



Equality Screening Assessment (ESA)

This form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on protected groups within our community and/or workforce. Please complete with reference to the [Guidance Notes](#).

1: Proposal

Requirement	Details
Title of proposal:	Draft Budget Proposals for North Northamptonshire Council 2025/26.
Type of proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• new or change of policy,• new or change to service.	A budget to set the financial position of the authority for the financial year ending 2026. The draft proposals within the budget set out the financial position taking account of new savings and additional investment requirements for 2025-26 onwards. The budget is designed to support the priorities of the Council as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan. The budget proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek to protect service levels• Continue the Local Council Tax Support Scheme at 25% which is the same as the previous year.• Support a core council tax increase of 2.99% and an adult social care precept of 2%

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, deliver efficiencies through service redesign, transformation and improvements in technology. • Investment within Adult Social Care relating to better the continuation of strength-based working alongside support to enhance the specialist care provision. • Improve income through proactive risk-based treasury management investment • Review the fees and charges in a number of areas to recognise inflationary impact and other changes. • Include a number of technical budget proposals which do not require an equality impact assessment. • Some efficiencies will not require a full impact assessment
<p>What is the objective of this proposal?</p>	<p>To set a balanced budget for the financial year ending 2026. Which, by statute, must be balanced financially. This requires the Council accounting for pressures on services that require investment as well as identifying savings and efficiencies in order to balance the budget.</p> <p>In setting the budget the Council will take into account the contents of the Equality Act (2010) which contains a range of rights, powers and obligations to assist in the drive towards equality. North Northamptonshire Council has a duty towards people who share 'Protected Characteristics' to have 'due regard' to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating discrimination;

Requirement	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting equality; • Fostering good relations. <p>Having due regard means public authorities must consciously consider or think about the need to do the three things set out in the public sector equality duty.</p> <p>The Council must demonstrate compliance with the duties in its decision-making processes, which it does so by requiring decisions made at Executive to be accompanied, where appropriate, by Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to measure the effect of the proposed decision or policy on people with protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender reassignment • Marriage and civil partnership • Pregnancy and maternity • Race • Religion and belief (including no belief) • Sex • Sexual orientation <p>The budget will underpin the key commitments contained within the Council's Corporate Plan which has the following six thematic policy areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people to lead active, fulfilled lives – helping people be more active, independent, and fulfilled.

Requirement	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building better, brighter futures – caring for young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish. • Developing safe and thriving places – enabling a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit. • Creating a green, sustainable environment – taking a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come. • Building connected communities – ensuring communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and areas where they live. • Developing modern public services – proving efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities.
<p>Who will be consultation on this proposal? And when? (List all the groups / communities, including dates)</p>	<p>Executive to approve draft budget on: 19 December 2024</p> <p>Consultation on the budget will commence as soon as practical after the draft budget has been approved and end on 24th January 2025, covering a five-week period</p>
<p>Did the consultation highlight any impact on protected groups? (If yes, give details)</p>	<p>The Equality Screening Assessment will be reviewed when the consultation has concluded.</p>
<p>What processes are in place to monitor and review the equality impact of this proposal?</p>	<p>Feedback from the wider consultation process and the comments from the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.</p>

Requirement	Details
Who will approve this proposal? (Committee, PGG, CLT)	Executive and Council

2: Equality Consideration

In turn, consider each protected group and question whether the proposal seeks to:

- Eliminate discrimination,
- Foster good relations,
- Remove barriers,

Protected Groups Look at each group in turn. Will that group be impacted differently by the proposal to other protected groups? How? Why?	General Equality Duty Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data to show who is in this group. • Consider how they are impacted by the outcomes and during the process. • Whose perspective does this need looking at from? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees • Customers • Contractors 	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there levelling up opportunities for a particular group? • Can you... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove disadvantage? • improve access/support? • collect more data to be more informed? 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Neutral • Negative
Age Are different age ranges impacted differently?	<p>School age people The Dedicated School Grants (DSG) forms part of the North Northamptonshire Council budget. It focuses on the funding for schools and early years settings, as well as other specific education related costs. – It is expected that the Statutory Override will continue for this financial year.</p> <p>Free school meals vouchers for eligible children during the school holidays will continue in this budget year. Implications for this not extended beyond 2025-26 is being explored.</p> <p>The budget allows for capital investment to be made to improve the condition and building programme of the school estate.</p>	<p>There is the opportunity for investment to both protect vital services and invest in service change. This will allow for demand and cost increases in services, particularly Adult Social Care, and Children's Services.</p> <p>The Home to Transport Team are looking at ways to make cost savings through efficiencies. With a view to ensuring that the Council is not just providing transport in line with statutory requirements and the Council's policies but also ensuring we get best value from the market.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p>

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	NCT will continue to deliver targeted transformation projects, with financial commitments allocated to placement efficiency, improving outcomes for children, exploitation hub, edge care services, valuing care and the MASH review. <u>Over 18 years Adult Services</u> Adults Services have a responsibility to make sure that people over 18 who live in their areas are provided with an assessment of need, and where eligible provided with support.		
Sex Is one sex impacted more than another?	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability Is one type of disability impacted more than others?	<u>Education</u> There is significant pressure on the high needs block that supports children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities age 0 to 25 years. Nationally in 2023 the number of new Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) increased by 27% and is expected to continue to increase. Since 2021 the number of EHCPs in North Northamptonshire has more than doubled. There are pressures nationally in providing the services to support the education of children with additional needs. Whilst the funding has been increased, this has	To mitigate the pressures on High Need Blocks we propose to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a multifaceted strategy to address the current and legacy pressures on the DSG budget. • Form a new DSG 'Dedicated Schools/High needs block' Team to drive and implement plans and strategies. • Conduct a rapid review of all independent sector placements. • Develop an alternative delivery model to deliver greater integration and inclusion for children and young people. 	Neutral

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	<p>not reflected the full increase in the needs that are being identified.</p> <p>There is an inherited structural High Needs deficit from NCC. In addition, there was an outstanding backlog of EHCP assessments in the system. These assessments are now meeting the 20weeks waiting period but have caused overspend on the High Needs Block DSG budget allocation. To secure substantial additional High Needs Block Funding from the DfE, we must demonstrate commitment to reduce the HNB deficit. The Council will work with the DfE to develop a Deficit Management Plan.</p> <p><u>Adult Services</u> Adult services have a responsibility to provide physical or psychological support to people with a disability to enable them to live a full life. It is also has a responsibility to promote wellbeing and helping people stay independent for as long as possible. It is likely that additional pressures will result from demographic increases over the medium to long term planning period. Provision will need to be made for the national Living Wage increase. During the last couple of years North Northamptonshire have seen a significant increase in the number of clients requiring care. The growth reflects this increase in client numbers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a comprehensive strategic review of all education and Inclusion Services. • Develop a multidimensional dynamic early help team. • Improve strategic modelling around sufficiency forecasting. • Review the high cost SEND pupil placements. • Consult with schools on the Schools Block and High Needs School Block budget setting. • Review requirements for the 'Falling Pupil Roll Fund' for 2025-26' <p><u>Adult Services</u> The budget requirements for Adult Social Care will continue to be monitored with demographic trends and reflecting the on-going impact of external factors and the move toward a more integrated care system with Health partners.</p> <p>Efficiency savings, increase client contributions and savings from Strength Based Practice will contribute to being able to deliver a service that meets demand.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>


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Gender Reassignment Will there be an impact on people who are trans?	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Gender Reassignment.	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Race Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another?	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Race.	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Sexual Orientation Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Sexual Orientation.	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Marriage & Civil Partnership Note: Applies to employment proposals only.	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Pregnancy & Maternity Are people who are pregnant, or have a baby of 6 months old or younger, impacted by this proposal?	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Religion or Belief Does the proposal impact people differently depending on their religion or belief?	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on individuals in relation to Religion or Belief	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral
Care Experience Does the proposal impact someone who has been in care differently to someone who has	Neutral. The initial impact assessment has not highlighted any negative or positive impacts on	Any concerns regarding the impact in relation to this protected group will be highlighted through the consultation	Neutral

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not. Please also refer to the care experience guidance notes .	individuals in relation to those who may have been in care.		
Health & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health behaviours (E.g. diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking) 2. Support (E.g. community cohesion, rural isolation) 3. Socio economic (E.g. income, education). 4. Environment (E.g. green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards). 	<p>There is a proposed increase of 4.99% in Council Tax to enable the council continue to deliver vital services. Those that are exempt from paying council tax due to financial hardship will not be impacted.</p> <p>There will be no change to the Local Tax Support Scheme which will continue at it's current rate of 25%.</p> <p>Homelessness has been significantly impacted by the ongoing challenges of the health service, external markets and wider economic market. Additional spend to prevent homelessness, to reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>To date the Climate Change Investment Fund, has allocated funding for internal projects to save on carbon emissions. Further funding requests are also in the pipeline for 2024/25. Progress for the fund is reported through the Sustainable Communities Executive Advisory Panel</p>	Homelessness – there are efficiency savings within the service that have been identified that to ensure continuity of service.	

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
<p>What impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? No Impact, Positive Impact, Negative Impact or a combination? Any negative impact will result in an overall negative impact.</p>	Overall, a positive impact
<p>Does an Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found.)</p>	No – not at this stage. This will be considered in light of the consultation.
<p>Is this document going to be published with the relevant report? If yes, include link to location.</p>	Yes copy attached to the Committee Report
<p>Does the associated proposal meet our accessibility requirements? Writing for Inclusion Guidance</p>	Yes

4: Ownership

Question	Response
Directorate	Finance and Performance
Service area	Finance
Lead officer's name	Claire Edwards
Lead officer's job title	Executive Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
Lead officer's email address	Claire.Edwards@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead officer's signature	
Date completed	5 th December 2024

Question	Response
Confirm Lead Officer has completed Equality Impact Assessments iLearn Module .	

Completed forms must be sent to [NNC Equalities](#)