



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2025 to 2026 Consultation

Overview

Give us your views on the Council's Budget proposals for the 2025 to 2026 financial year.

Each year West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) plans for the money it will have available and how it should be spent on delivering services in line with the priorities and objectives set out in its Corporate Plan. The Council's Cabinet approved plans to consult the public on WNC's draft 2025-26 budget proposals on 10 December 2024.

Our plans and budget proposals make sure that resources are prioritised and allocated to support the most vulnerable in our local community in the most cost-effective way possible.

In developing the budget proposals, we have focused on making the best use of our resources to support the most vulnerable in our community, supporting the people and places in West Northants to thrive. Our draft budget aims to carefully address key financial challenges, ensuring that essential services can be protected and maintained, and that the authority also continues to remain financially sustainable.

Our key financial challenges

Like most councils in the UK, our key financial challenges are mainly due to rising costs for services and increasing demand from those who need our help and support. Our key financial challenges include:

- Increases in demand and cost in the following services:
 - Children and Adult's Social Care,
 - services we provide to Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND),
 - home to school transport,
 - homelessness accommodation.

Our main proposals

Despite the financial challenges, we are on course to set a balanced budget for 2025-26 through careful and early review.

Key headlines for the 2025-26 draft budget include:

- Providing a balanced draft budget that uses the best information we have right now. This makes sure we have enough money to properly fund all of our expected and known expenses within the base budget.
- Making sure our legal duties can be met, even with higher demand and increased costs for essential services.
 - Maximising service efficiencies in order to maintain and protect services as much as possible with proposed savings totalling £26.2m.
 - Fees and Charges reviewed and where appropriate increased to reflect increased cost of service delivery or an inflationary uplift, where residents and businesses have a choice about whether they wish to use that service or not.
 - £41m of additional base budget growth which reflects the increased demand for services encountered in this financial year and expected to continue into next year.

What is a base budget?

A base budget refers to the level of resources that covers the essential, and ongoing costs of running the local government. It includes daily operational costs, expenses such as staff salaries, maintenance, utilities, and other necessary services. The base budget makes sure that all known and expected costs are funded appropriately, providing a stable position to operate well.

Housing Revenue Account Budget

The Council has also published a draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2025 to 2026. The HRA is a ring-fenced account which records the cost of managing the Council's housing stock.

Within the HRA are proposals to invest £77m in social housing during the next financial year, which will form part of a total five year capital programme amounting to £261m.

The Council is considering a 2.7% increase in average rents from 1 April 2025, which aligns with the Government's Rent Standard. This would mean an average increase of £3.01 per week. Service charges and garage rents would also see a 2.7% increase. These adjustments are essential to ensure we can continue maintaining and providing quality housing.

Due to the ongoing cost of living pressures, any leftover money from the 2024 to 2025 hardship fund will be carried over to 2025 to 2026. This will help support tenants who are facing extra financial difficulties because of the increase.

Related Documents

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

- Cabinet Meeting [2025-26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) report, and its appendices:
 - [Appendix A – 2025-26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Budget Summary](#)
 - [Appendix B – Draft Budget Proposals 2025-26](#)
 - [Appendix C – Fees and Charges](#)
 - [Appendix D – Draft Dedicated Schools Grant](#)
 - [Appendix E – Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2025-29](#)
 - [Appendix Ei – Council Budget proposals log 2025-26 onwards](#)
- [2025-26 Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#)
 - [Appendix 1 – Draft HRA Revenue Budget 2025-26 Summary](#)
 - [Appendix 2 – Draft Rent Increases Inflation Growth and Efficiencies](#)
 - [Appendix 3 – Draft HRA Capital Programme](#)
 - [Appendix 4 – Draft Northampton Partnership Homes \(NPH\) Management Fee](#)
 - [Appendix 5 – Draft Schedule of Rents and Service Charges](#)

Have your say

Your views on all our draft budget proposals are important to us.

This consultation provides further details of the budget proposals. You do not have to answer all the questions or give us your feedback on every section. It is split into sections so that people can give their views on what they want to. Please note that you need to answer the 'About You' section to be able to submit your response.

Answer this consultation by accessing the 'Have your say' link below. Alternatively, you can send your comments in by email or post.

Email address: haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk

Postal address:

Budget Consultation Response
West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles' Street
Northampton
NN1 1DE

You can also access this questionnaire online free of charge at any West Northamptonshire Council managed library. Please

visit <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/libraries> or telephone 0300 126 7000 to check opening times.

If you are feeding back on behalf of a group

If you are holding a group discussion to provide your joint feedback you can submit your response either by completing the online Group Facilitator's Feedback form or by downloading the PDF version to print. Any printed forms will need to be scanned and emailed or posted back to the council using the address details above before the closing date.

If you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format you can contact us by email or post using the detail above, or telephone 0300 126 7000.

All consultation feedback will be analysed and considered to help councillors make a final decision on the budget at WNC's Full Council meeting on 20 February 2025.

Making a representation at Full Council

Anyone wishing to submit a statement in this public meeting must contact Democratic Services by 12 noon on 19 February 2025.

You can do this [by email](#), or by post (to Democratic Services), or in person at:

West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles' Street
Northampton
NN1 1DE

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.

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025.

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

For information about how consultation and engagement responses are managed, please see the [consultation and engagement privacy notice](#).

Thank you for helping us by completing this consultation.

About you

1) How are you responding to this consultation? (Required)

Please select one option that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation:

- A resident of West Northamptonshire
- A West Northamptonshire service user
- A West Northamptonshire business owner or representative
- A West Northamptonshire Council employee
- A West Northamptonshire Council councillor
- On behalf of a town or parish council in an official capacity
- A town or parish councillor
- On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)
- A representative of a local community group or residents' association
- On behalf of an educational establishment such as a school or college
- On behalf of a health partner organisation such as integrated care or mental health trust
- A representative of a user group
- Other (please give details below)

Other: _____

Please note: If you're responding for yourself as an individual, there's an optional '**More About You**' section at the end of the consultation. This helps us understand how different people might be affected by the proposals, ensuring fairness and equality.

2) If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (business, community group, residents' association, council or any other organisation), please tell us the name of your organisation and your role:

Organisation name:

Job title/role:

Proposed increase to Council Tax

Key to helping the Council protect essential services whilst balancing the books in its fifth year as a unitary authority is the income it receives from Council Tax.

The Council is proposing to increase the amount of Council Tax by a total of 4.99 per cent (2.99 per cent general increase plus 2 per cent for adult social care), in line with the limit set by Government, which allows for this increase without triggering a referendum.

The proposed Council Tax rise will bring in about £19 million more income for the year. This money will help protect existing services. Without this increase, more services would need to be cut to balance the budget than what is currently suggested in the draft budget.

Example: Breakdown of cost for a Band D property

As an example the Council Tax for a Band D property in this current year is £1,778.25 for West Northants Council services.

This will rise by 4.99 per cent to £1,866.98 in 2025 to 2026 for all of the Council services for the whole year, which is an increase of £88.73 per year or £1.71 per week. With the increase, the breakdown cost per week would be £35.90.

All Bands:

Band	Current financial year (2024-25)	Financial year 2025-26	Increase	Amount per week breakdown
A	£1185.50	£1244.66	£59.16	£23.94
B	£1383.08	£1452.10	£69.02	£27.92
C	£1580.67	£1659.54	£78.88	£31.91
D	£1778.25	£1866.98	£88.73	£35.90
E	£2173.42	£2281.87	£108.45	£43.88
F	£2568.58	£2696.76	£128.17	£51.86
G	£2963.75	£3111.64	£147.89	£59.84
H	£3556.50	£3733.97	£177.47	£71.81

- 3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should increase Council Tax by 2.99 per cent to address the additional cost, and protect and invest in services?

Example: What would a 2.99 per cent increase mean for a Band D property?

As an example, a 2.99 per cent general increase would result in an increase of £53.17 per year on a band D property.

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

4) Use the following space if you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did:

5) If you think this proposal might have a negative effect, please use the space below to explain what that effect could be and suggest ways to avoid it:

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should protect Adult Social Care by increasing Council Tax by 2 per cent to fund the rise in costs?

More information

The Adult Social Care Levy was introduced by the Government as a way of funding social care because of rising costs and demand. Councils like us, that are responsible for adult social care, can raise extra money through Council Tax, which must be spent directly on care for the most vulnerable adults and older people in the area.

Example: What would a 2 per cent increase mean for a Band D property?

As an example, a 2 per cent adult social care precept increase would result in an increase of £35.56p per year on a band D property.

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

- 7) Use the following space if you have any comments on the impacts of the 2 per cent increase, or any alternative options you feel we should consider:

Fees and charges

Income from fees and charges is an important source of funds and helps us deliver a range of services.

West Northamptonshire's Draft Budget generates Fees and Charges income in the region of £28.5m. For further details please see the proposed [Appendix C – Fees and Charges](#). This shows the current charges (2024 to 2025) and the proposed charges (2025 to 2026).

Each year we review, and where appropriate, increase fees and charges to cover any increasing cost of service provision, the impact of any inflationary increases and align with national benchmarks, and nationally set fees. We do not raise fees and charges where the charges are set by Government.

- 8) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should put up some fees and charges in line with inflation and operational costs, to help fund services?

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

- 9) Use the following space to provide your comments about fees and charges:

Please make sure you state which fees and charges your comment relates to.

Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2025 to 2029

The Draft General Fund Capital Programme shows how the Council will spend and invest money according to our goals and priorities. It outlines key objectives and principles for capital investment and funding, supporting the Council's vision. This programme ensures effective long-term planning and investment for the benefit of our residents.

Details of the draft General Fund Capital Programme are set out in [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix Ei](#).

The draft budget proposes a £155m investment in the capital programme over the next four years to improve local infrastructure and assets. For the 2025 to 2026 period, the Council is set to invest £100m through the programme to improve infrastructure, support residents, and encourage sustainable growth.

- 10) If you have any comments on these proposals, please give us your views below:

Name of scheme(s):

Comment/s:

Other comments

You can use this section to provide any other comments on anything within the Draft Budget that you have not already told us about.

Use this section if there is anything else you would like to tell us about the proposals set out in the Cabinet Meeting Draft Budget 2025 to 2026 and Medium Term Financial Plan report, and its appendices.

Related documents

- Cabinet Meeting [2025-26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) report, and its appendices:
 - [Appendix A – 2025-26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Budget Summary](#)
 - [Appendix B – Draft Budget Proposals 2025-26](#)
 - [Appendix C – Fees and Charges](#)
 - [Appendix D – Draft Dedicated Schools Grant](#)
 - [Appendix E – Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2025-29](#)
 - [Appendix Ei – Council Budget proposals log 2025-26 onwards](#)

11) Use the following space to let us know if you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this draft budget:

You can include comments on any of the proposals not already covered or provide alternative ideas. If commenting on proposals, please refer to which you are commenting on.

Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025 to 2026 and Medium Term Financial Plan

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

This HRA holds the budgets for the Council's housing provision, identifying the major elements of expenditure and how these are funded, mainly from rents. Any money that enters the HRA, can only be spent on maintaining and improving social housing, including building new homes.

The Council has a housing stock which is managed by its arms-length management organisation, Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH).

Read more about the Housing Revenue Account

There are strict rules surrounding the costs and income that can be charged to the HRA. 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.

The Rent Standard 2023 which is a national policy ordinarily 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 per cent. The CPI in September 2024 showed an increase of 1.7 per cent.

The proposals

There are plans to invest £77m in social housing during the next financial year, which forms part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £261m.

The investment in 2025-26 includes:

- £8m on external improvements,
- £7m on internal improvements,
- £6m on structural works and safety compliance,
- £3m on energy efficiency, heating and ventilation, and window upgrades
- £2.3m on adaptations (for disabilities),
- £39m on new build programmes and major projects,
- £10m on buying back social housing and acquiring suitable properties.

The Council and NPH are proposing to increase rent from 1 April 2025 by 2.7 per cent, on average across the Council's housing stock in line with national government policy. This will raise the average rent from £111.79 to £114.80 per week, which is an increase of £3.01 per week. This increase will help to manage the increasing costs that are also being experienced in this area. We continue to provide support to tenants facing difficulties with the increase in rent, by rolling over any unspent funding from the previous year's hardship fund.

The Council and NPH are also proposing an increase of 2.7 per cent for tenant and leaseholder service charges, and to increase garage rents and commuter surcharges by 2.7 per cent. This will increase the average rent per garage from £11.80 to £12.12 and the commuter surcharge from £18.75 to £19.26 per week.

Related documentation

- [2025-26 Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#)
 - [Appendix 1 – Draft HRA Revenue Budget 2025-26 Summary](#)
 - [Appendix 2 – Draft Rent Increases Inflation Growth and Efficiencies](#)
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 - [Appendix 4 – Draft Northampton Partnership Homes \(NPH\) Management Fee](#)
 - [Appendix 5 – Draft Schedule of Rents and Service Charges](#)

- 12) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase rent by 2.7 per cent (an average increase of £3.01 per week) across the Council's housing stock managed by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH)?

Example: What would a 2.7 per cent increase mean for a local authority tenant?

As an example, a 2.7 per cent increase would result in a rise on average rents from £111.79 to £114.80 per week (an increase of £3.01 per week) for 2025 to 2026 for the average NPH tenant.

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

- 13) Use the following space if you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did:

14) If you think this proposal might have a negative effect, please use the space below to explain what that effect could be and suggest ways to avoid it:

15) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase garage rents by 2.7 per cent (an increase of £0.32p per week)?

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

16) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase general service charges by 2.7 per cent?

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

17) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the planned investment of £77m for social housing during 2025 to 2026?

Please select your answer from the below

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

Use the following space if you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did:

18) Use the following space should you have any further comments on the HRA Capital programme:

19) 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:

More about you - Individuals

Please only complete this section if you are responding for yourself (as an individual).

We collect information from people to understand the reach of consultations, so we know that everybody has an opportunity to have their voice heard, and ensure fairness and equality.

Please feel free to leave any questions which you do not wish to answer.

Any information you choose to provide will be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation and regulations.

20) What is your postcode?

By providing us with your postcode, you are consenting for us to use this information to understand where respondents live. If you do not consent to us using this information in this way, please do not provide your postcode.

Postcode: _____

21) Are you:

Please select your answer from the below

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- I'd prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

22) Are you currently pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months?

Please select your answer from the below

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

23) How old are you?

Please select your answer from the below

- 0 to 9
- 10 to 19

- 20 to 29
- 30 to 49
- 50 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

24) Do you have a disability?

Please select your answer from the below

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If 'Yes,' please tick select the appropriate box(es) which best describes your disability:

- Mental health
- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Sight impairment
- Learning Disability
- Other

25) What is your religion or belief?

Please select your answer from the below

- None
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Prefer not to say
- Any other religion (please state below)

26) How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please select your answer from the below

- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Other white background
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other Asian background
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- Caribbean
- African
- White and Asian
- Other mixed or multiple
- Other Black background
- Arab
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group (please state below)

27) If you are 16 or over which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

Please select your answer from the below

- Bisexual
- Gay Man
- Gay Woman / Lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Prefer not to say

28) Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were registered with at birth?

Please select your answer from the below

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

29) Are you:

Please select your answer from the below

- Married
- Single
- Civil Partnership
- Co-habiting or living together
- Widow or Widower
- Prefer not to say
- Other

30) How did you find out about this consultation?

Please select your answer from the below

- From the local media (i.e. newspaper or radio)
 - On social media
 - As a member of the West Northamptonshire Residents' Panel
 - As a member of the West Northamptonshire Consultation Register
 - From an email alert from West Northamptonshire Council
 - From the West Northants Life magazine
 - From a voluntary sector organisation providing me with support and advice
 - From my parish or town council
 - From a West Northamptonshire Councillor
 - Other (please provide detail below)
-

The next steps

Your feedback on this consultation is really important to us.

Following the consultation period, we will analyse and consider the results and then final budget proposals will be developed before going back to the West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet meeting on 11 February 2025 and Full Council on 20 February 2025.

The Full Council meeting is held in public. Anyone wishing to submit a statement to the meeting must contact Democratic Services by email (democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk), by post or in person (The Guildhall, St Giles' Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE) by 12 noon 19 February 2025.

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.

If you have printed and intend to submit this form please ensure you allow enough time for it to be received via post, as we cannot accept submissions after this date.

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025.

Return address:

Budget Consultation Response
West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles' Street
Northampton
NN1 1DE