

# Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 15 | 27 July 2023



Welcome to the latest Town and Parish Briefing, bringing you a 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 <a href="mailto:communications@westnorthants.gov.uk">communications@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

# Have your say on future waste strategy

Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

We are asking people living and working in West Northamptonshire to have their say in a consultation which will help shape the future of bin collections and other waste services across the area.

Our Council collects and empties more than 21 million wheelie bins, sacks and caddies every year, as well as providing street cleansing services to keep our areas clean and green. Our recycling centres, meanwhile, receive more than 500,000 visits from West Northamptonshire residents each year.

Since we became a new authority in April 2021, we have made several changes to align our three local waste services across West Northamptonshire and deliver improvements for residents and businesses. We want to continue improving the fairness and consistency of the services we provide to residents and businesses in the area, and reduce the impact the waste we collect and how we collect it may have on our environment.



Services also need to align with Government proposals to change waste policies nationally, so the development of a West Northants Resources and Waste Strategy will set out our long-term vision.

People's views will play a key role in creating the new strategy and are being asked to have their say on a range of services including:

- Collections of general waste, garden, food and recycling
- Waste prevention and reuse opportunities
- Household waste and recycling centres
- Street cleaning
- Clinical waste services
- Commercial waste
- Collections of bulky household furniture.

I would encourage everyone to take part in this important consultation, the feedback from which will help us shape the overall West Northamptonshire Resources and Waste.

The online consultation will take place until 21 August and <u>people can have their say on our</u>

Consultation Hub

## **Please join Community Governance Review**

As you will be aware, the LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) has been conducting a ward boundary review for our Council.

These changes will impact on some parish councils whose boundaries no longer align with our new wards. If a parish boundary is not aligned with a Council ward, this may result in the need for parish wards to be created to enable the election to be conducted in areas which fall outside the council ward boundary. This can lead to additional expenses for parishes in the conduct of elections.

To meet this challenge we are preparing a Community Governance Review, allowing Town and Parish Councils an opportunity to put forward proposals to change their boundaries and the number of members. It also allows for the possibility of merging with an adjacent parish or parish meeting.



### Responding to the review

We have written to all town and parish councils recently, to ask you to express an interest in being part of that review.

In order to be a part of the Community Governance Review, you must email your views to <a href="mailto:electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk">electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk</a> no later than 18 August.

We are particularly asking parishes to consider the following:

- Are there any parish meetings which should be incorporated into a parish council?
- Should any parish councils be merged with another parish council or parish meeting?
- Are any changes required to the existing boundaries of a parish to better reflect local communities? (this may be particularly relevant in areas where there has been housing development for instance.)
- Are there any parish councils that should be renamed to better reflect the communities they represent?

Please note that the following is not within the scope of this review:

- The ward boundaries of West Northamptonshire Council
- Parliamentary boundaries
- The conduct or membership of individual parish councils or meetings.

We will start preparing for the Community Governance Review as soon as our Council's new ward boundaries are confirmed, and will draw up proposed terms of reference for the review.

#### The proposed timetable is as follows:

- 1 August 2023: Final decision of the Boundary Review
- 18 August 2023: Deadline for requests from Parishes for Community Governance Reviews
- 28 September 2023: Report to Council to commence Community Governance Review
- 28 September 2024: The Community Governance Review must be completed by this date. The review will require West Northamptonshire Council to draw up proposals as to how the boundaries will be redrawn and then to carry out public consultation in relation to those proposals before a final decision is reached. A formal decision is made by full Council to amend the boundaries.
- By December 2024: Polling Station Review for new wards and parishes
- January May 2025: 2025 Election delivery underway

Visit our <u>Consultation Hub for more information about the Community Governance Review</u>

National Guidance on the Community Governance Review process can be found here

### **New customer services hub for Daventry**

### Cllr Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Services

Our new Customer Services Hub at the Abbey Centre in Daventry has opened its doors to the public.

Based in St John's Square behind the town's leisure centre, the hub replaces the former reception area at the Lodge Road offices.

The Customer Services Hub at the Abbey Centre houses various frontline teams across the council, including customer services, revenues and benefits, housing, adult social care, and children's services.

Residents visiting the Abbey Centre can look forward to a wide range of services and benefits, such as receiving advice on housing options, council tax matters, and more.

The Centre also offers LibraryPlus services and opportunities to meet with partners who can provide money advice, legal assistance, or support for health and wellbeing.



The Council, alongside our partner agencies, remains committed to offering the highest level of service to ensure that the needs of our community are met effectively and efficiently.

# Say hello to our customer services team

#### Cllr Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Our Customer Services Team visits locations across West Northamptonshire on a monthly basis, offering advice and guidance to residents on a range of issues.

We are grateful for your support in promoting these events to residents, but Town and Parish Council Clerks, and your local councillors, are also very welcome to attend for help with any casework or other queries you may have.

### Sessions coming up over the next month include:

- Brackley Library (Manor Road, NN13 6AJ): Fri 28 July from 10am to midday.
- Brixworth Village Hall (Holcot Rd, NN6 9BS)
   Weds 9 August from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.
- Southbrook Community Centre (Hood Road, NN11 4JS) Weds 16 August from 1pm to 2.15pm.
- Moulton Library Plus (Moulton Reedings, NN3 7AX): Fri 28 July from 10am to midday.
- Roade Community Larder (Roade Village Hall, Bailey Brooks Lane NN7 2LS): Mon 21 August 1.15pm to 2.15pm.



View listings for all of the drop-in sessions on our website

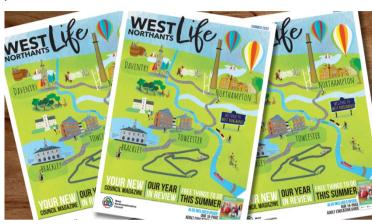
# **Magazine delivered to West Northants homes**

### Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

Our Council's new magazine, providing important news and information about our services, has been landing on the doormats of homes across West Northamptonshire.

Designed and produced in-house by the council's communications team to keep costs down, the first edition of *West Northants Life* offers a summer what's on guide, promoting some of the areas fantastic visitor attractions, events and activities.

Other articles in the summer publication include a review of the Council's activities and spending over the last year, top tips to help people recycle more and waste less, a look at recent investment in our highways, and a focus on some of the exciting regeneration schemes that are taking place across West Northamptonshire.



The new magazine also incorporates the Northamptonshire Adult Learning brochure, and has been distributed to homes across West Northamptonshire via Royal Mail. Copies have also be made available at libraries across West Northamptonshire.

Many of us live in a digital world these days, but we know a number of residents still value or rely on the printed word. This new magazine offers a way for everyone to find out more about the many things our council is doing across West Northamptonshire and the services and support that is available.

The magazine is also contributing to our efforts to be more sustainable, incorporating the existing Adult Learning brochure which would otherwise be distributed separately into a single publication. It provides an opportunity for us to share important information to all residents about a range of services, without the need to produce additional printed materials.

It is also printed on recycled paper, and delivered by Royal Mail alongside their existing postal deliveries, minimising the need for additional distribution methods.

West Northants Life will be published twice a year, with the second edition due out in the winter.

Copies of the magazine are also available for download at <a href="https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/magazine">www.westnorthants.gov.uk/magazine</a> and town and parish councils are invited to share this link via their communications channels

Residents who would like to stay more regularly updated on the council's activities are encouraged to subscribe to the fortnightly e-newsletter at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/newsletter

# Planning service holding summer focus weeks

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

Our Planning Service is holding two focus weeks this summer, as they continue their aim of achieving and maintaining statutory timescales consistently by the end of the year.

The first took place last week, and a second is planned for the week beginning 31 July, when members of the team will concentrate on the validation of applications submitted since mid-May.

The team has a target of clearing 150 applications from the total backlog of about 350 during the first focus week, and all members of the team will be working on this.

In the second focus week, the target will be to clear the remaining backlog, with the aim of beginning to meet our target of validating all applications within 10 working days of submission to the Council. Performance on determining applications once validated continues to be well ahead of national targets.

# **Progress for Brackley skate park project**

#### Cllr Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance

Brackley Town Council has taken a step closer to delivering its planned skate park after agreement was reached at the recent Cabinet meeting for a lease to be progressed.

Plans for the facility were approved in April this year and full details <u>are available on the planning pages of WNC's website.</u>

Brackley Town Council islooking forward to developing this long awaited facility, which would be constructed on land to the west of Brackley Leisure Centre, in Candleford Close.

Granting Brackley Town Council a lease on this land will enable it to bring forward a range of community facilities.

I have no doubt that young people can't wait for the development to be brought forward, and it's a fantastic looking design with a range of elements to help blend it into the landscape.



It will also complement other nearby facilities like Brackley Leisure Centre and recreation ground, which is home to Brackley Athletic Football Club.

### Agreement over shared use of park pavilion

#### Cllr Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance

Our Council has agreed to a shared use of Becket's Park Pavilion in Northampton to give it a new future supporting use of the park.



The decision will mean the creation of a new café whilst the voluntary group, Buddies of Becket's (BOB), is able to formalise its use to support enjoyment of the park.

The café operator is currently assessing the extent of the work required to make this plan a reality.

This plan offers the best chance of protecting the building for the future, while creating something that's of benefit to the users of Becket's Park.

We're extremely happy that we've been able to find a way of supporting Buddies of Becket's while potentially creating a new enterprise at the heart of one of our wonderful open spaces.

I'm sure if a café does open at the pavilion in the future, it will be quite a draw for students from the nearby University of Northampton, as well as the thousands of other residents who use the park each year.

We know this project has taken some time to reach its conclusion and we're incredibly grateful to all involved for their patience.

As Members may be aware, the pavilion is a charming 19th century-style building which was previously used as a café and kiosk, before it fell into disrepair following closure.

## **Accord shows commitment to sustainability**

#### Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

We have reinforced our commitment to sustainability by **signing the Northampton Sustainability Accord**.

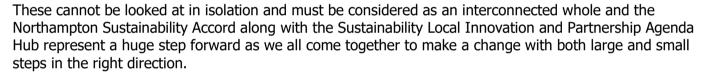
The Accord, unveiled following the University of Northampton Sustainability Summit held in May, brings together a range of stakeholders including local and national businesses, governmental organisations, and third-sector businesses in a collaborative effort to transition towards more sustainable practices.

The Northampton Sustainability Accord recognises the significance of collective action in addressing shared sustainability challenges. It aims to establish a framework for collaboration among stakeholders to achieve mutually agreed sustainability goals.

We are committed to achieving Net Zero for our own emissions by 2030 and Net Zero West Northants emissions by 2045, and the Northampton Sustainability Accord reflects our deep and shared commitment to sustainability, as well as our dedication to the work we need to do together to address our shared sustainability challenges.

Like many other organisations across the country, we are aware of our climate impact and are dedicated to changing our relationship with the environment to make a difference today, and for future generations.

Sustainability goes beyond climate change, and the environment, it encompasses all forms of development and activity, and therefore to be truly sustainable we must look at how we are developing socially, economically, and environmentally.



All signatories share a common ambition to integrate sustainability principles into their operations, practices, and decision-making processes, acknowledging the urgent need to minimize environmental impacts, promote social responsibility, and drive economic prosperity through sustainable practices.



Our Council's annual canvass is underway, during which every property in West Northamptonshire will receive a communication via email or letter.

As Town and Parish colleagues will be aware, the annual canvass is a legal requirement, enabling the council to maintain a current and precise electoral register.

Residents who have provided their email addresses to the council will have received branded emails from our Council next week. The emails will come from <a href="mailto:electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk">electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk</a> and contain step-by-step instructions on how to check, confirm and/or change your details online.

Anyone who does not respond within the timescale will receive a reminder letter. Some properties will also receive a form to complete. We are urging people respond to the email/ form as soon as possible, to save the cost of sending a reminder. Anyone not currently registered to vote can register online at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/registertovote">www.gov.uk/registertovote</a>

Those who do not receive a letter or canvass form will receive a letter by post in early August.

We are advising residents to be cautious of phishing, scam, or spam emails, and reminding them that Council will never request personal or banking details via email. Anyone with concerns should contact the helpline at 0300 126 7000. Find out more information about the Canvass



# **Spotlight on vital Reablement West service**

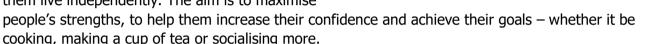
#### Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

I was very pleased to join Stuart Lackenby, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of People Services, recently on a visit to meet colleagues at Reablement West.

It was an opportunity to chat to colleagues and find out more about how the service received its CQC 'Good' rating, as well as hear about their journey towards their aim of achieving the highest 'Outstanding' rating.

As Town and Parish colleagues may be aware, the Reablement West service provides vital care and support to people upon discharge from hospital, to enable them to continue to live confidently and independently in their own homes.

Each person receives an individual need assessment, to ensure the correct care and support is in place to help them live independently. The aim is to maximise



Working with this focus helps to reduce the likeliness of hospital re-admission, supporting the individual to 'live their best life'.

The team is made up of Reablement Support Officers, team leaders and schedulers, who work closely as a multi-disciplinary team with other key partners such as therapists, NHS and NHFT partners, GPs, mental health teams and others.

I would like to say a huge thank you to colleagues at Reablement West for taking the time to show us around, and telling us about the work they do and the brilliant difference they make. The dedication and commitment from the team was really obvious and I was so impressed with how the team work. There is no surprise that the team were rated 'Good' in their latest CQC inspection last year!

The team shared with me how they are looking at next steps to reach the 'Outstanding' rating and it is encouraging that despite being good, they continue to look at ways to improve. It was a brilliant visit and I look forward to hearing more about their progress.

The service is currently recruiting for Reablement Support Officers. This rewarding role helps people to set and meet their goals, as well as supporting them to become more independent by helping them connect with their local community. **People can find out more on our recruitment pages** 



### **Emergency services day coming to Daventry**

People of all ages can enjoy a day of entertainment and demonstrations at an emergency services fun day in Daventry this summer.

The event will take place on Wednesday, 9 August, at Danetre and Southbrook Learning Village in Hawke Road between 10am and 2pm, and aims to provide members of the community with an opportunity to find out more about the work of our Emergency Services and the West Northants Community Safety Partnership.

Visitors can enjoy a range of fun activities, from battling in sumo suits, to having a go at hockey, and viewing demonstrations. There will also be a range of stalls and games, free refreshments, and a chance to see police and fire vehicles up-close.

# **Annual report provides an overview of Council**

#### Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

I was very pleased earlier this month to present our Annual Report, providing a comprehensive overview of our achievements, challenges, and performance during our second year as a unitary authority. Over the past 12 months, the council has faced numerous challenges in the wake of significant cost-of-living rises, amidst an uncertain international and economic climate.

Addressing the cost-of-living difficulties faced by our communities was one of the council's top priorities throughout the year 2022/23 and, working closely with partners, we made extensive efforts to provide vital support to residents in need.

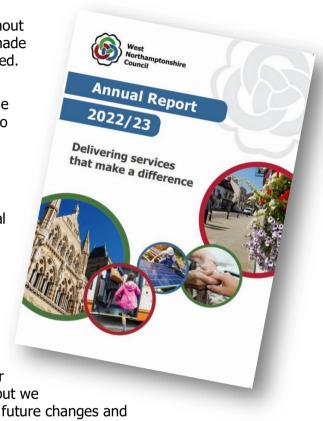
We have also dealt with a multitude of significant issues, including assisting in the resettlement of families fleeing the war in Ukraine, leading the county's emergency response to the loss of our Queen, and taking proactive measures to tackle emerging financial challenges in future budgets that could not have been predicted this time last year.

Despite these challenges, we have continued to make substantial progress towards our ambitions, and the Annual Report outlines the significant milestones we reached in 2022/23.

Recognising there is more work to be done, the Report also talks about our priorities for the upcoming year, reflecting our ongoing mission to provide even better services that enable residents to lead their best lives.

We have made significant strides in our second year, but we recognise that there is more work to be done in our third year. There will be challenges ahead without doubt, but we are confident that we will be able to respond effectively to future changes and challenges.

The report is also available to download on our website



# Payment pages updated to improve experience

#### Cllr Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance

We have updated our payment pages in a bid to improve efficiency and customer experience as well as offer enhanced security to residents making online payments.

Residents will notice some changes to our payment pages and payment URLs as we continue our rebranding work following the local government reform in 2021.

We are committed to continuously improving our services to better serve residents, and these updates have been carefully designed to enhance the overall customer experience by providing a smooth, convenient, reliable and secure payment process while reinforcing our dedication to safeguarding resident's personal and financial information.

While these updates may bring visual changes to the payment process, we want to assure our residents that these modifications aim to enhance security and provide an optimal user experience as we continue to improve our services and ensure that we keep on top of emerging changes in the digital landscape.

### Work on new transport model is set to start

#### Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

Our Council has teamed up with North Northamptonshire Council to start work on a new version of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model.

The model uses a computer simulation to anticipate traffic flows and is used to inform strategic planning where new developments or major roads are proposed.

It was last rebuilt in 2015, since when technology has moved on significantly, meaning a full overhaul is needed to ensure the data it produces is as accurate as possible.

Each council will contribute £78,000 toward the project from fees charged to developers using the model, alongside £400,000 previously allocated by the former Northamptonshire County Council.

Hosting, maintenance and operation fees could take costs to a total of around £2m over the life of the contract.

This joint effort between our two councils shows our commitment to transport planning across the whole county. By pooling our resources and expertise, we can ensure the accuracy and relevance of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model while saving taxpayers money.

West Northamptonshire Council will lead on procurement of the model rebuild. As part of the process, each council will have its own version of the new model, but it will be managed through a continued relationship with the consultancy building it.

The new model will have a 2023 base year, informed by verified traffic count data, and the process is expected to be complete by autumn 2024, with a contract anticipated to run until 2031.

# Investment in new machinery to fix pot holes

#### Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

We are investing £450,000 into purchasing two new pieces of machinery which will enable our Highways partners, Kier to carry out an improved repair service.

The investment forms part of our longterm vision to improve the road network across the area and follows the announcement to invest more than £2.8 million additional funds into the Highways contract in 23/24.

The investment will allow us to purchase a JCB Pothole Pro, which travels at a faster speed than other machines, provides a more efficient service, and will enable workers to clean and repair potholes to a better standard.

A second Thermal Road Repairs machine will also be purchased. The new



machinery offers advanced technology and deliver high-quality outputs and benefits from low emissions, zero waste, and offers a quality solution to defect repairs.

Potholes can form quickly during extreme weather and cause a real issue for our road users. We are committed to working with Kier to invest in our network and improve the condition of the roads across West Northamptonshire.

By investing in this ground-breaking technology, we can achieve our Council's strategy to deliver prompt pothole mending with no requirement for further, future repair – ensure the future sustainability of our road network.

## July consultation and engagement round-up

A range of consultation and engagement activities are currently taking place across West Northants.

We have summarised the main consultations below, but please remember you can check new consultations, have your say, and sign up to receive alerts and updates via our **Consultation Hub** 

You can find out the results of recent surveys on our **We asked, you said, we did page**, and **sign-up** to receive emails whenever a new consultation opens on the Consultation Hub.

#### **Residential Care Service at Boniface House**

Deadline for comments: 30 July

We are reviewing the current and future usage of the residential care service at Boniface House in Brixworth.

The care home has 46 rooms, however it is significantly under occupied as the design of the building means that the facilities available within the home are unable to meet the needs of an increasing number of people who require residential care.

#### Have a say on the residential care service at Boniface House

### **Community Governance Review**

Deadline for comments: 18 August

Parish and Town councils are encouraged to engage with this process, which could see changes to parish boundaries, and the number of councillors at parish and town councils.

### Find out more about the Community Governance Review

### **Resource and Waste Strategy**

Deadline for comments: 21 August

We are developing a Resources and Waste Strategy to set out our long-term plan of action for the waste and street cleansing services we operate. Your views will help us shape the overall West Northamptonshire Resources and Waste Strategy for residents using household waste collection services.

#### Have a say on the Resource and Waste Strategy

#### **Draft Street Trading Policy 2023**

Deadline for comments: 27 August

We are consulting on a West Northamptonshire Council Street Trading Policy which sets out the management of street trading. The aims of this policy is to regulate street trading activities and to prevent obstruction of streets in the district by street trading.

### **Have your say on the draft Street Trading Policy**

**Have your say on the Council Housing Allocation Scheme** 

### **Council Housing Allocation Scheme**

Deadline for comments: 26 September

There are currently three housing allocation schemes that operate in West Northamptonshire, covering the Daventry Area, South Northants Area, and Northampton Area.

This policy will look to harmonise the differences between the schemes, making it fairer, clearer and

consistent across the West Northamptonshire area.



# Say hello to our Parish Council liaison officer

Did you know? Town and Parish Councils have a new dedicated officer at our Council who they can contact for help and support with all things WNC.

Our Parish Council Liaison Officer Alan Burns has been in post since January 2023 with a remit to maintain and enhance good working relationships between West Northamptonshire Council and our Town and Parish colleagues.

Find out more on the <u>Town and Parish Council help centre on our website</u>, or email <u>alan.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk</u> for more information.



# Changes to planning consultation process

Following a review of the types of planning applications and the legislation requirements for consultations on each application type, our planning service is making a number of changes to the current consultation process.

Consultations will continue to be sent electronically to parish and town councils where the legislation requires us to do so. For the following application types you will no longer receive a notification of a consultation:

- Certificate for lawful development
- Discharge of conditions
- Advertisement consent
- 28 day prior approval applications.

You can still access information on these applications in our published weekly lists.

To further improve engagement within the service a new weekly list service will be rolled out in August which will combine all applications submitted to our Council in one report, with applications shown in each Ward (for Ward Members) and Parish areas (for Parish/Town Councils), and both weekly reports shared with all ward members and parish/town councils, where we have a valid email address.

Further details on the new weekly list service will be shared in due course. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact David Simmons-Lindill, Technical Support Head of Service at **David.simmons-lindill@westnorthants.gov.uk** 

### **Our Council in the news**

Here's a roundup of the news releases and updates published by our Council during the last month.

Don't forget you can keep up-to-date with these and search the news archive by <u>visiting the News</u> <u>section of our website</u>. You can also <u>sign-up to receive our newsletter</u>

#### In the past month, we issued press releases on:

- Annual canvass gets underway across West Northamptonshire July 3
- Transition of Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre to North Northamptonshire Council July 3
- Cabinet to consider feedback following consultation on Home to School transport service July 3
- Residents asked for their views on policy for street trading across West Northamptonshire July 3
- Cabinet to discuss new action plan to tackle issues around HMOs July 3
- Abbey Centre set to welcome residents back July 3
- Chance to have your say on future of care home July 4
- Council set to consider investing in JCB Pothole Pro to maintain 1289 miles of road July 4
- Future plans for Market Walk to undergo multi-million regeneration July 5
- SEND families shape future approach for improving outcomes for young people July 5
- <u>Judicial challenge over Sixfields land dismissed</u> July 5
- Have your say on waste services in West Northamptonshire July 5
- West Northants shows support for Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week 2023 July 5
- Council's prudent planning yields remarkable financial results July 11
- Celebrating the official opening of the extension at 78 Derngate July 11
- Cabinet approves plans to seek public's views on social housing allocations July 12
- Stay informed and connected with new council magazine July 12
- People invited to have their say on next chapter for developing Library Service July 12
- Cabinet agrees to new sustainable energy contract July 12
- Councils join forces to build new Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model July 12
- Organisations come together to deliver operation to keep residents safe July 13
- Northampton's Commercial Street to host antiques market this Sunday July 13
- New report recognises BIPC Northamptonshire as engine of economic growth July 13
- West Northants leisure trust to deliver free health and wellbeing activities 17 July
- Director of Public Health Report 2022 17 July
- Residents invited to join free Emergency Services fun day in Daventry 18 July
- Convenient taxi service launched connecting Northampton bus station with market 18 July
- Land lease agreed for Brackley skate park -18 July
- Council agreed future use of Becket's Park Pavilion 19 July
- Enhanced Payment Experience for residents across West Northants 19 July
- West Northamptonshire Council signs the Northampton Sustainability Accord 19 July
- Panel convened to consider proposed interim fire chief appointment 20 July
- Students trial Virtual Reality to support independent travel to and from school 20 July
- Knife Amnesty bins installed across West Northants to tackle serious violence 21 July