

# Leader's Update

7 March 2025

Issue: 95

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## Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

Today's edition includes:

- Successful allocations of secondary school places in North Northamptonshire.
- Work continues to improve highways network across North Northamptonshire.
- Council continues climate change work with further projects in the pipeline.
- Transformation of £1 million Kettering 3G football pitch and pavilion project kicks off.
- Cash grant will help serve up refurb of tennis courts in Kettering.
- Corby East Midlands International Pool recognised as UK's first flagship site for outstanding delivery of aquatic rehabilitation.
- Launch of first Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- North Northamptonshire Council selected as an early adopter for new Government initiative.
- Celebrating women in small business.
- Look out for our brand-new street art-inspired adverts.
- Proposals to remove trees and vegetation as part of Corby Towns Fund project.
- Council trials out of hours service for reporting unauthorised encampments.
- Launch of North Northamptonshire e-scooter trial newsletter.

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!

## Successful allocations of secondary school places in North Northamptonshire

Children starting Year 7 in England and Wales in September 2025 found out about school places this week.

A total of 4,216 secondary school places for this academic year have been allocated to pupils across North Northamptonshire. This shows a consistent trend in the number of applications received each year in the last three years (4,292 in 2024 and 4,225 in 2023).

Over 95.5% of applicants have received a place at one of their preference schools.

- First preference: 83.16%.
- Second preference: 9.98%.
- Third preference: 2.42%.

The online portal remains the most popular method of applying, with 99% of applications submitted this way in 2025.

Families who applied for their secondary school place online before the closing date of 31 October 2023 can check their offer online at [School Admissions](#).

Parents have a statutory right to appeal (through the independent admission appeals process) against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied.

The next round of secondary school place allocations (for late applicants) will take place in April.

Primary and Junior school allocations will be announced on Wednesday 16 April.

## **Work continues to improve highways network across North Northamptonshire**

North Northamptonshire Council and our highways maintenance provider, Kier, are starting to ramp up the area-wide maintenance of the road network.

This week saw a trial of the 'RoadMender' technique on Boundary Road in Wellingborough. This method of pothole repair is designed to create strong, longer-lasting repairs which aims to reduce the need for repeat work while minimising disruption for road users. It works by using a boiler to melt bags of Elastomac, which is used to repair poor road surface areas and potholes, to produce a permanent, heat-sealed and seamless repair. A 2x1m patch takes around 8-12 minutes to complete and requires only a minimum amount of preparation, resulting in almost zero waste. Patches can also be joined together to repair larger areas of failed surfacing.

The new technology aims to reduce carbon emissions, minimise disruption to the public and traffic, and facilitate a faster repair. It repairs up to 60 sqm of road defects a day compared to 16sqm using traditional road repair methods.

The Highways Team has identified several areas in the Corby area which would be suitable for the Roadmender including Rockingham Hill, the roundabout near RS Components and Phoenix Parkway, with other areas in Corby and Desborough being considered. In the short-term, Rockingham Hill and the roundabout near RS Components are both receiving urgent repairs, following feedback from residents on the condition of the roads in both areas.

You can [Report potholes or a highway problem](#) on our website.

## **Council continues climate change work with further projects in the pipeline**

Having committed the £1 million earmarked to support our ambition to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, projects continue to progress at pace.

In recent weeks, a project to reduce the carbon emissions at Redwell Leisure Centre and a proposal to assess our supply chain emissions have been given the internal go-ahead. The works at Redwell Leisure Centre in Wellingborough will see 273 halogen light fittings replaced with LED alternatives, this will reduce energy consumption and costs. The supply chain assessment will help quantify our wider carbon footprint in relation to emissions from our supply chain (Scope 3 emissions). The analysis will identify key areas for improvement and how we can actively reduce such emissions.

Other projects that have been delivered include the purchase of 300 battery operated tools for the council's Ground Maintenance Team, funding to support carbon literacy training for staff, and work to support a Public Sector Decarbonisation bid which leveraged £3.8 million in external funding.

These projects follow on from the recent adoption of the first [Climate Change strategy](#) for North Northamptonshire last month which outlines our vision, approach, and key areas of focus to address the effects of climate change locally over the next five years. Feedback from stakeholder interviews and the formal public consultation last Autumn was used to shape the strategy.

Now the strategy has been approved, funds will be committed to help ensure that the development of a roadmap to net zero action plan is delivered at pace.

Glamis Hall was awarded £31,000 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for local Green Skills training. A variety of courses themed around carbon reduction are now available to book. The council has been awarded £2,895,000 from the Local Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to install a network of charge points across

North Northamptonshire - one of the first areas in the country to receive funding. We also received £552,859 from the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant to upgrade traffic signal systems and replace unreliable and obsolete equipment.

## **Transformation of £1 million Kettering 3G football pitch and pavilion project kicks off**

The construction phase of works to replace the football pitch at the Thurston Drive (Kettering) site started this week, marking a key milestone following the award of £1.021 million transformational project funding.

Funding for the 3G pitch and refurbished pavilion, comprised a Northamptonshire Football Association award of £50,000, a North Northamptonshire Council award of £150,000, and a Premier League, FA and Government's Football Foundation award of £810,330 through The Lionesses Futures Fund.

As with every Lionesses Futures Fund site, the new pitch at Kettering will prioritise access for women and girls through reserved peak-time slots and welcoming changing facilities to create a best-in-class experience.

The initial works start with the replacement of the current artificial football pitch with a new state-of-the-art 3G all-weather astro turf pitch, equipped with new fencing, LED floodlights and a spectator area.

The construction work on the pavilion is expected to begin next month. Built in the 1980s, it supports the Kettering Town Harriers Athletics Club on the Thurston Drive (Kettering) site and users of the football pitch. It will be improved with new changing facilities, an athletics club room and a café.

## **Cash grant will help serve up refurb of tennis courts in Kettering**

Working in partnership with Kettering Tennis Club, the council has received confirmation of funding to carry out work at the Northampton Road pavilion thanks to a £68,882 grant from FCC Communities Foundation.

The money will be used to resurface the four outdoor courts, provide outdoor seating and refurbish the community room within the pavilion.

The council's application would not have been possible without the third-party contribution of £7,404.82 from Kettering Tennis Club's own funds.

FCC Communities Foundation is a not-for-profit business that awards grants for community projects through the Landfill Communities Fund.

## **Corby East Midlands International Pool recognised as UK's first flagship site for outstanding delivery of aquatic rehabilitation**

[Corby East Midlands International Pool](#) has been given the seal of approval for its delivery of aquatic rehabilitation by the social enterprise [Good Boost](#).

Good Boost works in partnership with community, leisure and health teams across the country to create community-delivered therapeutic exercise and wellbeing programmes.

The North Northamptonshire Council-run facility has been awarded the flagship status by Good Boost, recognising its outstanding success in delivering therapeutic aquatic exercise programs that enhance physical and mental wellbeing.

The Good Boost sessions, offered at Corby's pool, aim to improve people's lives by getting them moving with gentle water-based exercise in a fun and social environment, so that looking after their health becomes a pleasure, not a chore.

The sessions, which use waterproof tablet devices for guidance, are individually tailored to allow individuals to progress at their own pace and have been built by experts to reduce pain and improve strength and mobility.

## **Launch of first Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

North Northamptonshire's [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS) was officially introduced at an event this week at Stanwick Lakes, with council members, environmental experts and other key partners in attendance.

The LNRS serves as a blueprint for how biodiversity can be protected, restored and enhanced across the area. It links green spaces to improve wildlife movement and strengthen the area's resilience to climate change.

Through collaboration, it is intended that this strategy will help guide all in North Northamptonshire on ways to support nature recovery. It will provide landowners with options for what they could do on their land, and to better target investment and funding. The remit of the strategy is not to tell people what they can do, or change what land is designated for, but will inform decision-making through location and design of land use changes.

We have collaborated with local communities, environmental bodies and stakeholders to produce this strategy. The strategy went out to public consultation in late 2024 and focuses on key areas within North Northamptonshire, including Rockingham Forest, Nene Valley and Ise Valley. Priorities include restoring ancient woodlands, protecting internationally important wetlands and supporting species such as the red-shanked carder bee, hazel dormouse, water vole and the curlew.

This initiative is part of a broader national effort driven by the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021, which mandates the creation of LNRSs across the country. In total, 48 responsible authorities are preparing strategies that will cover every place in England.

Natural England, the Government's adviser on nature, has a statutory quality assurance role and is working with all 48 local authorities to ensure that every strategy meets high standards.

The launch of the LNRS is just the beginning. Our immediate next step is to use it as a foundation for applying for funding, including grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other key sources.

Working in partnership with local environmental organisations and local stakeholders, we aim to begin implementing key actions identified in the strategy.

## **North Northamptonshire Council selected as an early adopter for new Government initiative**

It has been announced that North Northamptonshire Council, alongside eight other councils across the country, has been selected by Government to take part in a pilot scheme designed to reduce the number of empty retail units.

Following Executive approval last month, the council has now officially joined the Government's High Street Rental Auction Early Adopters programme - a scheme that was introduced as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Now that North Northamptonshire Council has been included in the Early Adopters programme, a working group will be set up to scope out a policy which will then be considered by the Executive later in 2025.

Council officers will also work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government throughout the process and work through the next phase to identify high streets in North Northamptonshire to designate for High Street Rental Auctions.

## **Celebrating women in small business**

Tomorrow is International Women's Day (Saturday 8 March). This year, the Hi Street campaign is celebrating the female-led businesses at Nene Court in Wellingborough.

With over 90% of its businesses run by women, Nene Court is a fantastic example of female entrepreneurship in action. This year's campaign theme, 'Accelerate Action', highlights the women who are driving change, growing their businesses and making a real impact on our local economy.

The Hi Street Team spoke to 15 fantastic female business owners about their journeys, challenges and successes, and have captured some photos of them and their businesses in action. The features are being shared on the Hi Street [Facebook](#) page and [Instagram](#) this week.

As part of the celebration, we're also running a giveaway competition for a £25 voucher to spend at The Bee Friendly Store, one of Nene Court's unique independent businesses. Keep an eye out on our social media pages for details on how to enter.

Let's celebrate the women who are making a difference in our local high streets and surrounding areas and support them. Not just on International Women's Day but all year round.

## **Look out for our brand-new street art-inspired adverts**

Our Hi Street campaign has taken a bold and creative step with the rollout of vibrant street art-inspired advertising, now appearing on bus shelters and advertising sites around North Northamptonshire. This initiative, designed in collaboration with Kettering Street Art, with designs created by talented local artist Sally Leach, aims to capture attention, spread positivity and encourage people to shop local, support local and love local.

The designs feature a colourful, uplifting, and playful street art style. They use eye-catching visuals and messages to help inspire people to explore their local towns, discover independent businesses and embrace the unique shopping experience our high streets offer.

New lamp post banner adverts in the same style are also being installed in Kettering town centre this Spring. There will be bold and engaging designs displayed around the town, reinforcing the shop local message in a highly visible way. We hope to roll this initiative out to other towns across North Northamptonshire in the future.

The campaign is made possible through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which supports projects that drive economic growth and community engagement. By investing in creative and impactful marketing, we are helping to boost footfall, support local traders and promote the fantastic small businesses that make our high streets unique.

For more updates, keep an eye on our Hi Street [Facebook](#) page and [Instagram](#).

## **Proposals to remove trees and vegetation as part of Corby Towns Fund project**

Works are continuing to deliver the Corby Station link road project, which aims to improve the public realm and provide an attractive and safe pedestrian/cycle connection between the town centre and the train station.

The scheme has been designed to avoid the removal of mature trees along the route as far as possible, to preserve the street scene. However, some trees have been identified for removal and North Northamptonshire Council are currently consulting on the plans.

It is proposed that alongside removal works, a programme is put in place for a planting within the scheme but also for other spaces across Corby.

The maximum number of trees identified for potential removal are 40, this will be continually evaluated as works progress and only trees which are identified as absolutely necessary will be removed, if the plans go ahead. Of those trees proposed for removal, a significant number are already dead, posing a safety hazard to pavement and road users, or are affected by Ash Dieback disease and need to be removed as part of our council wide programme to tackle this national challenge.

For more information, please read the full press release: [Proposals to remove trees and vegetation as part of Corby Towns Fund project](#).

## **Council trials out of hours service for reporting unauthorised encampments**

The council is undertaking a trial of an out of hours service to attend to reports of unauthorised encampments within the local area.

Unauthorised encampments are temporary accommodation, such as caravans and other vehicles or tents, on land without the landowner or occupier's consent and constituting trespass. Residents can now report unauthorised encampments on council-owned or managed land outside of our normal (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) working hours.

The trial is being managed by the Northamptonshire Traveller Unit (NTU) and uses the services of a contractor.

Out of hours, any unauthorised encampments that are reported will be attended. The contractor will then conduct a full assessment, including statutory health and welfare checks on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council. This will enable the NTU to make a prompt decision on how to manage the encampment the next working day. It will also allow the NTU to refer or signpost any occupants requiring health or welfare support to partner agencies more quickly.

The out of hours service is currently being trialled between the hours of 5pm and 8pm on weekdays, and between 8:40am and 5pm during weekends and Bank Holidays.

For more details of the service and how to report unauthorised encampments, please visit the [Northamptonshire Traveller Unit](#) (NTU) page.

## **Launch of North Northamptonshire e-scooter trial newsletter**

This week saw the launch of the [North Northamptonshire e-scooter trial newsletter](#).

The newsletter provides updates on the latest news, developments and insights from our e-scooter trial operated by Voi Technology.

Voi e-scooters are available in Corby, Kettering/Burton Latimer, Rushden/Higham Ferrers and Wellingborough.

The first issue includes articles on:

- Background
- Record Breaking Ridership in 2024
- Maintaining the Fleet
- Meeting Demand for Greater Flexibility
- Expanding Operations to Serve More Riders
- Sustainability Impact
- Ongoing Improvements and Parking Action
- Riding Habits and Key Locations
- Awards
- Next Steps.

## Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other 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](#).

- [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-29 Feedback - Have your say](#). Closes 13 March 2025
- [Local Transport Plan - Baseline report](#). Closes 23 March 2025
- [Rural health and wellbeing needs assessment](#). Closes 25 March 2025
- [Active Communities in the Corby area](#). Closes 30 March 2025
- [Draft Housing Strategy 2025-2030 - Have your say](#). Closes 11 April 2025

## Forthcoming meetings

### Executive

- Thursday 13 March from 10am.
- Thursday 17 April from 10am.

### Full Council

- Thursday 22 May 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 selected as an early adopter for new government initiative](#)
- [Corby East Midlands International Pool recognised as UK's first flagship site for outstanding delivery of aquatic rehabilitation](#)
- [Executive Members to consider North Northamptonshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024 - 2029 at next week's meeting](#)
- [Executive to discuss annual inflationary uplifts for commissioned adult social care and support providers](#)
- [Proposals to remove trees and vegetation as part of Corby Towns Fund project](#)
- [Wellingborough and Rushden area walking and cycling routes on Executive agenda](#)
- [Works to improve Sywell reservoir on Executive agenda](#)
- [Ambitious strategy for economic growth across North Northamptonshire to be considered at Executive](#)
- [North Northamptonshire launches region's first nature recovery strategy](#)
- [Council continues climate change work with further projects in the pipeline](#)
- [Transformation of £1 million Kettering 3G football pitch and pavilion project kicks off](#)
- [Work continues to improve highways network across North Northants](#)
- [Successful allocations of secondary school places in North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Statement on the Toxic Town series](#)
- [North Northamptonshire Council appoints contractor for Cornerstone roof replacement project](#)
- [Council trials out of hours service for reporting unauthorised encampments](#)
- [Cash grant will help serve up refurb of tennis courts in North Northamptonshire town](#)

## Social media: Top stories

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

### Top Facebook posts so far this week (3 to 5 March)

- Work continues to improve highways network across North Northants: <https://ow.ly/2I4650V9bV4> North Northamptonshire Highways (Views 28,412, Reach 14,367, Interactions 74)
- The construction phase of works to replace the football pitch at the Thurston Drive Kettering site has launched today, 3 March 2025 following the award of £1.021 million transformational project funding. <https://ow.ly/pAJF50V9iaA> #Kettering3GFootballPitch (Views 21,043, Reach 11,053, Interactions 49)
- Notice of work - Line marking to disabled bays at All Hallows Church, White Horse Yard Car Park in Wellingborough will take place on Monday 10 March, from 7:30am to 9:30am. The car park will remain open, but access to disabled bays will be temporarily restricted. (Views 14,806, Reach 8,941, Interactions 17)

### Top Tweets so far this week (3 to 5 March)

- Are you having a cracking #ShroveTuesday breakfast or planning a stack of pancakes for supper? Don't forget to put the eggshells in your food waste bin (if you have that service) or they can go in your compost. We're not yoking! #pancakeday (Impressions 343)
- Looking for a new job? Have you considered a career in local government? Are you the final piece of the puzzle to make our team the best it can be? Check out our latest vacancies, and we look forward to welcoming you to NNC! <https://careers.northnorthants.gov.uk> (Impressions 280)
- The construction phase of works to replace the football pitch at the Thurston Drive Kettering site has launched today, 3 March 2025 following the award of £1.021 million transformational project funding. <https://ow.ly/zutX50V9iaB> #Kettering3GFootballPitch (Impressions 256)

## 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](mailto:executive@northnorthants.gov.uk).

With Best Wishes,  
Jason