25-09-2026

County Councillor Report for October 2026

Local government reorganisation over - for now

Deputy Leader, Councillor Robin Hunter-Clarke, told the Strategic and Corporate select committee (16 September) that the Government had withdrawn its decision to have three unitary councils in Norfolk and was not simply pausing it.

Even if LGR is brought back in future, Cllr Hunter-Clarke said his administration would continue to oppose it. He said they would be pursuing devolution, to bring new powers and funding to Norfolk.

County Council meeting on Tuesday 22 September 2026

The agenda and papers can be found here: CMIS > Calendar of Meetings

All public NCC meetings can be viewed on YouTube. This meeting: Norfolk County Council - Full Council

The “Standing up for Norfolk” report was formally adopted as the new four-year strategy. Covering the period to 2030, the strategy will shape how the council works and what it delivers for Norfolk. It sets out five new priorities for the County Council:

- Putting Norfolk’s residents first
- Growing Norfolk’s economy
- Keeping Norfolk moving
- Running an efficiency and effective council
- Building stronger Norfolk communities and places

Full details and a copy of the strategy are available here.

A detailed delivery plan will be developed for November's cabinet meeting.

August was a record-breaking month for fire and rescue incidents in Norfolk

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service attended 1,295 incidents in August 2026, making it the busiest month in the history of the service. The increase was driven by hot, dry weather, with this summer declared the hottest on record and five heatwaves affecting Norfolk.

Flu Vaccinations - NHS Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board

The NHS is preparing for winter earlier than usual. Early booking is intended to help protect vulnerable residents and reduce pressure on local NHS services during the winter period. The national booking system is open for eligible adults to pre-book a flu vaccination appointment. Some eligible groups can receive their vaccination from 1 September, while most eligible adults will be vaccinated from 1 October. Local NHS services will contact eligible residents through GP practices, the NHS App or by letter.

New duty to support children placed in temporary accommodation

From 1 September 2026, councils have a new duty to notify schools, GP practices and health visiting services when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. The change is intended to ensure children do not lose access to education and health support when their housing circumstances change.

Free school meals expansion comes into effect

New guidance for councils and schools has been published as the expansion of free school meals begins from September 2026. The reforms extend eligibility to children in households receiving Universal Credit, alongside the wider rollout of breakfast clubs.

Rural councils' financial pressures debated in Parliament

A Westminster Hall debate on Government support for rural upper-tier local authorities took place on 2 September. The debate focused on the additional pressures faced by rural county councils, including the cost of providing services across large geographic areas, lower population density and difficulties in economies of scale.

Free weight management support for Adults

Norfolk adults who would like support to lose weight and improve their health are being encouraged to find out if they are eligible for free weight management services.

Being overweight or obese can increase the risk of developing several long-term health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some cancers. In Norfolk, around 65% of adults are classed as overweight or obese.

Further details and links are available in the county council news release here.

Children’s services team selected by the Government to share expertise

Norfolk County Council’s Children’s Services has been selected by the Government to share its expertise nationally and help improve social care at other councils. Norfolk is one of eight councils and one trust chosen by the Department for Education for the second phase of its Children’s Social Care Improvement Team programme. The selection reflects the council’s progress over the past decade and follows Norfolk’s outstanding Ofsted rating earlier this year.

Helping to improve Norfolk’s recycling service

Norfolk County Council’s annual Recycling Centre Survey is now open until 18 October 2026. Feedback from the previous survey led to real practical changes. Responses from people who do not currently use a Recycling Centre are particularly valuable, as they can help the council understand barriers, unmet needs and opportunities to make the service more accessible. Survey link: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RecyclingCentres2026/

The Big Conversation on Care

The independent Casey Commission launched The Big Conversation on Care, a national public conversation inviting people to share their views and experiences to help shape the future of adult social care. Residents can vote on proposals that have been suggested, helping to identify popular suggestions that receive broad support from the population and workforce. To find out more: The Big Conversation on Care.

Government announces draft Environment Delivery Plan for Norfolk

The Government has announced a draft Environmental Delivery Plan (EDP) that could unlock up to 15,780 new homes in Norfolk and fund improvements to rivers, wetlands and wildlife habitats. Natural England drafted the plan under the Nature Restoration Fund. It aims to unlock housing delayed by the need to protect rivers and wetlands from nutrient pollution.

The Plan covers the River Wensum, Bure Broads and Marshes, and Yare Broads and Marshes catchments across much of central and eastern Norfolk.

Developers would pay into a shared fund instead of arranging separate environmental measures for each site. Natural England would use the fund for larger projects to restore rivers, create wetlands and improve water quality.

The EDP is open for consultation until 27 October 2026.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee call for evidence – flooding

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee has launched a call for evidence on 'flooding emergency response', as part of its long-term inquiry into climate adaptation and emergency response. It will issue further calls for evidence on different topics within the broader inquiry in due course. The submission deadline is 9 October 2026.

National Planning Policy Framework Scheme of Delegation

The Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework, introduces a new statutory framework for planning decision-making, the National Scheme of Delegation, which comes into force on 31 October.

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

The Regulations introduce two categories of planning application:

Schedule 1 applications must be determined by planning officers and cannot be referred to Planning Committee.

Schedule 2 applications are presumed to be delegated to planning officers but may be referred to planning committee where the statutory "Gateway Test" criteria is met.

The new scheme of delegation severely restricts the role of elected members and the role of the Planning Committee with the majority of decisions being made by planning officers. For Norfolk, a key issue is to clearly ensure that increases in housing delivery are matched by timely investment in infrastructure and local services.

Common Ground Award - community grant funding

Community and voluntary organisations can apply for grants to improve local places and help bring people together.

The Common Ground Award 2026 to 2027 will fund buildings, facilities, equipment and other long-term improvements for eligible voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in England.

Individual organisations can apply for between £20,000 and £50,000. In exceptional cases, applications of up to £100,000 may be considered where there is strong evidence of need and likely benefit. Groups of organisations applying together can seek between £100,000 and £250,000.

Further details and information on how to apply are available in the Government press release.

Grants to support community energy projects

Local authorities and community energy groups across the UK are being given new opportunities to develop their own renewable energy projects, following the launch of a £30 million funding programme from Great British Energy (GBE).

The investment is the first tranche of a wider commitment of up to £1 billion. The initiative is designed to support more than 1,000 community and locally led clean energy schemes, ranging from solar panels on public buildings to village-owned wind farms and hydroelectric projects.

The funding includes the GBE Community Fund (£20 million), which is now open, and a new GBE Partnerships Grant (£5 million).

Alongside funding specific local power projects, the Government will also set out further details this autumn on plans to offer community energy groups an ownership stake in renewable energy projects.

Cllr Jan Davis
Blofield & Brundall Division
Norfolk County Council
25/09/2026