



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2022/23**

### **Consultation**

### **Group Facilitator's Feedback Form**

#### **Overview**

At a meeting held on 21st December, West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet approved for consultation its draft budget for 2022-23 and we are now seeking views on these proposals.

The main proposals are:

- To increase the average Council Tax by 2.99%, comprising 1.99% core tax and a further 1% adult social care precept, which is the maximum amount permitted. This would contribute around £9.77m per annum and would represent an average Band D level of Council Tax of £1,613.23 in 2022/23, or the equivalent of £31.02 per week.
- Fees and charges schedule review
- Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2022/23 review, including an increase of Council tenant rent of 4.1%
- Draft Capital Programme 2022/26

Our budget proposals for next year are made up of £397.4m for schools and £336.4m for all other services we provide. It will ensure we can maintain services and standards and it proposes no service reductions.

This is an increase of £42.2m on the current year, which will enable us to continue improving vital services like social care, refuse collection and recycling, transport, highways, planning and wellbeing.

Service improvements incorporated into the budget includes:

- Additional investment in the Highways service
- Additional investment in Refuse and Recycling
- The promotion of bus services
- Investment to drive forward the sustainability/green agenda
- Participation in the National Graduate Development Programme
- Investment in Young Driver Training
- Investment in the Flood Service

- The creation of an HS2 Marshall post for three years
- The impact of switching off the Bus Lane camera in the St. James' area
- Project resource to promote walking and cycling schemes

It will also fund pay and other inflationary costs incurred against existing contracts as well as unavoidable and one-off pressures.

These pressures are offset by £19.6m of productivity gains and additional income and technical budget adjustments of £12.8m, providing for a net budget growth of £9.8m.

The budget assumes an average Council Tax increase of 2.99% which is to be invested in local service provision. This would represent an average increase on a Band D property across the area of £46.84 per year or £0.90p per week.

As part of our approach, we continue our journey to harmonise Council Tax across West Northamptonshire by 2023-24. This means greater increases in some areas.

We're proposing the following increases in the former borough and district areas:

- Daventry - £62.93 per year
- Northampton - £36.24 per year
- South Northamptonshire - £46.84 per year

Through our Housing Revenue Account (HRA), we've identified £45m next year for our new-build and major projects programme, through which we aim to create 200 new homes per year to 2027.

Most of the rest of our HRA budget will be targeted at repairs and improvements on our existing housing stock, along with disabled adaptations.

To ensure we can do all of this, we'll need to increase rents in our rented housing by 4.1 per cent and charges for garages by 3.1 per cent.

The impacts of Covid 19 have and are likely to continue to place higher demands on all of our services and it is clear we face a challenging medium term financial position. However, it is important we deliver long term sustainability and affordability to ensure services are fit for the future. As such, we will continue to review contracts, income sources and assets whilst also identifying wider service improvements and cost efficiencies.

We also recognise the importance of the ongoing work across our council to reshape and continually improve processes and ways of working so we can reduce the cost of service provision, in order to protect against service reductions and to balance future years' budgets.

West Northamptonshire Council is focussed on becoming a greener and cleaner authority, a great place in which people can live and work, and visit.

The Council aims to recover and grow the economy, playing a full role as one of the largest authorities within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, while establishing strong and safe communities with good housing. We want our residents to have the best prospects and the skills to succeed and for children to have the best start in life.

Work will also continue to further the integration of adult social care and health services which is also key to the future, working towards a new way of delivering important services in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders. This makes sense as not only is there a financial efficiency but also it is much less complicated for people who want to access the services.

Your feedback on this consultation is really important to us, and all consultation feedback will be analysed and considered, and will help Councillors make a final decision on the budget at the West Northamptonshire Council Full Council meeting on 24 February 2022. This meeting is held in public. Anyone wishing to submit a statement to the meeting must contact Democratic Services by email [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) or by post or in person (One Angel Square, Angel St, Northampton NN1 1ED) by 6pm 23 February 2022. Up to three members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each on any agenda item although this may be extended at the Chair's discretion..

## **Related Documents**

Please read the related documents to gain a better understanding of the budget proposals before you comment on them.

- [Cabinet Meeting Draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan report](#), and its appendices:
  - [Appendix A – Budget Summary](#)
  - [Appendices B1-B7 – List of Proposals](#), which contains the full list of budget proposals
  - [Appendix C – Draft 2022/23 Fees and Charges schedule](#)
  - [Appendix D – Dedicated Schools Grant budget](#)
  - [Appendix E – Draft Capital Programme](#)
  - [Appendix F – Equality Screening Assessment](#)
  
- [Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget 2022-23 report](#), and its appendices:
  - [Appendix 1 – Draft HRA Revenue Budget and MTFP Summary](#)
  - [Appendix 2 – Draft HRA Capital Programme and MTFP](#)
  - [Appendix 3 – HRA Fees and Charges Proposals](#)
  - [Appendix 4 – Northampton Partnership Homes Draft Total Fee](#)

All of the above documents are available on our website  
<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/budget-2022-23>

## **Have your say**

**This form is to help assist a group of respondents to record and provide their feedback as a collective group (for example a community group) to one or more of the consultation proposals.**

If you would like to respond to the consultation as an individual, or if you are responding on behalf of an organisation, then we would encourage you to complete the online questionnaire at <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/budget-2022-23> (paper copies available upon request).

The following sections give details of the budget proposals. Please tell us your groups views by completing this questionnaire.

This questionnaire focusses on the new proposals for the draft budget 2022/23 that will likely affect resident and service users. However, you can comment on anything within the Draft Budget in the comment boxes.

Your feedback will be part of a report with many other people's feedback, so you will not be personally identified.

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight **1 February 2022**.

**Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire.**

## About you

Name of facilitator(s)	
Name of organisation/group	
Date of meeting	
Number of participants	

## Which of the below customer categories best describes the participants?

(Please tick (✓) all that apply)

Older People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Younger Adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Minority Ethnic Group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):	
-------------------------	--

## Proposed increase to Council Tax

The Council is proposing to increase Council Tax up to the level currently proposed by the government, without triggering a referendum – 2.99%. This increased rate includes a **general increase of 1.99%** and the allowable **adult social care precept increase, which is 1%**.

The Council Tax increase will contribute around £9.77m per annum which will be used to protect existing service levels or invest in local services.

In February 2021 it was agreed that the Council Tax for West Northamptonshire be harmonised over a three year period, with rates to be fully harmonised by 2023/24. This means that the average Band D rate in the former Daventry District will need to increase by more than 2.99% (if this is set as the average increase), but the actual council tax levied will continue to be slightly lower than the average Band D rates in the former Northampton and South Northamptonshire areas in 2022/23. The proposed increases are well within the £99 maximum Band D increase set in the Council's Corporate Plan.

The table below sets out the average increases in the West Northamptonshire Council Band D Council Tax in each area in 2022/23 that are required in order to remain on course for harmonisation in 2023/24, at which point the average Band D in each area will be equal.

	<b>Average Band D Council Tax 2021/22</b>	<b>Average Band D Council Tax 2022/23</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Increase (%)</b>
Ex-Daventry Area	£1,533.13	£1,596.06	£62.93	4.10%
Ex- Northampton Area	£1,588.18	£1,624.42	£36.24	2.29%
Ex-South Northamptonshire Area	£1,555.50	£1,607.71	£52.21	3.34%
Average	£1,566.39	£1,613.23	£46.84	2.99%

**Example: What would this mean for a Band D property?**

As an example, an average Band D level of Council Tax for West Northamptonshire Council of £1,613.23 in 2022/23 is equivalent to £31.02 per week. The average increase on a Band D property across the area is £46.84 or £0.90p per week. This Band D figure does not include the Council Tax for individual town and parish councils or the Council Tax set for fire and police by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

By law, Councils are required to have a scheme to help people on low incomes to pay their council tax. The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is to help people on low income to pay their Council Tax.

Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes were introduced from April 2013 when Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by locally agreed schemes. Those of pensionable age are protected by the prescribed regulations set out by central government.

**1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should increase Council Tax by 1.99% to help fund services?**

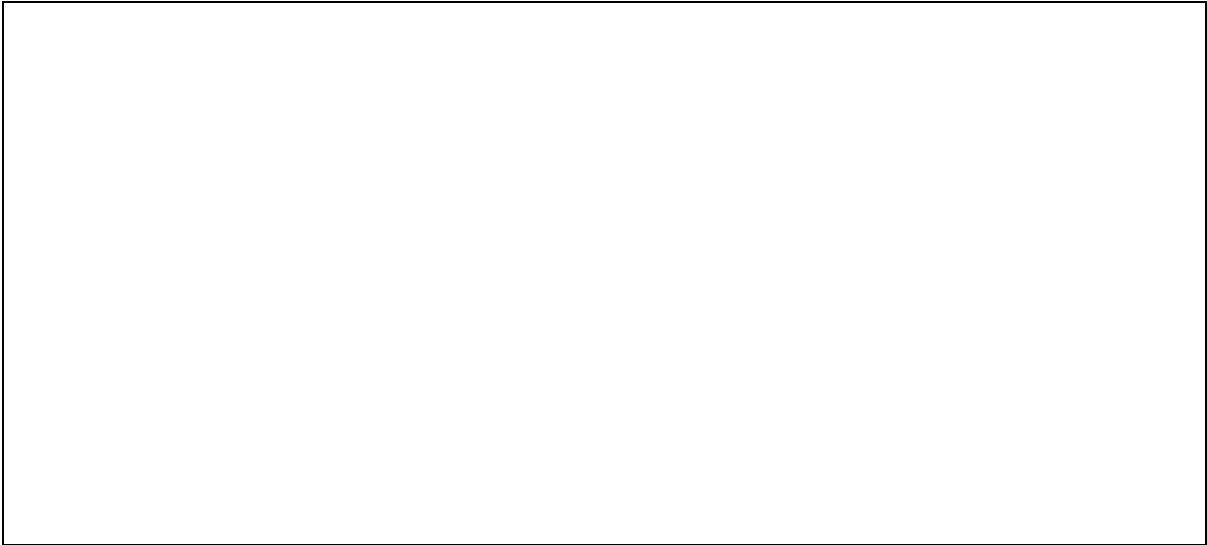
**Example: What would a 1.99% increase mean for a Band D property?**

As an example, a 1.99% general increase would result in an increase of £31.17 per year (£0.60p per week) for 2022/23 for the average Band D Council Tax payer.

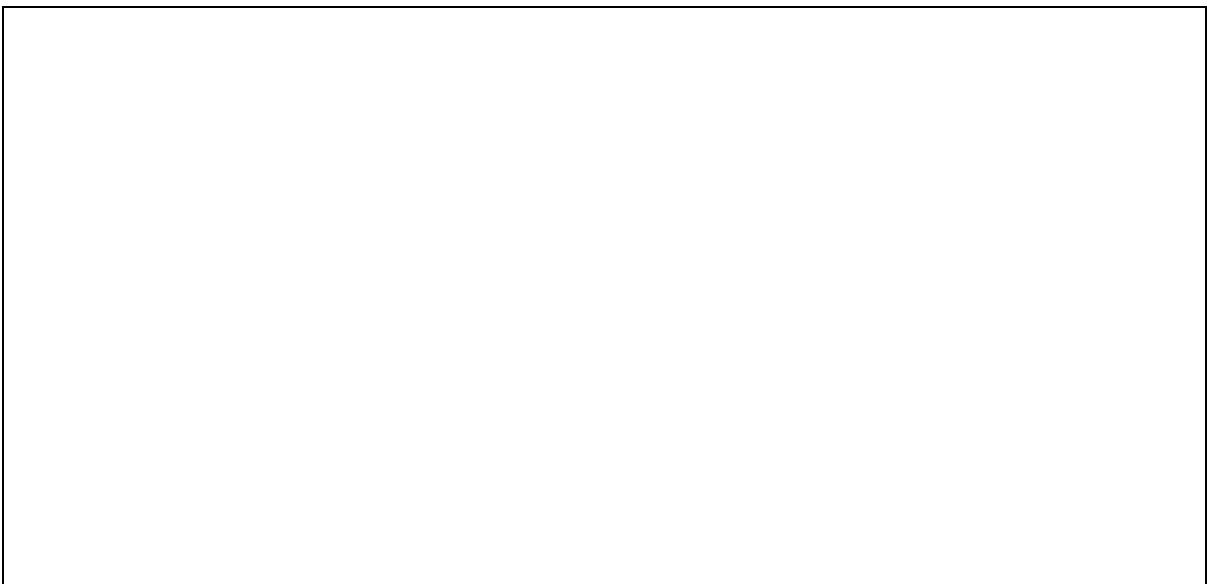
Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2) If you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did, please do so here:**



**3) If you feel this proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us what you think that impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be mitigated?**





**4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should increase Council Tax by a further 1% as part of the Adult Social Care precept, which would be used to directly fund Adult Social Care?**

**Example: What would a 1% increase mean for a Band D property?**

As an example, a 1% adult social care precept increase would result in an increase of £15.66 per year (£0.30 per week) for 2022/23 for the average Band D Council Tax payer

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5) If you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did, please do so here:**

**6) If you feel this proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us what you think that impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be mitigated?**

## **Fees and charges**

Income from fees and charges represents an important source of funds to the Council and enables a range of services to be provided within the area and beyond. West Northamptonshire's draft Budget generates income in the region of £33.5m with approximately £23 coming from Fees and Charges set out in Appendix C - Draft 2022/23 Fees and Charges schedule. All Fees and Charges have been subject to a review for 2022/23 and within the draft budget proposal there is an additional £1.2m of income that has been generated through this review.

This is the second year that West Northamptonshire Council has been able to set its fees and charges. In some cases, there will have been different fees and charges set by the previous authorities for the same services. In these cases, West Northamptonshire Council has looked to harmonise these fees and charges so that one consistent fee or charge is applied across the whole Council area. This has been done for most areas where there were different fees and charges for the same services, including all those where there is a legal requirement to harmonise. In a few cases harmonisation has not been possible for this financial year, and these fees and charges will be reviewed again during the year to look to harmonise as soon as possible.

The fees and charges schedule includes a proposal to harmonise kerbside garden waste collection for all residents of West Northamptonshire who opt into this service

of £42 per bin per year, from 1 April 2022. This proposal was approved by Cabinet in November 2021. This proposal is estimated to generate an additional net income of £800k. In addition, it is expected that a further £100k income can be budgeted for due to uptake of this existing scheme in the Northampton area being greater than previously budgeted for.

For further details please see Appendix C – Draft 2022/23 Fees and Charges schedule.

Details of the Council’s current fees and charges are available on our website <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/finance/fees-and-charges>.

**7) If you have any comments to make on these proposals, please tell us which fee or charge you would like to comment on and give us your views below:**

**Name of fee(s) or charge(s):**

**Comment:**

## Draft Capital Programme 2022-26

The Capital Strategy demonstrates how the Council will make expenditure and investment decisions in line with our Corporate Plan, which sets out the Council's priorities. It sets out the key objectives and broad principles to be applied by the Council when considering capital investment and its funding, and provides the context for how the Medium Term Capital Programme seeks to support the realisation of the Council's vision and corporate priorities.

The draft general fund capital programme has been developed to ensure a robust mechanism to deliver our priorities within the finances available.

Draft capital requirement proposals have been considered by the Capital and Assets Board who recommended that, at this stage of the budget setting process, only schemes which are fully funded are included for consideration as part of the draft budget setting process.

The draft budget therefore takes into account the schemes already approved in year through the Capital and Assets Board plus new fully funded schemes i.e. where there is no financial impact for the Council. A further review will be undertaken of all other proposals to agree prioritisation of schemes before they are submitted for final consideration.

Ten fully funded schemes have been submitted for 2022/23 onwards, totalling £35.3m.

Details of the capital programme additions for 2022/23 are set out in Appendix E – Draft Capital Programme.

If you would like further details about any of the schemes, please contact us at [haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk)

**8) If you have any comments you would like to us to know on these schemes, please tell us here:**

**Name of scheme(s):**

--

## Comments:

## Other comments

This questionnaire focusses on the new proposals for the draft budget 2022/23 that will likely affect residents and service users. However, you can comment on anything within the Draft Budget.

Before moving on to the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2022-23 section of this questionnaire, is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposals set out in the [Draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan](#) and it's Appendices:

- [Appendix A – Budget Summary](#)
- [Appendices B1-B7 – List of Proposals](#), which contains the full list of budget proposals
- [Appendix C – Draft 2022/23 Fees and Charges schedule](#)
- [Appendix D – Dedicated Schools Grant budget](#)
- [Appendix E – Draft Capital Programme](#)
- [Appendix F – Initial Equality Screening Assessment](#)

**9) If you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this draft budget that you have not already told us, including any alternative ideas about how we could save the same amount of money or generate the same amount of income as outlined in the proposals, then please tell us here:**

**Name of proposal(s):**

**Comments:**

## **Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2022/23**

Local housing authorities are required by law to keep a Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

This HRA shows the accounts for the council's housing provision, identifying the major elements of expenditure and how these are funded, mainly from rents.

There are strict rules surrounding the costs and income that can be charged to this account. Much of the income and expenditure is dictated by legislation and regulation leaving the Council with limited direct control over a number of these budgets.

A national policy that came into effect in April 2020 that allows annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to the rate of inflation (Consumer Price Index - CPI) plus 1%. The CPI in September 2021 was 3.1%, and therefore we are proposing to increase rent from 4 April 2022 by the maximum 4.1% on average across the Council's housing stock in line with national government policy. This will increase the average rent from £93.66 to £97.50 per week. An increase of £3.84 per week.

This increase ensures we are able to invest in high/quality housing service for our tenants. Failure to increase the rents by the statutory amount will not only have a significant impact on income in the current year but also in each year going forward. It is estimated that a 1% reduction in the rent increase would reduce the rental income by approximately £0.5 million in the current year.

The Council is proposing a 3.1% increase in general service charges (in line with CPI at September 2021), and to increase garage rents and the commuter surcharge on garages by 3.1%. This will increase the average rent per garage from £9.66 to £9.96 (or £0.30p per week) and the commuter surcharge from £15.35 to £15.83 (or £0.48p) per week respectively.

For further information please see the [Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget 2022-23 report](#), and its appendices:

- [Appendix 1 – Draft HRA Revenue Budget and MTFP Summary](#)
- [Appendix 2 – Draft HRA Capital Programme and MTFP](#)
- [Appendix 3 – HRA Fees and Charges Proposals](#)
- [Appendix 4 – Northampton Partnership Homes Draft Total Fee](#)

**10) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase rent by the maximum 4.1% (an average increase of £3.84 per week) across the Council's housing stock in line with national government policy?**

**Example: What would a 4.1% increase mean for a local authority tenant?**

As an example, a 4.1% increase would result in an average increase of £199.68 per year (£3.84 per week) for 2022/23 for the average local authority tenant.

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11) If you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did, please do so here:**



**12) If you feel this proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us what you think that impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be mitigated?**

**13) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase garage rents and the commuter surcharge on garages by 3.1%?**

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase general service charges by 3.1%?**

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**15) If you have any comments regarding the HRA Capital programme and indicative budgets for 2023/24 to 2026/27 as summarised in the [Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget 2022-23 report](#) and [Appendix 2 – Draft HRA Capital Programme and MTFP](#), then please tell us here:**

**16) If you have any other comments you would like to make about the details within the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget report and its appendices, that you have not already told us, then please tell us here:**

**17) How did you find out about this consultation?**

Please tick (✓) all that apply

From the local media (i.e. newspaper or radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>
On social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a member of the West Northamptonshire Residents' Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>
From an email alert from my local council	<input type="checkbox"/>
From a voluntary sector organisation providing me with support and advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Other, please give details:

## **The next steps**

Once the consultation period closes on 1 February 2022, we will analyse the results and then final budget proposals will be developed before going back to the West Northamptonshire Council Full Council meeting on 24 February 2022.

Your feedback on this consultation is really important to us, and all consultation feedback will be analysed and considered, and will help Councillors make a final decision on the budget for 2022/23.

This meeting is held in public. Anyone wishing to submit a statement to the meeting must contact Democratic Services by email [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) or by post or in person (One Angel Square, Angel St, Northampton NN1 1ED) by 6pm 23 February 2022. Up to three members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each on any agenda item although this may be extended at the Chair's discretion.

**Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire. Please return it to:**

Email address: [haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Postal address: Budget Consultation Response  
West Northamptonshire Council  
One Angel Square  
4 Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

The deadline for returning this questionnaire is midnight **1 February 2022**.