

Local Government Reorganisation – Full Council voted in favour for a one unitary authority. NCC now awaits governments response, following all submissions by District Councils and County Council.

Devolution

Following a discussion at full council on 16 October, Norfolk County Council's cabinet have voted in favour of proceeding with devolution.

Devolution will bring new powers and funding to boost jobs, transport, housing and growth in Norfolk and Suffolk. Under the Government's devolution priority programme, Norfolk and Suffolk have been offered:

- The transfer of powers and funding from Whitehall, to enable decisions on jobs, skills, transport and housing to be taken in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- A multi-million pound investment fund for 30 years, to spend on local priorities.

The new devolved powers and funding would be overseen by a mayor, elected by voters in May 2026, to lead a new combined authority.

Norfolk County Council Budget Consultation

The council's annual budget consultation launched on 27th October and people are being urged to take a look at the proposals and have their say.

Overall spending by the council is expected to increase next year, but this will not be enough to keep pace with inflation (the costs of providing our services) and expected increases in demand for our services - particularly in adult social care and children's services.

The county council is working to set a balanced budget, despite the need to save £41.6m in 2026-27.

The council want to find out what people think about their 2026-27 budget proposals. This year they are consulting on proposals to increase council tax and to seek feedback on saving proposals to help close the budget gap.

The county council have produced a budget factsheet, a brief guide to the annual budget – what it means, where the money comes from and where it goes, why council tax is going up, the challenges local authorities face, and our plans to fix the budget gap.

The consultation survey offers residents and local communities the opportunity to share any ideas they may have for saving public money.

The consultation closes on 15 December 2025.

Findings and final decisions will be made by the council in February 2026.

People can find out more and have their say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget.

People in Norfolk encouraged to attend organised displays this Bonfire Night

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is encouraging people to attend public fireworks displays this bonfire night, rather than setting off fireworks at home.

The advice comes from the service's Prevention team which works to keep people in the county safe by stopping fires from occurring.

Avian flu in Norfolk

The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) in England with mandatory biosecurity measures remains in place. This means all bird keepers (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) are required by law to take biosecurity precautions.

From 30 October 2025 Norfolk became one of the high risk areas where additional housing measures will apply to help protect birds from bird flu.

In Norfolk you must now house your birds if you keep either:

- more than 50 birds of any species
- any number of poultry (meaning birds that are kept to give away or sell eggs, poultry products or live birds)

You will not have to house your birds if you keep less than 50 birds and their eggs or poultry products are for your own use only.

Links to government updates are available on the county council's trading standards web pages [here](#).

If you wish to report breaches of bird flu rules, please email trading_standards@norfolk.gov.uk.

New Norfolk-wide highways contract

Norfolk County Council has appointed Kier as its new long-term contractor responsible for the maintenance and construction of the county's highway network.

Norfolk's highway network is one of the largest in the country, comprising around 6,000 miles of roads as well as extensive pedestrian and cycle paths. Kier will deliver a programme of highways maintenance and improvement, including road resurfacing and surface dressing, bridge works, drainage and the delivery of new transport infrastructure.

As part of the contract, Kier will invest in its existing site in Wymondham - upgrading facilities to reduce energy consumption and support the latest in sustainable construction and materials innovation, which will benefit the wider Norfolk economy.

A key feature of Kier's approach will be its commitment to local skills and employment. At any given time, Kier will employ at least 15 apprentices, providing structured training, professional qualifications, and career pathways for young people across Norfolk. The company will also run an annual 10-week programme for young people in care and care leavers, offering taster sessions, work experience, and employability skills, with support from supply chain partners.

Norfolk County Council Adoption Service

Norfolk is outperforming the national trend when it comes to recruiting adoptive parents. Whilst there has been a 12% drop in families considering adoption across England this year, Norfolk County Council's Adoption Service has seen a significant rise. In 2024/25, 43 adoptive households were approved in Norfolk - a 53% increase on the previous year. These included 37 couples and six single adopters.

This positive news comes as the council celebrates National Adoption Week (20–26 October), which this year focuses on dispelling myths about who can adopt. Research shows that many prospective adopters worry they need a “perfect” home, but the reality is that children simply need a welcoming and loving environment. In fact, 41% of adoptive parents surveyed live in homes with two bedrooms or fewer, 65% do not have a garden, and 25% live in rented accommodation.

Norfolk Adoption Service is currently seeking families for 10 children. If you or someone you know is considering adoption, please visit [Norfolk Adoption Services online](#) or call 01603 638343 for a friendly chat and details of upcoming information events.

National Update

Bus Services Act

The Bus Services Bill became [law](#) on 27 October 2025, which the Government intends will protect services and hand more power to local authorities.

It aims to empower local authorities to take greater control of bus services, improve reliability, and protect socially necessary routes.

The Act tightens requirements for cancelling routes and empowers councils to identify services which they deem as ‘socially necessary’.

The Act also includes plans to mandate staff – drivers and those based at bus stations – to undertake training to recognise and handle incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime, including violence against women and girls.

Further funding for local authorities running bus services will be agreed in the coming weeks.

Financial penalties for environmental offences – new consultation

Water companies who commit environmental offences could face quicker penalties of up to £500,000, under changes being considered by the government.

A [consultation has been launched](#) to expand and strengthen the current range of financial penalties available to the Environment Agency in a bid to clamp down on more offences.

The consultation closes on 3 December 2025

Carbon budget and growth delivery plan

The Government’s new [Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan](#) sets out how they propose to meet statutory carbon requirements under the Climate Change Act 2008 and reduce emissions in a way that lowers bills and secures good jobs. This is in line with their wider strategy, [Unlocking the benefits of the clean energy economy](#), published alongside the delivery plan.

Priorities include:

- Energy security and lower bills.
- Meeting decarbonisation targets.
- Good jobs and economic growth – creating new clean energy jobs.
- Improving nature and air quality to improve health.
- Retrofitting 5 million homes (with insulation, heat pumps, solar).

- Expanding EV infrastructure and zero-emission transport.

CQC State of Care report published

The Care Quality Commission's latest State of Care report highlights the severe pressures on adult social care – chronic workforce shortages, rising care requests (especially among working-age adults), and persistent underfunding.

Responding for the Local Government Association, Wendy Taylor praised councils' efforts to support growing numbers of people with innovative, preventative care, but said that the current trajectory was not sustainable, calling for improved funding with a long-term workforce strategy, stronger prevention and early intervention, and an overarching reform programme to help councils deliver on the Government's ambitions for care.

Menopause to be included in NHS Health Checks

The Department of Health has [announced](#) that menopause support will be added to England's routine NHS Health Checks for women over 40.

The addition of dedicated questions to the NHS Health Check about the menopause - free assessments offered to eligible adults aged 40 to 74 every 5 years - will benefit nearly 5 million women.

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