

Spending your money and the Government's money wisely, is one of our philosophy's. How we spend this money, the budget, has a huge effect on much of our daily lives, bin collections, children's services, adult social care, leisure centres, parks, libraries, carparks and road maintenance, and dozens of other areas which are being constantly reviewed and updated.

The approach we're taking locally is paying dividends. We have one of the most financially stable councils in the country; we were supposed to have delivered £83m of savings at this point in our reorganisation programme, instead we've delivered **£90m** and we'll deliver more before the end of the term.

In common with many local authorities across the country, the authority has set a balanced revenue budget for 2024/2025 of £889.5m

The approved budget follows a strong commitment to making services as efficient as possible.

We have a well performing adult social care service and an improving children's service, elements of which are already rated good, and which many in this parish may have engaged with at some point. We also, support and enable many local community organisations and local groups and put in place additional support for rough sleepers and overhauled our homelessness support services.

We've prosecuted an increasing proportion of fly tippers and rogue landlords, whilst stabilising our staffing levels to reduce reliance on expensive agency staff. Further to this, we've reduced the number of highly paid senior officers and reduced the number of large and expensive council buildings.

One of the greatest challenges has been the fusing together of four professionally independent planning departments, and although the planning service is not yet operating as we would wish, it is very much heading in the right direction.

Our financial performance in amalgamating the various balances of the four predecessor authorities has exceeded our expectations, and recently, the WNC finance team was recognised nationally as being one of the best in the country.

The single largest challenge remains is the contribution to the Children's Trust, a body set up at the same time as WNC, to administer children's services across the county. The budget allocation is £83.3m, some 22% of the whole. The second challenge is funding adult social care, specifically identified on the council tax statements we all receive.

Various strategic meetings have taken place to future proof GP provision in the ward and there will be more news to come on this in the future.

**Some highlights have been:**

Active trading standards prosecution involving seizure of 200,000 cigarettes and 35kg hand rolled tobacco.

Public health prosecution of a restaurant resulting in a fine of £33k  
£5m distributed in the form of household support, for 12,500 families.

Delivery of a 250-pupil special school for SEND pupils in Towcester

Opening of a new night shelter in Northampton

Commencement of work on the Northampton North Relief Road (NNRR)

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**In conclusion**, West Northamptonshire Council is working really hard to achieve the goals and aims of the Corporate Plan, and the Council's strategic plan, which reflects our 2021 Manifesto.

Much of the work goes on behind the scenes which is not seen or reported on by our local media, but I can assure you, you have a most diligent and hardworking professional group of councillors working on your behalf.