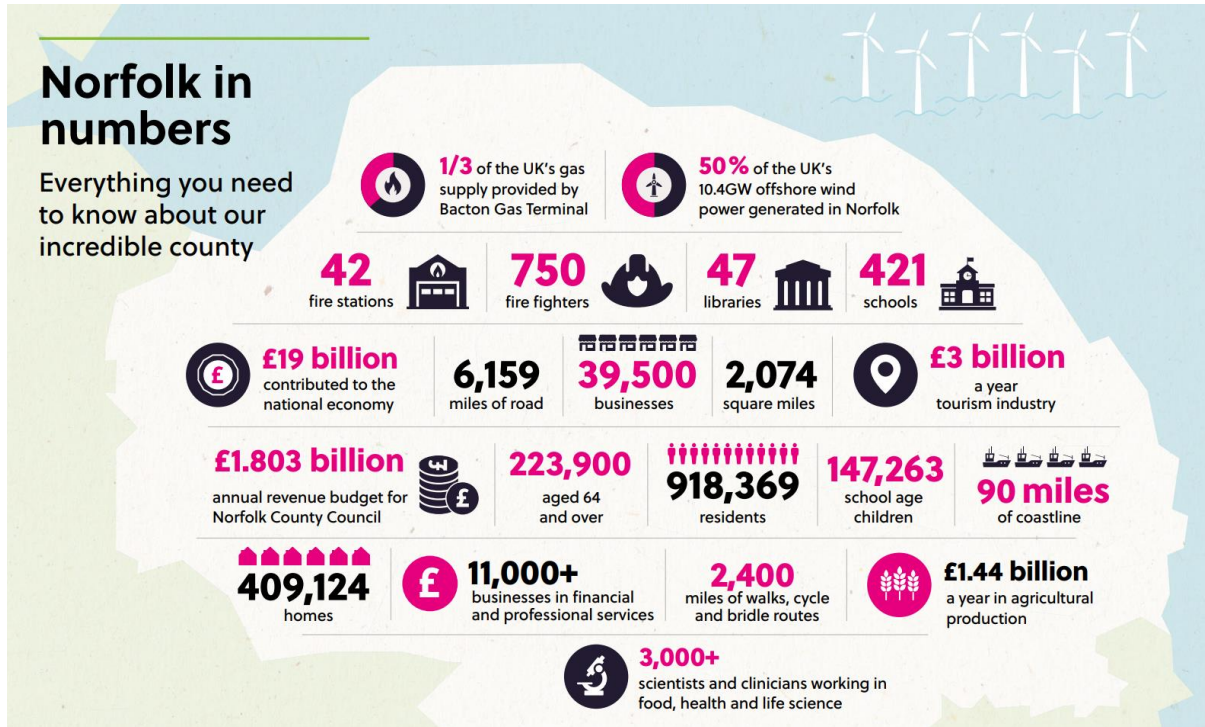


County Councillors for Necton and Launditch

Report March 2024



County Council agrees £528m Budget

Councillors have backed a budget that "delivers for Norfolk", in the face of major challenges facing local government. The budget for 2024-2025 will deliver stable and sustainable finances, well delivered public services, economic growth and protecting and enhancing Norfolk's heritage and environment. This includes an additional £60m for adult social services and £35m extra for children's services, and savings from transforming how the council operates.

Council leaders have pledged to continue to lobby the next Government for multi-year settlements, fair funding, and reform of adult social care.

The key headlines from the agreed budget are:

- £122m of investment to meet demand and cost pressures next year - including £34.6m for inflation, £38m for legislative requirements, £39.7m for demand and demographic issues and £9.6m for policy decisions.
- £41.5m of new savings, including £9.6m from transforming how the council operates.
- A proposed 4.99% increase in the County Council's share of Council Tax, in line with the Government's capping level (2.99% for general Council Tax and 2% for adult social care). This would increase the Council's share of band D bills to £1,672.11. A 4.99% rise would generate £24.9m.
- A small number of the budget proposals have been identified as requiring consultation, as they may relate to a policy or service change. Cabinet will take decisions on these proposals in the summer, after considering the consultation results.

Proposals that will be consulted on:

- Charging an admin fee for brokering on behalf of people who self-fund their adult social care
- Review of the adult social care non-residential charging policy - including the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG)
- Recommissioning of social isolation and loneliness contracts
- Norfolk Record Office - pre-booking of visits and new paid services to increase income generation.
- Switching off 2% of streetlights
- Recycling centres: Reduction of opening hours at some recycling centres to deliver a more consistent approach, in line with neighbouring authorities.

Norfolk flood protection takes centre stage at Westminster

The threat posed by flooding and coastal erosion in Norfolk has been laid out starkly for MPs as Norfolk County Council has taken their case for change to the heart of Westminster.

The delegation from Norfolk, led by Norfolk County Council Leader Cllr Kay Mason Billig and the Chair of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA), Henry Cator, met with MPs, on the 71st anniversary of the 1953 North Sea Flood, to explain the risks Norfolk faces and how those risks could be addressed.

As demonstrated over this winter, our county faces regular risks of flooding, with Norfolk ranked tenth most at risk of surface water flooding out of 149 local authority areas. In addition, the county's position on the North Sea exposes it to tidal threats as well as significant coastal erosion: without action, it's estimated that in North Norfolk alone approximately 1,030 residential and commercial properties could be lost to erosion by 2100. That number could be up to 10,000 in all of Norfolk.

These risks threaten both Norfolk residents and the contribution Norfolk makes to the wider country, as home to 54% of the offshore wind generation capacity in the UK and a major producer of food.

In a presentation delivered in Portcullis House, part of the Parliamentary Estate in Westminster, Norfolk's delegation made the case for MPs to:

- Push for legislative permission to build reservoirs designed to capture excess water in times of flood, for use in times of drought.
- Advocate for Property Flood Protection measures to be granted directly to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for faster allocation for those who need it.
- Reduce bureaucracy by granting greater autonomy in funding allocation for surface water flood mitigation schemes.
- Combine enforcement and maintenance powers and responsibilities for LLFA's.
- Support the creation of a dedicated Minister for the Coast

24/7 free travel to all disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk

From 1st February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled concessionary travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week when travelling within the county.

The decision, which was published today by Norfolk County Council, means that more than 14,500 people across the county who hold a concessionary bus pass due to disability, and their eligible companions, will now be able to travel on any bus at any time free of charge across Norfolk.

Previously concessionary pass holders with a disability were only able to travel for free on buses off-peak (all day on Saturdays and Sundays but only from 09:30 Monday to Friday) except for those registered blind or visually impaired.

Offering free travel at all times is over and above the minimum requirement set by government, and is something that a local authority can choose to do but doesn't have to do. The change was recommended following an updated equality impact assessment of the scheme which concluded that it is now unfair to offer a discretionary enhancement to just one group of disabled people (i.e. those who are blind or visually impaired).

The recommendation agreed by the individual cabinet member was to 'extend the concessionary travel discretion of free travel at all times to all eligible disabled passholders and eligible companions, from 1st February 2024.'

The cost of providing this enhancement is estimated at £50,000 which will be funded by the Council's ring-fenced public transport budget provided by the Department for Transport.

£1 million boost for Highway Parish Partnership Schemes

Schemes totalling over £1m will be distributed across Norfolk to deliver the wants and needs of local parishes and residents as part of the Highway Parish Partnership.

The Parish Partnership scheme began in September 2011, when Parish and Town Councils were invited to submit bids for local highway improvements, with the County Council funding up to 50% of bid costs. The key benefits of the scheme are that it:

- Delivers local priorities identified by local people.
- Draws in additional funding for small scale highway improvements, enabling us to collectively deliver more schemes.
- Gives local communities an opportunity to directly influence the improvements in their local area.

The programme continues to be well received by Parish/Town Councils, Local Members, and communities. Information about the number of bids received through the scheme over the past twelve years demonstrates there is a good spread across Norfolk.

A County Council contribution £467,884 and a Safety Camera Partnership contribution of £43,760 along with funding from Town and Parish Councils, will enable a programme of local works totalling £1,040,586 to be delivered. It can supply information on eligible schemes and how to apply to those Parish Councils who wish to investigate applying for a partnership bid. Information can also be found at [https:// www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships)

Mark Kiddle-Morris, Norfolk County Council,
Member for Necton & Launditch.

5th March 2024.

Get in touch

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Key contacts for families

There's lots of support
available for people at any
stage of life. Here are some
key contacts to help you
and your family.

Just One Number

0300 300 0123

For any questions or worries
you have about your child

Norfolk County Council

0344 800 8020

To report a safeguarding concern
about an adult or child

ChatHealth

07480 635060

Secure text messaging advice
service for 11-19-year-olds

Leeway refuge services

0300 561 0077

24-hour helpline for victims
of domestic abuse

Age UK's Advice Line

0800 678 1602

Free confidential advice for
older people and their families

First Response helpline

111 (option 2)

For people of all ages needing
urgent mental health support

