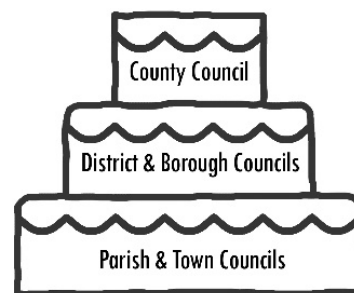


## All Change for Councils in Northamptonshire

Local government in Northamptonshire is changing. The existing system, which has been in place since the 1970s, is like a three-tier cake. The bottom layer is parish and town councils which typically cover one village or town. The middle layer is borough and district councils, which are responsible for things like planning applications, collecting the bins, tourism, and dealing with benefits. The top layer is the county council, which is responsible for things like social services, education, and highways.



From 1 April 2021 the top two layers of the cake are being replaced with one layer, known as unitary councils. There will be two in Northamptonshire: North Northamptonshire Council, and West Northamptonshire Council. Parish and town councils remain as they are.



*The new council's logo.*

West Northamptonshire Council will cover the area currently covered by Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, and South Northamptonshire Council. The area contains the towns of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley and nearly two hundred villages and hamlets. West Northamptonshire Council will be one of the larger unitary

councils in England. It will be responsible for all the services currently being provided in the area by the district, borough, and county councils.

The main reason for replacing the district, borough and county councils with unitary councils is to save money. Northamptonshire County Council had well-publicised financial issues in 2017 and 2018, which led to a government inspection of the council. The inspector's report recommended that creating unitary councils was the best solution.

Most people will not notice any difference, certainly in the first few years of the unitary councils. In fact, great efforts are being made to ensure that is the case. For example, the lorry collecting the rubbish might have a different logo on it, but the bins will still be collected. Council services will continue as normal, and any changes will be gradual.

From 2021 you will see three lines on your council tax bill. You will pay an amount for the parish or town council that looks after your village or town, an amount for Northamptonshire Police, and an amount for West Northamptonshire Council for all the council services it provides. The amount you pay to each body is set by that body.

West Northamptonshire Council will have 93 councillors, who will be chosen at the local elections on 6 May 2021. Some will be people who have been district, borough, and county councillors before; others will be new. Anyone over 18 and living in West Northamptonshire can put themselves forward to be a councillor. The councillors elected in 2021 will serve a four-year term of office and may seek re-election in 2025.

Council meetings are held in public, and all the information, reports, and papers for the meetings are published on the council's web site. Councils are open and democratic bodies and are accountable to the people they serve.

If you are interested to find out more about the changes happening to local government in Northamptonshire please visit <https://futurenorthantswest.org/>.