

Norfolk County Council Report for Annual Parish Meeting

Norfolk County council has approved a balanced budget for 2025-26. Council Tax will increase by 4.99% which includes a 2.99% rise in General Council Tax and a 2% increase for Adult Social Care. This should raise £572 million to fund all the County Council Services.

Devolution

As agreed at Cabinet and Full Council, NCC submitted their Interim Plan for devolution by March 21st. The Plan stated that the Council would collect all the relevant data and information before suggesting how many Unitaries would be most suitable for Norfolk.

Two working groups have been set up, one to collate information needed to plan for Devolution and a second to collate information required on which to base a decision on the number of unitaries that would be most suitable for Local Government Reform, for Norfolk. The final Plan must be submitted by September 21st.

Ukraine

Last May Kay Mason Billig, NCC Leader, signed a Co-Operation agreement with Lviv. This was to explore educational exchange and trade opportunities. Norwich also has links with Lviv as they are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The Fire Service is gradually upgrading our fire engines. At the beginning of April 15 Norfolk fire fighters volunteered to take five ex service vehicles to Ukraine. They joined a convoy of 30 appliances and equipment donated from services across the country as part of a UK wide campaign co-ordinated by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

National Grid Pylon scheme

NCC objected to the National Grid consultation on the 114 mile overhead power line from Norwich to Tilbury. The Council felt that further consideration should be given to putting more of the power line underground, or by using an off-shore alternative around the coast.

The Council is also concerned about the size and number of solar farms that are being proposed for Norfolk and how they will affect farming and the essential role that farming plays in the local economy.

Highways

In a National Highways and Transport survey people gave Norfolk the highest satisfaction score, re the condition of the highways, for the second year running. More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed since last April. The Council has also received additional funding for re surfacing roads. Norfolk will receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance this year.

To cut CO2 emissions from street lighting the council began replacing the bulbs with low energy LED bulbs in August 2023 and in November last year the project was completed.

Parish Partnership Scheme

This year the Parish Partnership Scheme has enabled 97 parishes to deliver schemes that they want for their area. This is a 50/50 scheme by which NCC matches the contributions made by parishes. This year NCC contributed £426,476 which enabled work totalling £848,702 to be delivered.

Household Support Fund

The Council committed over one million pounds to help keep people warm during the winter via the Household Support Fund. They worked in partnership with organisations such as Age UK and Citizens Advice to reach those most affected by the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment. They also helped provide 'warm spaces' in libraries and other community areas for people to meet and socialise. Libraries also provided 'warm packs' of hot water bottle, gloves, hat etc, to take away. Adult Learning provided free courses on cooking on a budget, budgeting and digital skills and the Council also continued providing cost of living vouchers for families eligible for means tested free school meals.

The cost of providing Adult Social Care and Children's Services increases every year. This year we have budgeted £700 million for Adult Social Care and £367 million for Children's Services.

Margaret

Cllr. Margaret Dewsbury

Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Norfolk County Council: Hingham Division
South Norfolk Council: Easton Ward

My pronouns are she/her