

WNC Councillors Report

Braunston & Crick Ward

To:	Barby & Onley Parish Council Meeting
Date:	12th January 2026
From:	Cllr Rosie Humphreys Cllr Andrew Simpson

1. WNC Matters

a) WNC Draft Budget 2026/27

The Council has published its draft budget for 2026/27 for public consultation. The top-level headlines are:

- Council Tax is proposed to increase by the maximum allowed of 4.99% (taking the Council's average charge for a band D equivalent property to £1,960.14 per year).
- Key areas requiring additional spend are Adult Social Care (£16m), Children's Services (£9m) and Central Services (£11m). The first two have been driven by increasing demand and costs whilst the third is to support the administrations capital spend and borrowing.
- Around £25m of savings have been identified to balance the budget.
- A number of fees and charges are being increased with proposals to introduce car parking charges in Daventry, Towcester and Brackley WNC car parks.
- Increase garden waste collection subscriptions by £20 per annum
- Total council expenditure is c£459m for 2026/27 (excludes ring fenced schools budget of £552m).
- It is worth noting that Adult Social Care and Children's Services takes up c58% of the council's expenditure.
- It is also worth noting that election promises made by Reform UK regarding council tax, DOGE style efficiencies and reducing borrowing appear not to have been realised.

Consultation closes on 3rd February. You can see more details and submit your responses online at [Council Budget 2026/27 | West Northamptonshire Council](#) There will also be a budget question time event on Tuesday 13th January from 6.30pm – you can register to attend here [Your Money, Your Say: Join our Budget Question Time event | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

b) Local Development Plan

The council is due to go out to public consultation on the final version of its Local Development Plan following approval at a Full Council meeting on the 19th January.

In terms of the impact on Barby & Onley the draft plan has included a review of the village confines and categorised Barby as a 'Secondary Service Village' whilst Onley is categorised under 'Other villages.'

There are a number of other changes from the previous draft plans and in particular there is now a 'Rural Area Housing Requirement' which sets out what growth is needed

to provide an additional c3,800 homes in the rural area. This growth being provided from Primary or Secondary Service Villages within their boundaries.

It is proposed that this is led by the Neighbourhood Plan or a Development Plan Document for each of the villages impacted which will need to be reviewed within 2 years.

For Barby there is now a minimum additional requirement of 58 houses being provided by the end of the plan period (2043).

Rosie questioned this change at the council's recent Planning Policy Committee as it no longer appears to be based on a local housing needs assessment or existing Neighbourhood Development Plans. How the numbers for each village have been arrived at needs better explanation as uses a complex formular. Also, the proposed requirement for Neighbourhood Development Plans to be reviewed to accommodate the minimum housing numbers currently comes with no additional resources to support Parish Councils.

You can see details here [Agenda for Planning Policy Committee on Thursday 8th January 2026, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council](#) and here [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Council, 19/01/2026 17:00](#)

c) Active Travel Strategy consultation

This is a plan for 'walking, wheeling and cycling' in West Northamptonshire and contains separate 'action plans' around mobility hubs and railways. As we have reported before there is an opportunity with the proposed new Rugby Parkway station at Houlton to press for improved cycleways and walkways connecting our villages and accessing local services.

We therefore strongly urge both the Parish Council and individuals to respond to this consultation to help support the opportunity for improvements.

[Help Shape: Draft Active Travel Strategy, Mobility Hub and Rail Action Plans - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#) The consultation ends on 27th January 2026.

d) Review of Blue Badge Scheme

Rosie is leading a working group looking at issues raised by the Lib Dems motion to Full Council in November which highlighted problems with badge renewals requiring extensive information to be provided. Also, general delays and in some cases multiple badges being issued to one person. The council has accepted some problems with the current system and processes. Please encourage residents to provide us with feedback of their experience of the current scheme.

2. Local Issues

a) Rugby Local Plan – Final Consultation & Submission

Rugby Borough Council has commenced on a final 6-week consultation over its updated Local Plan which covers the period up to 2042.

We are delighted to see that the new Local Plan significantly protects the Rainsbrook Valley by removing previous development sites off Kilsby Lane at Hillmorton and off Barby Lane. The Lodge Farm site is also not considered as an area for development opportunities.

The plan now focuses more on using brownfield land and adding enhanced protections which is a change heavily influenced by public consultation and local advocacy against housing proposals in the valley, though new development will still occur nearby, like 250 homes opposite Houlton. The Rainsbrook Valley is now designated as a 'landscape of elevated sensitivity'. This gives it some added protection when considering development options.

Rosie and Andrew are to meet with WNC Planning Officers to see if a similar designation can be agreed for the WNC side of the valley.

b) Planning Application No. 2025/4756 Land at School Close, Barby

After a resident raised some concerns about this proposed development at the last Parish Council meeting Andrew approached WNC with regards to the status of the unadopted road. They responded as follows:

It is important to note that West Northamptonshire Council cannot simply adopt a road. Road adoption is a developer-led process, and the responsibility for initiating and completing the necessary steps lies with Northamptonshire Rural Housing. Should they wish to apply for School Close to be adopted, we would welcome their contact and the opportunity to explore what may be achievable. However, it is possible that School Close was not constructed to an adoptable standard. If it remains private, any subsequent roads branching from School Close will also remain privately maintained unless they connect to an adopted road, as adopted roads must form a continuous network.

To progress an adoption application, Northamptonshire Rural Housing would need to:

- *Provide construction drawings and detailed information about the road.*
- *Allow inspections and, if required, core testing of the highway to confirm its construction.*
- *Complete any remedial works identified during inspections.*
- *Ensure sewers are vested with the Water Authority.*
- *Arrange for any street lighting to be adopted by Barby & Onley Parish Council (if not already).*
- *Investigate and resolve the absence of adopted surface water drainage for highway water, as indicated by our review of the statutory undertakers' database.*
- *Enter into a Section 38 Agreement with the WNC*

All of these steps must be completed before any potential adoption can be considered.

c) DIRFT IV

We have been contacted by Prologis about their proposals for further expansion of DIRFT the premise for DIRFT IV is 'the ongoing and sustained demand from

businesses to join the DIRFT cluster and to add further capacity to meet that demand and maximise the opportunities of the new rail terminal'.

They have stated that 'DIRFT IV is therefore an emerging proposal for a next phase of high-quality and master planned expansion, bridging over the M1 and focused on land immediately to the east of the current DIRFT footprint. It is consistent with national policy for freight on rail and infrastructure investment.'

This will need to be considered alongside the updated West Northants Local Development Plan. For Barby and the local area however it highlights that development ambitions are on the other side of the M1.

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