Norfolk's Crisis and Resilience Fund is supporting residents struggling with food, energy, heating oil and other household costs. This is particularly relevant locally because many rural properties depend on oil heating. Residents can call 0344 800 8020 or visit the Crisis and Resilience Fund, heating oil support or cost-of-living support pages.

The digital landline switchover remains a significant issue. The move from analogue to digital telephone services is due to complete in January 2027. Digital landlines normally depend on mains electricity, so vulnerable residents and people living in areas with poor mobile reception should talk to their provider about battery backup. Telecom providers are required to provide backup free to vulnerable customers, and Telecare users are also entitled to help with the switchover. Further information is available on the Norfolk County Council digital switchover page or email dv.engagement.query@ee.co.uk

Free digital support is also available through Norfolk's Tech Skills for Life programme. Community Tech Coaches help residents use smartphones and tablets and get online. Residents can call 01485 536420, 01603 306241 or 01493 448246, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

There are two particularly important County Council consultations. The Post-16 Travel Assistance consultation proposes increasing the standard parental contribution with lower contributions are proposed for eligible low-income families. This matters in Wells Division because many young people travel considerable distances to access sixth-form and college education. Respond on Your views on proposed changes to Norfolk County Council's Post 16 Travel Assistance Scheme - Norfolk County Council - Citizen Space. The consultation closes on 15 December 2026.

The Norfolk County Council budget consultation closes on 7 December 2026. The council faces a projected £35.927 million gap for 2027/28 and is seeking views on council tax and 86 proposals representing £32.273 million in efficiencies and cost reductions. Residents can respond at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget.

There is also a consultation outside the division on a nearly £21 million programme of walking, wheeling, cycling and public-space improvements in King's Lynn. It closes on 20 December 2026, with information available through the STARS consultation page.

Social worker drop-ins are available at Heritage House in Wells on 1 and 15 December, from 9.30am to 2.30pm. No appointment is required and telephone support can be arranged for residents unable to attend. Heritage House's number is 01238 711333. Similar sessions at the Glaven Centre in Blakeney are 4 and 15 December. Glaven Caring's number is 01263 740762.

The Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2026 on rural health highlighted issues familiar in North Norfolk, including an ageing population, long journeys to healthcare, limited public transport, recruitment difficulties and hidden rural poverty. In smaller rural areas, 28% of residents were aged 65 or over in 2024.

Home Fire Safety Visits are available for vulnerable residents, alongside the Government's Be Ready programme and Ready Together for community preparedness.

The Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service community will discuss fire preparedness with parishes. Let me know if you're interested and I will facilitate.

Previous safety testing had reportedly found around 60% of tested electric blankets, heat pads, heated throws and small heaters failing. I've asked for future testing sessions to be considered for Wells and Holt. Safety information is at www.norfolk.gov.uk/electricblankets.

Residents aged 60 and over have access to free workshops covering safer driving, Highway Code changes, health and vehicle technology. Individual GOLD driving sessions cost £42 and are free to residents receiving Pension Credit, subject to availability. I have been pressing for more sessions around Wells, Fakenham and Sheringham. Residents can contact the Road Safety Team on 01603 222195 or roadsafety@norfolk.gov.uk. Information is available from the Older Driver Workshop page.

An England-wide Avian Influenza Prevention Zone is in force. Enhanced biosecurity applies to all bird keepers, with additional housing requirements for people keeping 50 or more birds and those selling or giving away eggs, poultry products or live birds. Report dead wild birds to DEFRA on 03459 33 55 77.

The Government approved Norfolk's three-year SEND Reform Plan. It includes earlier support, increased inclusion in mainstream education, more mental health support, shorter neurodiversity assessment waits and plans to double Specialist Resource Bases by 2028. Approval also means around 90% of Norfolk's historic Dedicated Schools Grant deficit, approximately £185 million, is due to be repaid.

Norfolk and Suffolk agreed to proceed with a Mayoral Strategic Authority covering areas including transport, skills, housing and economic growth, supported by an investment fund exceeding £1.1 billion over 30 years. The first mayoral election is planned for May 2028. More information is available on the Norfolk devolution page and in the Norfolk and Suffolk devolution video.

Local Government Reorganisation is being considered again following the end of the Government's pause. No decision for Norfolk had been announced during this reporting period. District council elections remain expected in May 2027, with the Government timetable indicating shadow unitary elections in May 2028 and new councils from April 2029.

For help with County Council issues, residents can contact Victoria Holliday, County Councillor for Wells Division, on 01603 223037 or at victoria.holliday.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk.