

Grant funding and support for agri-tech and food tech businesses

Norfolk County Council is working in partnership with Innovate UK and regional partners Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority on the Launchpad with up to £7.5m to grow innovation in Eastern England's agri-tech and food technology cluster, which also includes agri-biotech and aquaculture.

The Eastern England region is the national leader in fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and seafood processing, underpinned by the largest food logistics sector in the UK. The cluster has a strong drinks and convenience food sector as well as leading niche and specialty food producers.

Innovate UK has opened two grant funding competitions to offer innovative businesses the opportunity to win a share of up to £2.5m.

Norfolk businesses looking to apply for the Innovate UK grant funding competitions can take advantage of free innovation bid writing support on offer through the [Innovation Grant Mentoring Project](#).

Further information about the partnership and the funding competition are available in the county council's press release [here](#).

Help shape Road Safety

Helping people to continue to be able to use their cars safely as they get older is an important part of our Promoting Independence strategy.

Being able to continue driving confidently and safely can help people in later life stay in touch with their family and friendship networks, reduce loneliness and isolation, and help them avoid relying on support services. It can make an important contribution to older people being able to continue to live fulfilling lives and stay independent for longer.

One of the things that can affect older drivers is deteriorating eyesight, which can make driving more difficult, for example at night, or on busy roads. That's why the county council is planning, along with colleagues at Norfolk Fire and Rescue and our road safety partners, to launch a road safety driving campaign to encourage older drivers to regularly check their eyesight.

To help prepare for the campaign, we're running a survey to better understand the experiences and behaviours of older drivers in Norfolk. We also want to hear from people who use other forms of transport, such as buses, and those who have recently given up their driving licence.

The survey is aimed at all road users and drivers who are aged 60 and over. It will only take a few minutes and the information will remain anonymous and confidential.

The feedback will play a crucial part in shaping future safety campaigns and tailoring support to meet the needs of older drivers in Norfolk

Please share the link and encourage people over 60 to participate.

The survey closes on 30 September. The survey is available [here](#).

Safer cycling for young people

Norfolk's Safety Camera Partnership with the support of Norfolk County Council are encouraging young cyclists across Norfolk to "be switched on" both day and night by offering a free set of bike lights on completion of their cycle training this year.

It became apparent during Bikeability training commissioned by Norfolk County Council and delivered by Outspoken, SJ3 and Pedal Power; that some cyclists in Norfolk either don't have access to bike lights or choose not to use them.

In response to this community need, Norfolk's Safety Camera Partnership agreed to fund bike lights for Year 6 cyclists who complete their cycle training from September 2024, supporting their transition to high school.

Using bike lights can improve the visibility for the cyclist and other road users. A Danish study in 2012 found that the risk of a collision with a car decreased by 19% in cyclists who used their lights during the day.

The cycle training is free of charge as it is funded by [The Bikeability Trust](#).

For more information about Bikeability training and cycling courses available in your area please [visit Primary school road safety education courses](#).

Subsidised trees available to order

Norfolk County Council has launched projects for the new tree planting season which starts in November.

The One Million Trees for Norfolk subsidised tree scheme is now open for individuals, parish councils, community groups, businesses, schools, and landowners to apply for tree packs (and tree protection) at up to 50% off the original price.

As well as the usual range of tree packs available, this year, for the first time there are a limited number of single Norfolk Oak trees, grown at Gressenhall Community tree nursery, making it possible for more people to take part and be 'one in a million'.

Those interested can apply for subsidised tree pack [here](#).

In addition to the subsidised tree scheme Norfolk County Council is once again partnering with Busseys, to launch the Busseys Community Grant. This initiative offers £10,000 in funding to support tree planting projects across Norfolk.

Community groups can apply for grants of up to £2,500 to plant trees that provide tangible benefits to their local area. The grant is open to any organisation in Norfolk with suitable land and the necessary permissions for planting.

More information on how to apply for a grant, the application process, and deadlines is available [here](#).

Herring Bridge wins another award

The new Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth, which opened in February, received further national recognition at a Highway Awards ceremony in London this week.

Norfolk County Council's nationally significant infrastructure project won the Major Project of Year award and was also later announced as winner for the Highways Special Merit award across all shortlisted finalists.

This follows the bridge already receiving Major Project of the Year at the New Civil Engineer awards early this summer.

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) - WOW bus update

The WOW bus is supported by partner organisations across the ICS, including NHS Norfolk and Waveney, Norfolk County Council, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector and others.

Services that are currently offered on the bus will vary between vaccinations and screening, along with health and financial advice.

Please share this information - and if you see the WOW bus, make sure you hop onboard.

The dates and locations available are: (10am until 4pm)

- 7 October: Wymondham Leisure Centre Norwich Rd, Wymondham NR18 0NT
- 8 October: The Bridge Community Lunch, Fastolff Avenue, St Mary Magdalene Church, Gorleston, NR31 7BZ
- 9 October: Lowestoft Near London Road/Surrey Street
- 12 October: PositiviTea being held in The Treehouse, Holt, Charles Road, Holt, NR25 6DA

Public Information Notice: next of kin appeal for Sharon O'Hara

The Norfolk Coroners Service is trying to trace the next of kin of Sharon O'Hara, aged 53, who resided in the Lakenfields, Norwich area and died on 19.09.2024. There were no suspicious circumstances that led to the death. Despite carrying out extensive enquiries, no next-of-kin have been identified by the Coroner's Office.

Anyone with information should contact the Coroner's Office in Norwich on 01603 774773.

National updates

Rural flood resilience partnership

The government have announced the launch of new [Rural Flood Resilience Partnership](#) to improve collaboration, deepen understanding of vulnerabilities, and support rural communities and agricultural businesses in building their resilience to present and future flood risks and coastal erosion.

The six equal founding partners are: Action with Communities in Rural England; the Association of Drainage Authorities; Country Land and Business Association; the Environment Agency; the National Farmers Union; and Natural England.

The Partnership has published its [work plan covering 2024 to 2026](#). This sets out 21 actions supporting seven strategic outcomes focused on: developing the evidence base

behind decision-making to increase resilience; ensuring communities, farmers and landowners have access to quality advice and support; and engaging rural communities in flood resilience.

Norfolk County Council leads the way with its partnership working to address flooding, in the form of the [Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance \(NSFA\)](#), it will host a summit early next year to bring together a variety of partners with the aim of increasing collaboration around flooding. This will complement the work carried out by the new national partnership.

National call for evidence on the curriculum launched

Young people, parents, employers and education staff, leaders and experts are being invited to take part in a 'national conversation' about how the curriculum and assessment system can better prepare young people for life and work, as a call for evidence was launched by the Department of Education on 25 September.

The evidence gathering is part of the [work of the government's independent review panel](#). The review panel wants to bring everyone into the conversation about what's working well and what could work better in the curriculum. The information will be used to help inform the panel's first recommendations.

The current call for evidence covers a range of specific areas, including how best to provide an excellent foundation in English and maths, support for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

The closing date is 22 November 2024. Further information available [here](#).

School Breakfast Club Pilot

The Chancellor announced that up to 750 schools with primary aged pupils will be invited to take part in a £7 million breakfast club pilot. The funding will allow these schools to run free breakfast clubs for their pupils in the summer term (April-July 2025).

The full policy, if rolled out nationally, is expected to cost £315m and aims to ensure children are not attending school hungry and with poor nutrition.

It is currently not clear which schools will make the 750 school pilot, but they will be state-funded primary schools and will be written to by the Department for Education to invite them to the pilot.

The Department for Education will work with the schools selected as part of the pilot to understand how breakfast clubs can be delivered to meet the needs of schools, parents and pupils when the programme is rolled out nationally.

Industrial Strategy update

At the Labour Party conference, the Chancellor announced that a green paper will be published alongside the Budget on 30 October. This will outline the long-term sectoral growth and priority industries of the government, ahead of the final industrial strategy being published in the spring of 2025, following a consultation with businesses and trade unions.

The chancellor says that the Industrial Strategy will be at the heart of the government's mission to grow the economy, unlock investment and make every part of the country better off. It will focus on delivering long-term change to the economy by making Britain a clean

energy superpower and accelerating to net zero, breaking down barriers to regional growth, and building a secure and resilient economy.

Devolution update

The Government says that they are continuing to deliver devolution for all corners of the country, with a [commitment to deliver full devolution across the North](#).

The commitment follows their earlier sign off on agreements for regional mayors in Greater Lincolnshire, Hull and East Yorkshire, and to establish combined county authorities in both Devon & Torbay, and Lancashire.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

james