



Northampton
TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2ND DECEMBER 2024 -18:00

To: Members of the Environmental Services Committee:

Councillors Stevens, (Chair), Kilbride (Deputy Chair), Ashraf, Brown, Choudary, Fuchshuber, Joyce, McNicholas, Meredith, Miah, Soan and Tarasiewicz

Distributed electronically to all other councillors for information.

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Environmental Services Committee of Northampton Town Council to be held at the Committee Room, Northampton Town Council Offices, Guildhall on Monday 2nd December 2024 at 18:00.

Public participation is in accordance with the Town Council's public participation policy. Members of public will need to contact the Town Clerk in advance if they wish to speak on any agenda item.

Stuart Carter
Town Clerk
26 November 2024

Guildhall
Northampton
NN1 1DE

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AND ASK QUESTIONS TO THE PROGRESS OF ANY ITEMS – ATTACHED**
Pages 3 - 7
- 4. CHAIR'S REPORT**
To follow
- 5. NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM UPDATE**
Attached *Pages 9 – 13*
- 6. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE**
Verbal update to be given
- 7. BUDGET PRINCIPLES 2025/26 – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ELEMENT**
Report attached *Pages 15 – 16*
- 8. ANY FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM, LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Kilbride (Vice Chair), Ashraf, Choudary, Meredith, McNicholas, Miah and Soan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: S Carter (Town Clerk) and F Barford (Democratic Services Committee)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Fuchshuber and Tarasiewicz

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made. Meredith & Stevens non-pecuniary as allotment holders.

13. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2024 AND ASK QUESTIONS TO THE PROGRESS OF ANY ITEMS

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th June 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

14. BUDGET REPORT UPDATE

The Chair stated that the focus of the next meeting would be on budget setting for the upcoming financial year (2025-26). A Councillor raised concerns about the increase in costs related to the Northampton in Bloom budget code and asked whether any work had been undertaken to improve its sustainability. The Chair responded that the Event & Project Officer responsible for Bloom had provided a report, which was included in the agenda and would be discussed under the relevant item.

The Town Clerk, in response to a query, stated that he believed the majority of the planters were owned by the Town Council, but he would confirm this.

Clerk's note: The Town Council own all the planters and baskets located in and around the town centre. The additional planters for the wards are hired.

A Councillor asked whether other suppliers had been contacted for quotes to ensure value for money. The Town Clerk suggested that the maintenance of Northampton in Bloom might be included within the broader legacy contract inherited from the former Borough Council, which is set to expire in 2028.

A Councillor questioned why only a percentage of the Environmental Project's budget had been spent. The Chair referred to his report and expressed the view that appointing a dedicated officer could help facilitate more environmental projects.

A Councillor suggested that a good initiative would be to replace some of the previously removed street trees. The Chair stated that he would circulate a tree policy he had formulated. A Councillor

also raised the possibility of supporting residents to come together and organise the replanting of street trees within their local areas.

Another Councillor noted that residents in their ward had expressed concerns about the number of trees and the subsidence issues affecting neighbouring properties. A Councillor recommended contacting existing groups with expertise in urban planting, as they could provide the necessary knowledge and resources. Another Councillor suggested reaching out to the relevant Tree Officers at West Northamptonshire Council for further information on urban tree planting.

NOTED

ACTIONS: to establish who the WNC tree officer is.

15. CHAIR'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The Chair referred to his report that was circulated with the agenda for information. The report was **NOTED**.

16. CHAIR'S VERBAL UPDATE ON THE JOINT WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL AND PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE SUMMIT PLANNING FOR AUTUMN 2024

The Chair explained that the summit would take place on 9th October 2024 at Delapré Abbey, Northampton. He continued, noting that the steering group, which includes other parish councils and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), had been meeting to discuss the organisation of the summit. The summit will focus on three key themes: communicating climate change, food, and biodiversity, with activities designed to encourage parish councils to take action on these issues. He added that thirty parish councils had registered to attend, with bookings managed by NCALC.

A Councillor asked whether well-established residents' associations could be invited to future events. The Chair responded that, if the summit proves successful, the intention is to hold additional smaller events throughout the year, focusing on these themes and other related topics.

The Town Clerk stated that the steering group had discussed expanding attendance to other organisations, such as residents' associations, but it was agreed that this would be a pilot event, with the possibility of inviting more participants in the future. In response to a question, the Chair explained that it is hoped future events will be held in larger venues to accommodate greater attendance.

NOTED

17. BLOOM UPDATE

A Councillor commented that the floral displays were more colourful and fuller in size this year and congratulated all those involved. Another Councillor suggested the possibility of holding a gardening competition. The Town Clerk responded by explaining that this year, the Town Council was hosting the 'It's Your Neighbourhood Awards,' which focused on community groups participating, with an awards ceremony planned.

A Councillor noted that the former Borough Council had run similar initiatives but with a larger staff and budget. The Town Clerk added that the Town Council was planning to apply to take part

in Midlands in Bloom, a competition that requires significant resources to complete.

NOTED

18. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that there had been a fire at the Southfields Allotment site, which caused damage to the fence of a neighbouring homeowner. He has requested that IdVerde investigate the potential causes of the fire. He further noted that additional works had been completed at the Billing Road allotment to resolve a water leak. During these works, an additional leak was discovered, and he would meet with the supplier to discuss measures to mitigate the issue, as the site has experienced a high number of leaks.

The Town Clerk informed the committee that trough repairs had taken place at Harlestone Allotments. He also noted that a complaint had been received from the Graspin Lane Allotment regarding overgrown brambles and trees on the site. The Chair stated that discussions with IdVerde regarding repairs and maintenance were planned.

A Councillor requested clarification on the management of the allotments. Another Councillor responded that the Town Council is the landowner of the allotment sites, while IdVerde administers the day-to-day management and some maintenance in return for the income generated.

The Town Clerk added that, as the Town Council is the landowner, it is responsible for paying the water bills and for any infrastructure repairs, such as fencing and pipes.

The Chair suggested that an Environmental Services Officer could assist with managing the allotments alongside other projects, if agreed. He also noted that discussions would need to take place to determine whether the management of the allotments would be taken in-house when the IdVerde contract expires.

A Councillor raised the concern that the Town Council does not own any landscaping equipment, and the income received from the allotments would not cover these costs. Another Councillor suggested that the more feasible approach would be for the allotments to be self-managed and self-sufficient. A Councillor also stated that a strategy needs to be developed in preparation for 2028, when the IdVerde contract ceased.

NOTED

19. TO DISCUSS THE COUNCIL'S POSITION ON THE PREVIOUS DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Chair stated that the Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2021, with the aim of placing climate change at the forefront of the Council's activities. The Chair added that an Environmental Services Officer would help to accelerate the Council's partnership efforts to combat climate change and work towards achieving net-zero.

A Councillor suggested that there were ways the Council could reduce its carbon output, such as changing the Mayor's vehicle. The Chair agreed that discussing this could lead to ideas on how to reduce carbon emissions.

A Councillor further stated that decisions made by the Council should consider the environmental impacts of its operations. The Chair noted that the Climate Change Forum had many ideas on how to speed up the Council's progress in tackling climate change.

20. TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF AIR QUALITY IN NORTHAMPTON TOWN – SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEM FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair shared information available on the Town Council's website information relating to Air Quality and an interactive mapping demonstrating air quality in Northamptonshire. A Councillor commented that air quality was very important to people's health and wellbeing. Another Councillor commented the resources on the website were very beneficial to assist residents in being better informed.

NOTED

21. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICERS REPORT ON WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S DRAFT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

RESOLVED: It was agreed that Members would send any comments to the Chair and the Democratic Services Officer for submission.

22. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICERS REPORT ON WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (2024-2030) CONSULTATION

A Councillor commented that the Committee should be mindful of the location of EV charging points in residential areas, as these could reduce the availability of on-street parking and potentially increase congestion.

The Chair suggested that, if an extension had been granted, the DSO should share the process for submitting comments with Committee members, rather than bringing the matter back to the Committee.

NOTED

23. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICERS REPORT ON WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Democratic Services Officer explained WNC were requesting views on what should be part of their Climate Change Strategy and views could be submitted via the dedicated consultation page

RESOLVED: It was agreed that Councillors submit their individual views to West Northamptonshire Council's Climate Change Strategy.

24. ANY FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- **Environmental Services Committee's Budget:** the next meeting 2nd December 2024 will focus on discussing and setting this committee's budget for Financial Year 2025-26.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 7:50PM

Environmental Services Committee December 2024

Northampton in Bloom

Report by Nicole Haviland, Events and Projects Officer

Purpose of report: To update on the Northampton in Bloom project for 2024- 2025.

Recommended: That subject to any comments, the committee note the report. Officers will work with Northampton in Bloom Working party, keeping them informed as the project progresses.

2025 Summer Orders

In early October, we gathered the 2024 summer flowers and placed an order with Idverde for the 2025 contractual town flowers, themed around the ‘Great Fire.’ This selection will feature vibrant colours of red, orange, and yellow. There have been a few minor amendments to the town order including the addition to Fish St and Dychurch Ln hanging baskets and the removal of the Shoelast plants.

NTC proposes to continue our partnership with Plantscape for the ward planters. Plantscape is well-acquainted with our project and has provided a competitive quote. Additionally, the brackets they installed last year will remain in place for another year, making it financially sensible to proceed with Plantscape for this upcoming year. The brackets will be removed after the second year, allowing us the option to explore new suppliers if desired.

Budgets

2024-2025

£63,930 has been spent from this year’s £87,172 budget, leaving £23,242 left for the remainder of the year.

2025-2026

To maintain the Bloom activities in line with the successful format of previous years, we have allocated a budget for sustainable planting, as well as for our participation in Northampton in Bloom and the associated projects and costs. The estimated total for next year is projected to be £75,497.49.

We propose that £23,242 from the 2024-2025 budget be earmarked for the 2025-2026 period, with an additional allocation of £60,000 designated for the 2025-2026 budget.

The estimated costs are detailed in the table below. Please note that not all expenses have confirmed quotes at this time and not all projects/costs have been identified at this stage. Additionally, it's important to highlight that the cost of the town centre flowers has seen a significant increase of 32%.

Description – Category A: Horticulture	Value
Contractual Town Centre summer flowers 2025	£33,545.49
Watering for Cllr additional baskets 2025	Approx. £9,815.00 (based on 14% increase from contractual flowers quote)

Cllr additional locations for Summer 2024 flowers	£23,335.00
Description – Category B: Sustainability	Value
Sustainable Watering	Approx. £700
Sustainable planters- maintenance of existing and 1 x further planter to plant + set of new panels	£2,000.00
Sustainable Projects (Bloom)	£1,000
Description – Category C: Community	Value
IYN Awards Prizes and frames	£150
IYN Room Hire & Refreshments	£670
Photography (Site Visits & IYN Awards)	£750
Community Projects/Competitions	£450
Description – Route/Tour Date	Value
Heritage Bus Hire (Practice and Judging Day)	£700
On the Day requirements (Photography, gifts, food)	£450
Bloom Portfolio & Display Boards	£800
Route Community Projects (Restorations, Route Clean Up, Decoration, Window Dressing Comp)	£950
Total	£75,497.49

To facilitate our entry into Northampton in Bloom, we propose an increase in the advertising budget to ensure that we can produce the necessary amount of promotional materials. The estimated costs are detailed in the table below. Please be aware that not all expenses have confirmed quotes at this time.

Advertising and Promotion of Bloom	Value
Design and Print Bloom Pull-up Banner and Leaflets	£675
Poem Lampost Banners and Abington Park Roadside Board Design and Installation	£500
Window Stickers and Bus Station Posters	£375
Total	£1,550.00

IYN- It's your Neighbourhood Awards

On Wednesday, 23rd October, the NTC hosted an awards ceremony at the Guildhall, which was a great way to celebrate the great work done by various community groups. The event not only honoured their achievements but also encouraged collaboration and the sharing of ideas and resources to boost community projects in Northampton. To keep the momentum going, the groups set up a WhatsApp group for easier idea-sharing. The Mayor and Cllr. Andrew Stevens led the evening, presenting their certificates and reports from East Midlands in Bloom (EMiB) that highlighted how the groups did. All groups were highly praised and either received a '5 for Outstanding' or '4 for Thriving.'

Schools

Greenfields SEN School was invited to the ceremony; however, they were unable to attend due to availability. We are currently in discussions to arrange a visit to the school and extend an invitation to the Mayor to present their award in person.

Sustainable Planting

NTC has partnered with the Royal & Derngate to facilitate the relocation of the Coronation planter from its original position outside V&Bs at the top of Guildhall Road to the main entrance of Derngate. The Royal & Derngate has taken on the responsibility for its maintenance. The planter has successfully been moved and planted, and collaborated with Bees Be Happy in Headlands to source suitable plants.

Additionally, the Royal & Derngate plans to install new panels on the planter to highlight their environmental initiatives. They have agreed to either retain one of NTC's panels or incorporate NTC's support into their new design.

Bees Be Happy are eager to collaborate with NTC and the CCF group to design and source plants for the remaining sustainable planters, one on Abington street and one on Gladstone Rd. Partnering with a local community group will not only enhance the project but also improve the Bloom 2025 portfolio.

Wellness Walks, Abington Park:

During the summer months, Abington Park showcased the Wellness Walks, featuring poetry by James McNerny. The display boards have now been taken down, generously cleaned by the West Northants L.I.V.E team, and stored away for the winter season.

We have received encouraging feedback from the park rangers, who report that visitors have thoroughly enjoyed the Wellness Walks, often sharing positive comments as they pass by. Given its popularity, NTC and the Abington Park rangers are collaborating on a proposal to introduce a Winter or Spring trail.

In early October, two roadside boards were installed at Abington Park, providing a striking way to promote our upcoming events. They currently feature advertisements for our five events: Diwali, Fireworks, Remembrance, and two Christmas events. A new design will be implemented in the new year to refresh our messaging.

East Midlands in Bloom Entry: Northampton

A Bloom meeting was held in late September where we finalised the order with WNC/Idverde for the town flowers. During the meeting, the group provided feedback on the ward flowers and collectively decided to maintain the existing colour scheme instead of aligning with the Great Fire theme in the town. This will ensure we are meeting our sustainability and biodiversity initiatives, offering nectar-rich flowers around Northampton.

The Bloom working group party are currently working on a plan to meet the East Midlands in Bloom awards criteria – with the view to be ready for judging in 2025, when the town will have had all renovation work completed. A walking route around the town centre and a driving route (via a Northampton Transport Heritage vintage bus) into the town council wards has been agreed by members of the Bloom Working Group. A lunch will be paid for from the NTC Bloom budget which will thank all partners, volunteers, groups and judges for attending and taking part.

The Bloom team has begun compiling the portfolio for July 24–July 25, which will document positive news stories, social media posts, and an overview of the recent It's Your Neighbourhood visits. This portfolio will highlight groups, activities, and locations that could not be integrated into the main route.

Additionally, a new and simplified Bloom logo has been created and will be launched alongside the upcoming promotional materials.



Bloom Grants Scheme

There have been no new applications for the NTC Bloom Grant scheme for 2024, and it is unlikely that we will receive any additional funding until the new year. However, we are pleased to announce that a total of six groups successfully applied for and received the £200 start-up grant to support their sustainable planting initiatives. These organisations include:

- C2C Social Action
- Friends of Billing Road Cemetery
- St Giles Community Group
- Northampton BID
- Friends of St Peters Marefair
- Broadmead Community Church

Please visit <https://www.northamptontowncouncil.gov.uk/northampton-in-bloom-start-up-gr> for more information.

Environmental Services Committee

Budget Principles 2025/26 – Environmental Services Committee element

Report by town Clerk

Purpose of report: Top ask the committee to set their budget for the cost headings under their management to go to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

Recommended: That the committee puts forward its recommended budget for consideration by the Policy and Finance Committee

Members will be aware that the council has begun its budget process for 2025/26.

The Environment Committee has some key budget headings within its remit. These are:

- 4536 – Northampton in Bloom
- 4400 – Allotments Repairs and Maintenance
- 4560 – Environmental Projects
- 4561 – Environmental Grants

The process for setting the budget is as follows:

1. Committees consider their elements and make recommendations
2. Policy and Finance Committee consider these and draft final budget for recommendation to the Council
3. Council considers final budget and subject to any final amendments approves the final budget in January
4. The precept request is sent to the WNC who are the precepting authority and collect it on behalf of town and parish councils and the police and fire authority.

Northampton in Bloom is the major project at present, which is entirely managed NTC officers. There is an intention to enter East Midlands in Bloom in 2025/26. There is accompanying report that goes into detail with regards to the proposed bloom spend.

The Chair and RFO have gone through the budget and have drafted the below for the committee's consideration. It proposes a reduction of £5,000 in each of the 4560 and 4561 budget headings. IT is proposed that the bloom expenditure remains broadly the same for the coming year, but that some of the spending comes from earmarked reserves. It is also recommended that the budget stays the same for the allotments maintenance with any unspent funds being earmarked.

Committee members are asked to consider the below budget and put forward their views.

Environmental Open Spaces & Environment	2024- 25 Budget	Apr - Sept Actual	Forecast					2024- 25 TOTAL	Variance	2025- 2026 Proposed Budget	Comments		
			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb					Mar	
1537	Northampton in Bloom Income	0	5,200						5,200	-5,200			
	SUB TOTAL	0	5,200	0	0	0	0	0	5,200	-5,200	0.00		
4015	Travel and Subsistence	100	0						0	100	Propose to centralise and move all to cc Policy & Finance add £621 (101) and £100 (210) and £300 (315)		
4140	Advertising and Marketing	1,000	837						837	163	centralise- move 4140 from all cc to Policy & Finance add £1030(110) and £1000 (210) and £12000 (315) total should be £22,330 excluding what Connor had spent £,185 as there was no budget for it		
4536	Northampton in Bloom	87,172	63,134	796					63,930	23,242	Propose £60,000 on the basis that £23k from WNC was used to support the £87k budget last year. As there is no money (except the £5200) this year suggest earmarking any unspent money to support Bloom in F-Y25/26		
4560	Environmental Projects	25,000	2914						1,415	23,585	Propose to reduce Environment projects on the basis that it hasn't been used this year.		
4561	Environmental Grants	25,000	4,455						4,455	20,545	Propose to reduce Environment grants on the basis that it hasn't been utilised this year.		
	SUB TOTAL	138,272	68,717	1,920	0	0	0	0	70,637	67,635	100,000.00		
	Plus Transfer from EMR		4,455								0		
Allotments 230		Budget	Actual	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance	Proposed Budget	Comments
4400	Repairs & Maintenance	60,000	9,607	4,354						13,961	46,039	60000	Propose to leave as £60,000 with any unspent funds at the end of the year to be earmarked for Repairs.
	SUB TOTAL	60,000	9,607	4,354	0	0	0	0	0	13,961	46,039	60,000.00	