

## **Norfolk County Council updates**

### **The Council's performance and priorities for the coming year highlighted**

At the meeting on 8 May, Cabinet agreed Norfolk County Council's Annual Review report for 23-4 as well as the new Council Delivery Plan for 24-5 which sets out the priorities for this coming year.

The Council Leader, Kay Mason Billig, said 'I'm proud that the county council continues to deliver for the people of Norfolk, despite the financial challenges that local government faces. I would encourage everyone to read our plan for this year, to be aware of all the good work that continues to be done. Please be assured of our unwavering commitment to make Norfolk the best it can be.'

Highlights of the council's performance over the last year include:

- Agreeing a £600 million-plus devolution deal to bring powers and funding from Westminster to Norfolk
- Spending £1.5 million per day on adult social care, including help for 11,000 people to return home from hospital.
- Securing £49.5 million of Government funding to improve bus services, with an 18 per cent rise in passenger numbers.
- Delivering ultra-fast broadband to more than 6,900 premises, with superfast broadband now covering 97.3 per cent of properties.
- Serving more than 1.8 million library customers.

Key priorities for this year include:

- Delivering the devolution deal and an economic strategy for Norfolk, to boost jobs and skills
- Delivering better quality, local and affordable care for children, including more foster carers
- Continuing to deliver supported living housing programmes for adults
- Delivering library hubs, including a range of services, in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth
- Completing the roll-out of LED streetlighting, to cut costs and carbon emissions

Both documents will soon be published on the NCC website alongside the Performance Framework. In the meantime, they can be found within the full Cabinet papers [here](#).

### **£600 million-plus devolution deal to be considered at the NCC Infrastructure and Development Select Committee in May**

Preparations for a devolution deal to bring more powers and funding to Norfolk are to be considered by councillors at the I&D select committee on 15 May.

Three reports will be presented that pave the way for major investment in infrastructure, skills, housing and transport, subject to a vote in July on introducing a leader, elected by the public:

- A report to enable transfer of the Government's £12.8 million per year adult skills budget to Norfolk.
- A report on how the county and district councils have worked on a pipeline of brownfield site regeneration projects, to develop up to 580 homes using £7 million of devolution funding.
- A report on how the £20 million investment fund will be administered, with the involvement of district councils and other partners in advising the directly elected leader and cabinet on funding decisions.

Reports and details of the meeting can be found [here](#). Find out more about devolution for Norfolk [here](#).

### **Heartsease Fiveways roundabout reopens**

Work on the final phase of improvements to Heartsease Fiveways roundabout in Norwich is finished, with all roads in the area now reopened.

The roundabout had been closed in all directions since 13 April to carry out the final construction and resurfacing work needed to complete the project.

Up to five weeks (until 18 May) had been programmed for this phase to allow for any potential delays due to bad weather or other issues, but conditions have been favourable and allowed completion after three weeks.

Completion of the work sees the return of normal bus services for a number of routes, which have been on diversion during recent weeks.

Full details of the work that's taken place, along with more detail on the history of the project can be found [here](#).

### **Flourish Awards 2024**

Norfolk County Council has announced the return of the Flourish Awards for 2024 – with nominations now officially open.

Hosted by the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (CYP SA), the distinguished awards recognise the people, projects, teams and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to help children and young people flourish in Norfolk.

Any project, team or organisation can be nominated by members of the public or a professional, with the winners being decided by a panel of children and young people, made up of members of the Norfolk Youth Advisory Boards and other relevant groups, and parents.

More information, including how to make a nomination, can be found [here](#). Nominations are open until 24 May 2024.

### **Watton Junior School unveils New Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Base**

A 16-place SEMH base, located within the grounds of Watton Junior School officially opened on 18 April 2024.

This new building, funded as part of Norfolk County Council's £120 million Local First Inclusion programme, will provide early support to children and their families to manage emotions and build the confidence and strategies to flourish at both school and home.

The base will be managed by the Executive Headteacher and governing body at the school, part of the Clarion Corvus Trust. A newly recruited team leader will oversee the day-to-day running of the facility along with support staff. NCC has also funded access to a range of professionals, including family learning workers and educational psychologists.

For more information on the wider programme to increase specialist education places in Norfolk schools, please see [here](#).

## **Government updates**

### **New £64 million plan to help people stay in work announced**

A new work and health support service will be rolled out across 15 areas of England (not including Norfolk at this stage) as part of the Government's plan to help people with health conditions back to work.

The WorkWell pilot – launched on 7 May – will connect 59,000 people to local support services, including physiotherapy and counselling so they can get the tailored help they need to stay in or return to work. The pilot service provides a single, joined-up assessment and gateway into both employment support and health services locally. Participants do not need to be claiming any government benefit to qualify. More information [here](#).

### **Government to fund 180 local projects to boost water quality**

New funding of £11.5 million – which is being matched by organisations including the National Lottery, local rivers and wildlife trusts, as well as some private investment – is being made available by government to boost tree planting, habitat restoration and flood management, which is expected to lead to an additional 300km of English rivers being protected and improved.

The funding will also support the creation and restoration of around 160 hectares of inland and coastal waters.

The funding is in addition to the existing £3 million the Environment Agency has already been allocated for this financial year for local projects to improve water quality.

More information [here](#).

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

Kind regards

james