

West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2026 to 2027 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 2026-27 budget proposals on 22 December 2025.

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 these financial challenges, we are on course to set a balanced budget for 2026-27 through careful and early review.

Key headlines for the 2026-27 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 to maintain and protect services as much as possible with proposed savings totalling £146m since 2021.

- Fees and Charges reviewed and increased where appropriate, where residents and businesses have a choice about whether they wish to use that service or not.
- £64.2m 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 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 2026-2027. 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 £78.6m in social housing during the next financial year, which will form part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £359.6m.

The Council is considering a 4.8% increase in average rents from 1 April 2026, which aligns with the Government's Rent Standard. This would mean an average increase of £5.51 per week. Service charges and garage rents would also see a 4.8% increase. These adjustments are essential to ensure we can continue maintaining and providing quality housing.

Related Documents

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

- **[Cabinet Meeting 2026-27 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan report, and its appendices:](#)**
 - [Appendix A – 2026-27 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Budget Summary](#)
 - [Appendix B – Draft Budget Proposals 2026-27](#)
 - [Appendix C – Fees and Charges](#)
 - [Appendix D – Draft Dedicated Schools Grant 2026-27](#)
 - [Appendix E - GF Capital Programme](#)
 - [Appendix Ei – Council Budget proposals log 2026-27 onwards](#)
- **[2026-27 Draft Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#)**
 - [Appendix 1 – Draft HRA Budget 2026-27 Summary](#)
 - [Appendix 2 – Draft HRA Budget - Rent Increases, Inflation Growth, and Efficiencies](#)
 - [Appendix 3 – Draft HRA Capital Programme 2026-27 to 2030-31](#)
 - [Appendix 4 – Draft Northamptonshire Partnership Homes \(NPH\) Management Fee](#)
 - [Appendix 5 – Draft Schedule of Rents and Service Charges 2026 to 2027](#)

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.

Email address: haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk

Postal address:

Budget Consultation Response
West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square (Service Yard)
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

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 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 **Thursday 26 February 2026**.

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.

Making a representation at Full Council

Anyone wishing to submit a statement in this public meeting must contact Democratic Services by **12pm, Wednesday 19 February 2025**.

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

West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square (Service Yard)
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

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 3 February 2026.

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% (2.99% general increase plus 2% 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 £17 million more income for the year. This money will help protect existing services. Without this increase, more services reductions would need to be reviewed 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 £1,866.98 for West Northants Council services.

This will rise by 4.99% to £1960.14 in 2026 to 2027 for all of the Council services for the whole year, which is an increase of £93.16 per year or £1.79 per week.

The overall Council Tax increase of 4.99% includes a core Council Tax increase of 2.99% as well as utilising the allowable adult social care precept increase of 2%.

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

Please select your answer from the below.

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

4. If you disagree, please use the space below to outline other ways you feel we could address the shortfall this would create, that we aren't already considering.

5. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should protect Adult Social Care by increasing Council Tax by 2% 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.

Please select your answer from the below.

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

6. **Use the following space if you have any comments on the impacts of the 2% 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 £29m. For further details please see the proposed [Appendix C Fees and Charges](#). This shows the current charges (2025 to 2026) and the proposed charges (2026 to 2027).

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.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should increase some fees and charges 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

8. Use the following to provide your comments about fees and charges. Please make sure you state which fees and charges your comment relates to.

Name of Fee or Charge: _____

Use the following space to provide your comments.

If you have any other fees and charges that you want to tell us about please email: haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk, stating the name of the fee.

Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2026-2031

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 £143m investment in the capital programme over the next five years to improve local infrastructure and assets. For the 2026 to 2027 period, the Council is set to invest £83m through the programme to improve infrastructure, support residents, and encourage sustainable growth.

9. 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 2026-27 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan report, and its appendices.

Related documents [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 22nd December 2025, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Cabinet Meeting 2026-27 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan report](#), and its appendices:

- [Appendix A – 2026-27 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Budget Summary](#)
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10. 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 2026 to 2027 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%. The CPI in September 2025 was 3.8%.

The proposals

There are plans to invest £78.6m in social housing during the next financial year, which forms part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £359.6m.

The investment in 2026-27 includes:

- £12.8m on external improvements,
- £6.9m on internal improvements,
- £7.34m on structural works and safety compliance including Estate Shops,
- £8.3m on energy efficiency, heating and ventilation, and window upgrades
- £2.3m on adaptations (for disabilities),
- £37.4m on new build programmes and major projects,
- £3.6m on buying back social housing and acquiring suitable properties including some IT Development (£0.4m).

The Council are proposing to increase rent from 1 April 2026 by 4.8%, on average across the Council's housing stock in line with national government policy. This will raise the average rent from £114.80 to £120.31 per week, which is an increase of £5.51 per week. This increase will help to manage the increasing costs that are also being experienced in this area.

The Council are also proposing an increase of 4.8% for tenant and leaseholder service charges, and to increase garage rents and commuter surcharges by 4.8%. This will increase the average rent per garage from £12.12 to £12.70 and the commuter surcharge from £19.26 to £20.19 per week.

Related documentation

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 22nd December 2025, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council](#)

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11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase rent by 4.8% (an average increase of £5.51 per week) across the Council's housing stock managed by Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH)?

Please select your answer from the below

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Unsure

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

13. 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:

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase garage rents by 4.8% (an increase of £0.58 per week)?

Please select your answer from the below.

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

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase general service charges by 4.8%?

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 planned investment of £78.6m for social housing during 2026-2027?

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:

17. Use the following space should you have any further comments on the HRA Capital programme:

18. 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.

19. 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: _____

20. Are you:

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

21. Are you currently pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

22. How old are you?

- ☐ 0 to 9
- ☐ 10 to 19
- ☐ 20 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

23. Do you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

24. 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?

- ☐ 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?

- ☐ 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?

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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

29. Are you:

- ☐ 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?

- ☐ 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 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 **Monday, 16 February 2026** and Full Council on **Thursday, 26 February 2026**.

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 (West Northamptonshire Council, One Angel Square (Service Yard), Angel Street, Northampton, NN1 1ED) by **12pm on Monday, 19 February 2026**.

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, 3 February 2026**.

Return address:

Budget Consultation Response
West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square (Service Yard)
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED