

February Report

Highways

Norfolk County Council maintains 6,000 miles of roads in Norfolk. The Government grant for Highways maintenance will increase from £56 million in 2025/26 to £83 million by 2029/30. This will help fill the potholes and provide resurfacing work to prevent them.

Libraries

Throughout February Norfolk Libraries will be hosting their annual DigiFest for the seventh year running. DigiFest is part of Norfolk County Council's digital inclusion strategy which helps hundreds of children and young people, up to the age of 16, develop skills and learn stop-motion animation, basic coding with robots and AI skills via free events in libraries.

More than 500 children took part last year.

Fire Service cadets

The Fire Service is planning to open another Fire Cadet Unit in Fakenham adding to the three currently run in Diss, Hunstanton and Wymondham. The units enable 13 – 17 year olds to get an idea of the work and training undertaken by firefighters.

Body cameras

Each of the Fire Services fire appliances and operational officers have been provided with a body worn camera for use at incidents. They include location data and two way communication with the control rooms to enable quicker, better informed, decision making during complex incidents.

Trading Standards has also provided its officers with body cameras for use during investigations.

Education

The Government has agreed to provide funding for two new SEND schools, one in Downham Market and one in Gt Yarmouth. This will ensure that local children with special needs do not have to travel so far to go to school.

Devolution

There has been a lot of preparation going on for Devolution but the Government decided to postpone the election of a Mayor to take overall control of Norfolk and Suffolk until 2028. They were originally going to be elected in May this year, 2026. The election of members of the Unitary Councils that will work with the Mayor and replace the County and District Councils will still take place next year, 2027.

In 2024 we agreed to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme because it would have provided £20 million a year. The Government has now decided the funding for Devolution will be less but we are continuing to prepare for that and Local Government Reform. The

Government has decided to cancel our election which was postponed until this year as the Council will cease to exist in 2028.

Cllr. Margaret Dewsbury

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