

## **Norfolk County Council news and update**

### **Proposals to support some of Norfolk's most vulnerable people this winter have recently been set out**

The County Council is looking to use £1.15m of the £6.7m allocated to the county through the Household Support Fund to keep people warm and help them make ends meet. This follows the government's decision to make the winter fuel payment means tested from this winter. Councillor Andrew Jamieson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance at Norfolk County Council has said:

*"We are extremely concerned about the impact that the government's decision will have on our communities. Winter can be an extremely challenging time for our older residents and the cost of heating your home can make it difficult to pay for other necessities. There will be thousands of people who will miss the new cut-off by a small margin, leaving them without the means to pay for the cost of fuel. The county council will make sure payments make their way quickly to those who most need them, working closely with Age UK, Citizen Advice Bureau and other local partners. However, the funding only lasts until March. I will continue to urge the government to find a solution that isn't to the detriment of our older residents."*

The council will use £0.75m to partner with local organisations, including Age UK and Citizens Advice Bureau, to reach some of those most affected by the changes to the Winter Fuel Payments. They will also put £400k into the 'warm spaces' scheme which provides vital respite in community spaces across the county. The proposals also include £3.6m to continue providing cost-of-living vouchers for families eligible for means tested free school meals. This is in addition to:

£1.00m to Norfolk Assistance Scheme. Delivered by the Norfolk County Council, the scheme includes direct award of assistance, the provision of household items and emergency help, alongside a range of support and guidance

£0.70m to local councils across Norfolk to provide proactive and crisis support

£0.25m to Adult Learning to continue free access to a range of courses to help with cooking at home, budgeting, and digital skills.

The Household Support Fund has been extended to the end of March 2025.

**OUT OF HOURS HELP** - As winter is upon us I thought it might be helpful to let residents know about the work of the Emergency Duty Team which runs out of hours

support for situations that don't require 999 services. (*If you believe someone is in danger, or their life is at risk – call 999.*)

### **EDT works with:**

Children in need of protection

People with mental health problems who may be at risk to themselves or others

Older people with care and support needs who need urgent help which cannot wait until our usual opening hours

Adults at risk of abuse and neglect

People with a disability who need urgent access to social care services

Police to help adults and young people with care and support needs

Families in emergencies

Health services

For example, they :

Help children and young people at risk of immediate family breakdown. We work to prevent them going into public care.

Help families find new ways of dealing with difficult situations

Work with doctors to carry out emergency Mental Health Act assessments

Give emergency telephone support to carers and families dealing with mental health emergencies

Help older people and other adults with care and support needs to stay in their homes and, where safe, not use residential or nursing care

### **When the emergency lines are open**

Monday to Thursday from 5pm to 9am the following morning

From 4.35pm on Friday through to 9am the following Monday morning

All day (24 hours) on bank holidays

### **How to contact the team**

Call 0344 800 8020.

A call handler will answer your call. They'll take your details and discuss the reason for your call so they can find out how urgent it is. Depending on your situation, they might do one of the following:

Pass your details onto a qualified social worker from the EDT

Signpost you to other agencies

Refer your situation to one of the daytime social care teams for follow up at a later date

People in high-risk situations will always receive a priority service. At busy times there may be a delay before someone gets back to you.

### **Winter gritting programme**

The County Council's highways maintenance teams are helping keep Norfolk residents moving safely around the county. 2024 will witness the most technologically advanced gritting operation Norfolk has ever seen. With 45 brand new gritting vehicles joining the fleet over the last 2 years and all 58 vehicles now operating at the highest specifications available. Each vehicle will run with brand new auto-salting technology. Aided by satellite navigation, it will allow teams to salt the road with limited manual intervention, making the operation more accurate, saving time and reducing waste. On average, the technology reduces the amount of salt used by between 10% and 15% and saves salt being distributed onto grass verges and other areas that do not require gritting. The technology was trialled in some vehicles last year ahead of full implementation across all depots. Using mapping data and information from the Norfolk network, vehicles can track pre-programmed routes making treating Norfolk roads easier and more precise. Because route data is uploaded into the vehicles, any driver can select any route, set the required spread rate and drive - improving safety and ensuring more effective use of resources and drivers. This means that the network will be treated appropriately and consistently throughout this winter helping to keep Norfolk's roads moving.

### **Norfolk 2025 Commemorations - open to applications**

At the latest meeting of the Norfolk Covenant, the Board decided to establish a fund to enable community organisations to apply for up to £500 to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of VE and VJ Day next year. The Fund is open to any non-profit groups including constituted voluntary and community groups; Parish and Town Councils; charities; churches; social enterprises; community interest companies; cadet groups, and schools and nurseries. The Fund will consider a wide range of projects specific to the commemoration of military events, which may include but are not exclusive to:

Community events and commemorations, including street parties  
Dance, drama and art projects  
Local military and social history research projects  
Educational activities

All the information about the fund can be found at [Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant 2025 Commemoration Fund | Norfolk Community Foundation](#).

The deadline for applications is 12 noon on 9 December 2024.

## **New Roads Programme - Support for Children and Young People**

More young people in Norfolk are being supported to stay at home with their families or return home, thanks to the specialist support being provided by Norfolk County Council.

The [council's New Roads programme](#), which provides wrap around support for children at risk of coming into care, or those already in care, has prevented 395 children coming into long-term care since it was launched four years ago. This has avoided costs of £35m and substantially improved outcomes for young people who have often faced significant challenges. The council is now extending the approach to work with children with disabilities and their families. The success is one of several outlined in the annual review of children's residential care, which was discussed by the council's Cabinet this morning.

## **Norfolk street lighting goes green**

A project to upgrade street lighting across Norfolk to make it more energy efficient and environmentally friendly has been completed almost a year ahead of schedule. The change will see CO2 emissions on lighting maintained by Norfolk County Council cut by over 200 tonnes a year.

## **East Anglian counties partner with US city for mutual business and economic growth**

The counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex are partnering with Virginia Beach, a US city with booming technology and renewables sectors, to boost transatlantic trade and cooperation through a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Virginia Beach is the largest city in Virginia, about the size of Bristol, halfway down the US East Coast.

The MOU was signed on 12 November at the US Embassy in London by the three County Council Leaders

## **Have your say on Norfolk County Council's saving proposals**

As it seeks to agree a balanced budget for 2025/26, Norfolk County Council is asking for resident's views on a number of proposals to save money or raise revenue in the next financial year. As part of the council's work to find £44.722m of savings, public consultations are now open on three of the proposals under consideration:

Raising Council Tax

Reducing Street Light usage

Review of our Housing Related Support Services

Full detail of these proposals, as well as information on how residents can have their say, can be [found online](#). To receive a hard copy of the consultation document, residents can call 0344 800 8020 or email [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk). The consultation is now open and will close on Monday 16 December 2024.

## **Health and Wellbeing Partnership**

Leaders from Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Partnerships recently came together to celebrate and showcase the progress made so far, and to identify future opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of local communities.

The event provided an opportunity to showcase innovative projects such as PositiviTea and Safe and Habitable Homes.

Attendees include representatives from the District Councils, Norfolk County Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Primary Care Networks, voluntary, community and social enterprises.

## **Local Government re-organisation**

There has recently been much speculation in the mainstream and local government media that 10 areas in England, including Norfolk and Suffolk, may be amongst the first to be re-organised into Unitary Authorities, thus scrapping the two-tier systems currently in place.

More details are expected to be included in the Government's devolution white paper, set to be published soon.

## **Car Park Charging**

Finally, as Breckland Council member for Watton Ward I continue to oppose Breckland Cabinet's decision to impose car park charging on Watton and Wayland residents and visitors who shop in our High Street, given that the Council's consultant's original advice, was specifically that Watton should not be subject to charging at this time.

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