

**TO ALL PARISH COUNCILS IN THE ELMHAM & MATTISHALL DIVISION
MONTHLY UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR PAUL CARR –
SEPTEMBER 2026**

Norfolk County Council Updates

New Party in control and making significant progress- TOUGH QUESTIONS....DECISIVE ACTION.

Reform UK are now in overall (minority) control of the County Council.

The Party has been elected on the promise of providing best value services to residents in Norfolk and is committed to eradicating wasteful expenditure.

Much work is being done now that the new Cabinet have settled in and have started to engage with the Council Officers. See below for the first 100 days review.

New Chief Executive

Following an extensive recruitment process, Norfolk County Council announced that Dennis Bacon is its preferred appointment for chief executive. He was duly appointed by the recent full Council meeting and commences work this month.

Dennis has wide ranging senior executive level experience of leading and delivering transformation in the health and care sector and across a series of commercial ventures.

His previous roles have included Chairman of the Norfolk Independent Care Association for 19 years supporting over 600 organisations with 11,000 staff, and he was an executive member of the Norfolk and Waveney Sustainability and Transformation Partnership. He was also the first independent sector representative appointed to an NHS System Leadership Board. He has also been a past recipient of Outstanding Leadership in Public Services Award from Norfolk County Council. Dennis and his family live in Norfolk.



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My involvement as a County Councillor

Since being elected to Norfolk County Council in May 2026, I have been busy undergoing various induction training, and other task specific training including mandatory training and recently a special security briefing.

I have been appointed to the following Committees:

- **Strategy and Corporate Select Committee (Including Trading Standards, Norfolk Fire Service and the NCC Constitution)**
- **Adult Social Services and Public Health Select Committee**
- **Audit and Governance**

These committees are very influential in key areas of the Council.

My first meetings took place in July. These were very enlightening and covered some key areas and emphasised how crucial the next few years will be for us all.

You can watch these select committees on the Council's YouTube channel.

I have also been appointed to the following Internal and Outside Bodies to represent the Council:

- **Active Norfolk**
- **Norfolk Joint Museums Committee**
- **Area Museums Committee (Breckland) – *Internal. Vice chair***
- **Norfolk against Scams Partnership**

I plan to meet all Parish Councils in due course.

You can contact me on:

Paul.carr.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

The following is a brief update on some of the key issues and activity from the past month:

Termination of Inner Circle Consultancy Contract (LGR project)

Today, 27th August, the Deputy Leader, Cllr Robin Hunter-Clarke has taken the decision to give notice to terminate Norfolk County Council's £6.3 million contract with Inner Circle.

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Cllr Robin Hunter-Clarke said “This contract should never have been signed by the previous administration. There was no scrutiny of it at the time and after discussion with officers it is clear to me that it is a waste of public money to continue with this type of contract. At a time when residents expect every pound of public money to be spent wisely, we must ensure we do just that.

“I am not prepared to tolerate a system where consultants are paid vast sums, taxpayers pick up the bill for lunches and hospitality, and yet the pace of delivery falls well short of what Norfolk deserves.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

Your County

Government pauses three-council reorganisation proposal



The Government has announced that it is halting plans for a major reorganisation of local councils in Norfolk.

The announcement means the proposal that would have replaced Norfolk’s existing councils with three new authorities will not go ahead. The government is now reviewing their proposals following new legal advice and a number of legal challenges.

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For residents, this means the future shape of local government in Norfolk remains under review while the Government considers its next steps.

Many people have questions about what this could mean for local services and local decision-making. We will keep you updated on any developments and what they mean for you and your community

New priorities unveiled for County Council



Norfolk County Council's cabinet has pledged to secure value for money for residents, in its first report on the major issues facing the authority and how to tackle them.

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The priorities focus on supporting residents and families, growing the local economy, improving roads and transport, building strong communities and making sure public money is spent wisely.

This follows a review of the council's first 100 days under its new administration, which highlights a number of early achievements, including:

- **£1.2 million invested in Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service**
- **£924,000 invested in better roads and highways**
- **More than £1.5 million saved by renegotiating contracts**
- **More than £300,000 saved through service changes**
- **More than £170,000 saved by stopping non-essential marketing spend**
- **Putting tougher checks in place on spending and major projects**
- **Launched a review of net zero activity, to ensure value for money**
- **Trialled new innovative tech, to repair potholes faster**
- **Challenged ministers' plans for local government reorganisation**
- **Closed five illegal tobacco shops in Great Yarmouth**

The new approach aims to ensure council services deliver value for money while continuing to support the people and communities that rely on them. A more detailed delivery plan is due to be developed later this year, setting out how the priorities will be turned into actions and measurable outcomes.

[You can view the full 100 days report on the attachment to this email](#)

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Pothole Pro poised to be put through its paces



The condition of Norfolk's roads is a high priority for our residents - and us!

That's why our highways colleagues are all set to trial an innovative new pothole repair machine.

The JCB Pothole Pro is a specialist machine designed to repair potholes and carriageway defects more quickly and efficiently than traditional methods.

It will be put through its paces in early September when it will be used on some planned repairs across the county and provide information to help assess whether the technology can deliver longer-lasting repairs while reducing the amount of time needed on site.

The machine and operator are being provided at no cost to the Council for this short trial. If successful a longer-term trial will be arranged.

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Norwich Western Link – project update



In terms of an update on progress, the project team are now in the thick of the options assessment work. They're aiming to reduce the numerous options that were originally being considered down to a shortlist by early next year, followed by a public consultation on those shortlisted options. Existing conditions and new surveys continue to inform the assessments and I'll provide another update later this year on where we are with this.

We've also received funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the options assessment work now – they are funding two-thirds of this work, with the remainder being funded by the council.

I will be attending the next meeting of the Local Liaison Group in Costessey at the end of September.

National Updates

National Planning Policy Framework update

The Government has published a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#), alongside wider reforms intended to create a clearer, more rules-based planning system, increase housing delivery and support economic growth. The new framework applies to England and takes effect immediately for planning decision-making.

The revised framework introduces a stronger presumption in favour of sustainable development, places greater emphasis on housing growth and development around well-connected railway stations, increases the weight of national policy in planning

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decisions, and is intended to speed up delivery of homes, infrastructure and economic growth across England

For Norfolk, a key issue is to ensure that increases in housing delivery are matched by timely investment in infrastructure and local services.

Environment Agency consultation responses to water management issues

The Environment Agency's Significant Water Management Issues consultation ran from November 2025 to May 2026, with responses from environmental groups, water companies, farmers, businesses, councils, partnerships, community groups and residents.

The [responses](#) will inform the next river basin management plans, with draft plans due for consultation from December 2026.

The main message was the need for faster progress, stronger collaboration, better evidence, clearer funding and action that tackles the causes of environmental decline, linking water, nature, climate, communities and growth.

Key concerns included wastewater pollution, agricultural and urban runoff, chemicals, plastics, PFAS, road pollution and other emerging contaminants.

Respondents also supported nature-based solutions, including wetlands, river restoration, sustainable drainage, peatland recovery, floodplain reconnection and coastal habitat restoration.

Tackling rough sleeping this winter

The Prime Minister has [announced a national drive](#) to offer everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets by Christmas, backed by a £442 million package. The new accommodation and support will be rolled out this winter, with areas facing the greatest pressures receiving the largest share of support.

The government says that research from Crisis suggests preventing 40,000 people from becoming homeless for a year could save taxpayers around £370 million.

Alongside emergency accommodation, the programme will provide practical help with housing, health and other needs. The Government has said the programme will be fully funded within Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government budgets.

In Norfolk, homelessness and rough sleeping are linked to wider pressures including housing supply, health and mental health needs, substance misuse, domestic abuse,

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care leaver support, financial hardship, and temporary and supported accommodation.

The Government's emphasis on joint working reflects Norfolk's existing partnership approach between the County Council, district councils, health partners, police, housing providers and the voluntary sector.

The announcement sits alongside a wider five-year government programme to provide homes and support for people facing the most severe and long-term homelessness.

Disabled people to get free 24 hour travel on buses

From April 2027, disabled individuals in England will be able to use their free bus passes at any time, as the Government removes existing weekday restrictions.

This change aims to improve access to transport for disabled people, helping them with work, education, and healthcare.

Local Issues

I have continued to work on a range of local issues raised by residents, including highways, planning matters, environmental concerns and access to local services. If you have an issue you would like me to look into, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Council Business

Recent council meetings have focused on a range of important topics, including council finances, service delivery and future priorities. I have continued to represent the interests of residents and ensure that local concerns are raised where appropriate.

Community Engagement

It will be a pleasure to attend community events, meet with local organisations and speak with residents about the issues that matter most to them. These conversations are invaluable in helping shape the work I do on your behalf.

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Keeping in Touch

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact me. Your feedback is always welcome, and I remain committed to representing the interests of everyone in our community.

OUR SAVINGS THIS MONTH

See above 100 days review

**SAVINGS AND
ADDITIONAL
INVESTMENT OF OVER
£10 MILLION POUNDS!**

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**Best wishes
Paul W Carr FCA.**



Parish areas within the Division:

Bawdeswell, Billingford, Bintree, Bylaugh, East Tuddenham, Elsing, Foxley, Gateley, Guist, Hockering, Lyng, Mattishall, North Elmham, North Tuddenham, Sparham, Twyford, Yaxham.



Protecting public money and using it efficiently