 February from 10am.

Full Council

- **Budget Council** - Thursday 20 February from 10am.
- Thursday 6 March from 6pm.

The agenda and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

The meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube](#) channel.

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):

- [North Northamptonshire Council to pursue fast-track South Midlands devolution bid](#)
- [Public Health contract awarded to deliver services for children, young people, adults and families](#)
- [How to increase physical activity levels in North Northants on Executive agenda](#)
- [Over 300 reports of abandoned vehicles in North Northants in 2024](#)
- [North Northamptonshire Youth Advisory Council elected](#)

Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts and share our [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#) posts when you can.

Top Facebook posts so far this week (6 to 8 January)

- Residents in the Danesholme area of Corby may notice some blue dye in the waterways over the next few days. We'll be putting blue dye in the brook to help us understand water flows and causes of flooding. The dye is nothing to worry about and is non-toxic. (Views 41,249, Reach 19,206, Interactions 69)
- If you have been affected by the rain/sleet overnight, we have a page dedicated to flooding advice. Please avoid driving through flooded roads <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/flooding>. (Views 19,826, Reach 11,710, Interactions 21)
- Did you know car batteries need special disposal because? Like all batteries, they can cause fires in our refuse trucks. It's easy to drop off car batteries at any of our Household Waste Recycling Centres (tip) <https://ow.ly/Vbua50UycAB>. (Views 5,100, Reach 3,612, Interactions 12)

Top Tweets so far this week (6 to 8 January)

- Due to the ongoing cold weather, the SWEP will continue for two more nights. Report anyone of concern to: Rough Sleeping Team Hotline: 01536 464630. Rough Sleeping Team Email: roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk. Out of Hours Service: 0300 126 3000. (Impressions 472)
- If you have been affected by the rain/sleet overnight, we have a page dedicated to flooding advice. Please avoid driving through flooded roads <https://northnorthants.gov.uk/flooding>. (Impressions 349)
- Residents in the Danesholme area of Corby may notice some blue dye in the waterways over the next few days. We'll be putting blue dye in the brook to help us investigate water flows and causes of flooding. The dye is nothing to worry about and is non-toxic. (Impressions 327)

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have any ideas for items to include in future updates, please email me at executive@northnorthants.gov.uk.

With Best Wishes,
Jason

© North Northamptonshire Council 2025