

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT MAY 2024

First stages of work for £600 million-plus devolution deal

Subject to the Council agreeing a change of governance in July a considerable amount of work is getting underway to prepare for the implementation of the devolution deal in May 2025 including:

- The transfer of the Government's £12.8 million per year adult skills budget to Norfolk.
- How the county and district councils have worked on a pipeline of brownfield site regeneration projects, to develop up to 580 homes using £7 million of devolution funding.
- How the £20 million investment fund will be administered, with the involvement of district councils and other partners in advising the directly elected leader and cabinet on funding decisions.

New grants to help Norfolk residents open for applications

Voluntary organisations who support people struggling with the cost of living in Norfolk can now apply for two new grants from Norfolk's Household Support Fund.

£2.15m of funding from a combination of national government and NCC sources is being made available. Of this, £1.35m is available as part of a one-off grant funding pot that will enable community groups and social enterprises to meet the emergency needs of residents, particularly those at the highest risk of living in poverty and those who have higher than average costs due to specific needs such as care costs. Applications for this Community Based Hardship Support Fund must be made by 31 May, with grants of £10,000-50,000 available. Applications can be made [here](#).

In addition, £800,000 is being made available to organisations that are already supporting people in Norfolk to help meet any emerging needs these individuals may have, such as help with the cost of food and energy. An applicant organisation can receive up to £20,000 to distribute to individuals in grants of up to £100 to help meet these costs. Applications can be made up to 30 September [here](#).

Anyone in Norfolk struggling with living costs can also request support or advice via norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving or by calling 0344 800 8020.

Calls for more foster carers

Five children in Norfolk come into care every week and Norfolk County Council is calling for more people to come forward to give them a loving home. There are more than 1,200 children in care in Norfolk and, although numbers have stabilised in recent years, the council needs more carers to provide stability and safety for the children it looks after.

Norfolk County Council has recently become accredited as a Fostering Friendly Employer and has 30 employees who are also foster carers with Norfolk Fostering Service. Foster carers are self-employed. Many continue working at their usual place of employment at the same time as being a foster carer.

Heartsease Fiveways roundabout reopens

Work on the final phase of improvements to Heartsease Fiveways roundabout in Norwich is finished, with all roads in the area now reopened.

The roundabout had been closed in all directions since 13 April to carry out the final construction and resurfacing work needed to complete the project.

Completion of the work sees the return of normal bus services for a number of routes, which have been on diversion during recent weeks.

Flourish Awards 2024

Norfolk County Council has announced the return of the Flourish Awards for 2024 – with nominations now officially open.

Hosted by the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (CYPSA), the distinguished awards recognise the people, projects, teams and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to help children and young people flourish in Norfolk.

Any project, team or organisation can be nominated by members of the public or a professional, with the winners being decided by a panel of children and young people, made up of members of the Norfolk Youth Advisory Boards and other relevant groups, and parents.

More information, including how to make a nomination, can be found [here](#). Nominations are open until 24 May 2024.

Digital Switchover – help keep people who are reliant on Assistive Technology connected

Over the next year and a half, the UK's telephone network is being upgraded. By the start of 2027 the old analogue copper telephone landline network will be switched to digital, meaning that all phone calls will go through the internet, and everyone will require broadband to make landline phone calls.

This means that people who use technology that is reliant on analogue telephone connections may need to upgrade their devices.

If you meet or visit people who rely on Assistive Technology, this may be an opportunity to make sure they are aware of and ready for the change.

Norfolk County Council appointed to lead Music Hubs for Norfolk and Suffolk

Norfolk County Council has been appointed by Arts Council England to lead both the Norfolk and Suffolk Music Hub from September 2024, as part of an ambitious national programme to provide high-quality music education for all children and young people.

NCC's Music Service has led the Norfolk Music Hub, a partnership of organisations and schools which engage with children and young people in music making, since 2012.

As the new Hub Lead Organisation for both counties, NCC will receive just over £2m from the DfE to coordinate music education, plus £661,967 to invest in new musical

instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of children and young people in Norfolk, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Four Norfolk teenagers sworn in as new Youth Parliament Members

Four Norfolk teenagers have been officially inaugurated as the county's new Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) at a special ceremony held by Norfolk County Council.

The Norfolk Youth Parliament helps young people to have a voice on the future of Norfolk and make a positive difference in their local community. Working with regional MPs and local Norfolk councillors, the young leaders will represent their peers and advocate for important issues such as education, mental health, and climate change.

Youth parliament elections are organised by Norfolk County Council and the young people will be supported by the council's participation team during their time in office.

Government to fund 180 local projects to boost water quality

New funding of £11.5 million – which is being matched by organisations including the National Lottery, local rivers and wildlife trusts, as well as some private investment – is being made available by government to boost tree planting, habitat restoration and flood management, which is expected to lead to an additional 300km of English rivers being protected and improved.

The funding will also support the creation and restoration of around 160 hectares of inland and coastal waters.

The funding is in addition to the existing £3 million the Environment Agency has already been allocated for this financial year for local projects to improve water quality.