

Mini *eUpdate* from Northants CALC

To Member Councils in Northamptonshire:

[Please read and circulate to all councillors]

It's a **Thursday** mini *eUpdate* this week due to the long weekend coming up.

Procurement Changes

As mentioned in previous *eUpdates*, open invitations for local authority contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT must be published on Find a Tender (<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk>) rather than on Contracts Finder, which is now defunct. This is one of the changes brought about by the **Procurement Act 2023**, which came into force on 24 February 2025. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has produced new Model Financial Regulations and new Model Standing Orders to reflect the requirements of the Procurement Act and, as promised, Northants CALC has produced a paper that member councils can take to a council meeting just to approve the minor things that have changed. Therefore, councils in Northamptonshire have the option of **either** adopting the new templates whole (customisation to each council's circumstances is required) **or** approving the minor wording adjustments and simply updating their existing Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. You'll find the council paper and the full new templates at www.northantscalc.gov.uk/procurement_changes.

Marking VE and VJ Day

In March, the government announced a series of celebrations and events to mark the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe (VE) and Victory over Japan (VJ) Days that will share stories of the Second World War generation. Commemorations will begin on the early spring Bank Holiday, 5 May 2025, with the Cenotaph dressed in Union flags, a Military procession, and a flypast in London. Street parties will also be held across the country and a ceremony on HMS Belfast will start community celebrations. The 8 May 2025 will see a service of remembrance and thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey followed by a concert. The 80th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East will be marked with a service on 15 August 2025. **Councils are encouraged to promote street parties and community get-togethers on Monday 5 May 2025.** The National Lottery Community Fund is making their 'Awards for All' programme available to organisations to bid for grants to support communities coming together for these commemorative events. A dedicated interactive website has been launched with latest information and ways to get involved. See <https://ve-vjday80.gov.uk>.

Stress Awareness

April is Stress Awareness Month. Being a local council officer can be very stressful, and part-time clerks can be very isolated as they typically work from home and are the only employee in the organisation. Of course, being a councillor can also be stressful, but whereas there is no specific legal duty for a council to protect the mental wellbeing of its councillors, there is a moral responsibility to do so. The

Health and Safety Executive's Working Minds campaign (<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>) identifies five simple steps to help to prevent stress and support good mental health:

- **Reach** out and have conversations
- **Recognise** the signs and causes of stress
- **Respond** to any risks identified by agreeing action points
- **Reflect** on the actions taken – have things improved?
- **Make it routine** to check back in on how things are going

To learn more about stress and the early signs of stress, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/stress/>.

I hope you have a very good Easter weekend. 🐣🐰

Best regards,

Danny.