



Introduction and Welcome!

I am really pleased to be able to introduce this week's update with such positive news. Last week, North Northamptonshire Council announced it was providing free school meals for the most vulnerable pupils during October half-term and Christmas.

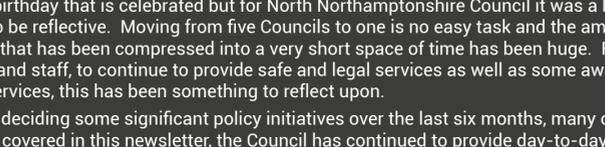
We felt that this was important because although thankfully we're all moving in a more positive direction with regards to the pandemic, we are not out of the woods yet. I am delighted that we can provide this additional support for the families and pupils who are in most need of our help. I also hope this helps reassure our residents in North Northamptonshire that we will always help when and where we can.

This week, we also made the important announcement that the Council will be paying its lowest paid staff no less than the Real Living Wage. This will provide a fairer pay rate for our dedicated and hardworking staff and I believe this is a major step in the right direction. We will be looking to implement this fairer minimum pay rate as soon as we practically can and we will be backdating it to 1 April 2021.

Last Friday, 1 October, North Northamptonshire Council was 6 months old! A lot has been achieved over the last 6 months but there is still plenty more to do! I am sure the next 6 months are going to be just as eventful. I have provided some more information further below about some of the volumes of services we have been providing during the first 6 months. I thought this would make an interesting break from the norm.

Last week was particularly busy because we had both a meeting of Council and the Executive. At the Executive, we agreed a report that will see future Council and Executive meetings being held at the Corby Cube. Area Planning Committee meetings will continue to be held in their current locations which we feel is important. The Council will be investing in better technology at the Corby Cube so that meetings can be live-streamed, along with better sound, video and hearing loops.

Council celebrates its first 6 months!



On Friday 1 October North Northamptonshire Council was 6 months old. I know this is not usually a birthday that is celebrated but for North Northamptonshire Council it was a key moment to be reflective. Moving from five Councils to one is no easy task and the amount of change that has been compressed into a very short space of time has been huge. For our members and staff, to continue to provide safe and legal services as well as some award-winning services, this has been something to reflect upon.

As well as deciding some significant policy initiatives over the last six months, many of which have been covered in this newsletter, the Council has continued to provide day-to-day services which make a real difference to people's lives.

It is sometimes easy to overlook some of the things the Council does so I have provided just a snapshot of the last 6 months below:

North Northamptonshire Council:

- Is supporting over 5,000 people through either provision of social care support, reablement or equipment.
- Commissions over 14,000 hours of care per week, providing vital support to older people with care and support needs.
- Inspected over 1,100 play areas for safety to keep children at play safe.
- Marked 32,000 metres of sports pitch for local grass roots football.
- Created 21 miles of new habitat and food for pollinators via our responsible verge maintenance campaign.
- One new outdoor gym has been installed and one new play area.
- Removed over 49 tons of litter from parks.
- Installed one new five-a-side football facility.
- Created 15 exotic meadows.
- Determined over 1,900 planning applications.
- Served over 220,000 visitors to our HWRCs.
- Collected over 12,000 tonnes of recycling from households in the first four months.
- Repaired over 6,000m² of road surface
- Adopted 598 km of new roads benefitting 96 properties.
- Repaired 425 traffic signal faults.
- Delivered 476 Bikeability courses to encourage and promote safe cycling.
- Fixed 7,452 defects on our roads and 2,165 on our footways and pavements.
- Help over 50 event organisers, assisted by the Environmental Health team to safely organise their events.
- Carried out over 600 food safety interventions by our Environmental Health Officers.
- Carried out 1,693 Covid-19 support and enforcement interventions.
- Investigated over 1,300 complaints of noise and nuisance.
- Completed 60 Disabled Facilities Grants, helping disabled people live independently in their homes.
- Our customer services team have taken over 140,000 phone calls, responded to over 16,000 emails, processed 20,000 e-forms and held 1,500 face-to-face appointments.
- Plus much more!



Central Area Growth Board

Those of you who follow the local government news may have seen an article in the national Local Government Chronicle (LGC) this week regarding the Council's involvement in a 'Central Area Growth Board'.

The Government approached the Central Area Growth Board (made up of six unitary authorities: North Northants, West Northants, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Luton) in the summer on a potential Growth Deal. The Central Growth Board was in place prior to vesting day and the then sovereign councils were involved prior to North Northamptonshire Council's existence.

The Leaders of the Central Area Growth Board approved an initial focus of the work of the growth deal, collating information related to the areas shown in the figure below:

- Immediate priority projects**
 - Infrastructure projects and others (e.g. skills projects) where delivery can be completed or underway by 2024
 - To include infrastructure projects supporting delivery of existing planned growth
- Support for 'Priority Economic' projects**
 - For longer term ambitious projects support for early delivery where already scoped or securing funding to help their development (Business Cases)
- Freedoms and flexibilities**
 - TBC, exploring freedoms and flexibilities around planning, public sector covenants
- Resourcing for deal delivery**
 - Funding for a Central Area director post and capacity to deliver deal

In order to make immediate progress with developing the content of the deal, the Chief Executive's Group (which supports the Leaders Group) agreed to undertake the first stage of this work. This first stage focused on reviewing the list of projects from the Central Area Infrastructure Assessment which had been concluded in Spring 2020.

This initial list was informed by the former sovereign authorities in the North plus Northamptonshire County Council. A number of schemes and projects came from a separate piece of work undertaken by the North to develop the North Northants Investment Framework (NNIF). Each of these projects were assessed with rigour.

Following this, there has been ongoing dialogue with government officials at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Leaders Group, and the Chief Executives Group in the Central Area. The aim has been to agree the final scope of the deal. This has to be both acceptable to government and provide the Central Area with an initial tranche of investment to progress key strategic schemes across the Central Area geography.

A finalised Prospectus is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in the next week and we are led to believe announcements would be at the end of the month and aligned to the government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

This deal, if agreed, is seen as an initial tranche of investment for the Central Area. It's hoped that it will pave the way for collaborative working across the Central Area and wider OxCam Arc area. This would lead to further investment from government in the future.

Consultation and engagement: October 2021 update

Listening to our partners and local communities is vitally important to the new Council. There are a number of ways this dialogue takes place, but one way is through the consultation activity of the Council. All formal public consultation are included on the Council's **Consultation Hub**. I wanted to provide you with an update of some of the consultation activity this is currently in progress and some of the activity that has recently taken place.

Activities closing soon

- **Bus back better: How can we improve bus services across North and West Northamptonshire?** We are seeking views on the improvements you would like to see in local bus services across both North and West Northamptonshire to help shape future plans for services across the area. The consultation closes on: 10 October 2021.
- **Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Have your say.** The Government has launched a consultation on future development across the Oxford Cambridge Arc which includes Northamptonshire. The consultation closes on: 12 October 2021

Recently launched consultation activities

- **Emergencies: How prepared are you?** As part of the annual #30Days30WaysUK campaign, September is Preparedness Month and we run an annual survey to find out how prepared people are for emergencies that may happen. The consultation closes on 31 Oct 2021

Recently closed activities

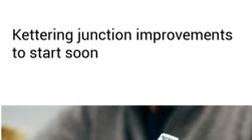
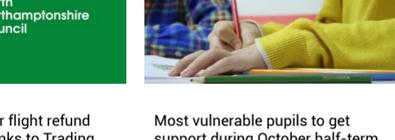
- **North Northamptonshire Draft Corporate Plan 2021-25 consultation:** North Northamptonshire Council is working on its first ever Corporate Plan which sets out the Council's vision, values, key commitments and priorities for the future. The activity closed on 3 October and feedback is currently being analysed.
- **What do you think we should look at (scrutinise) more closely?** North Northamptonshire Council sought views to help identify the key areas to look at more closely. Feedback provided will help Scrutiny Committee members to focus on the right areas for North Northamptonshire.

Sharing outcomes – We asked, you said, we did

- We also provide details of the outcomes of consultation activity that the Council has carried out. You can find out more here: [We Asked, You Said, We Did](#). If you have any questions about our consultation and engagement activities please contact us via CET@northnorthants.gov.uk

Media Releases

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

 <p>Kettering junction improvements to start soon</p>	 <p>North Northamptonshire Council to pay Real Living Wage</p>	 <p>NNC to host 'Big Community Clean-Up Day' in Wellingborough</p>
 <p>Public Health advice for parents and guardians of 10-19 year olds as COVID-19 cases rise again</p>	 <p>Smokers encouraged to take part in Stoptober 2021</p>	 <p>North Northamptonshire Council Executive: September 30 meeting</p>
 <p>North Northants small grants can help transform communities</p>	 <p>Compensation for flight refund fraud victims thanks to Trading Standards</p>	 <p>Most vulnerable pupils to get support during October half-term and Christmas</p>
 <p>COVID-19 cases rise again this week and advice for household members of secondary school age and above</p>	 <p>Residents reminded to reply to canvass request</p>	

Social media: Top stories

I know I have said it before but there really is no better way to stay up to date with what the Council is doing than by following us on social media. I know a lot of people find social media daunting, but it does not have to be.

If anyone would like to learn more about how to use social media but is not too sure how, let me know and I will arrange for a familiarisation session to be provided to help you get up and running. All you need is a smart phone and access to either the Apple Store or Google Play on your phone. Most have these pre-loaded on them.

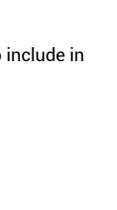
Week commencing 27th September

Facebook: (Measured by Impressions and Engagements)

- Today we are 6 months old – 6,948 reach, 668 post clicks
- Do you want to work for a leading fashion brand located in the area? – 5,999 reach, 122 post clicks
- Catch up on our latest stories from across the Council – 3,455 reach, 93 Post clicks

Twitter:

- Full Council meeting – 2,519 impressions, 247 engagements
- Debate on the move of the start time of Council – 2,344 impressions, 44 engagements
- Advice on disposal of face coverings – 1,545 impressions, 20 engagements



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

With Best Wishes,
Jason

