

## **Norfolk County Council updates. 09/01/2025.**

### **Government asked to explore new powers and funding for Norfolk**

On 9 January 2025, county councillors backed a bid to secure new powers and funding for Norfolk. The full county council discussed and then the cabinet agreed to apply to be part of the Government's priority programme for devolution.

The Government wants to extend devolution of powers and funding, plus local government reform, across England. It invited councils to express an interest in being part of the first phase, by January 10th.

Further details and information are included in the county council's news release [here](#).

### **Public Health campaign launched**

Members are asked to support and promote Public Health's annual Ready to Change campaign that launched on 30 December.

The campaign aims to encourage Norfolk residents to sign up to improve a health behaviour of their choice through the 30-day health challenge and to boost awareness of Norfolk county council's [Ready to Change](#) web pages.

Members are encouraged to promote the campaign and the call to action: Ready for a new you in 2025? Sign up to the 30-day health challenge at [www.readytochange.co.uk](http://www.readytochange.co.uk).

### **Hop on the WOW bus**

Over the coming weeks, the WOW bus will be traveling across Norfolk to support those who need extra help with their health and care.

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

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

The WOW bus will be on site from 10am until 4pm at the locations below:

10 January: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS

13 January: The Treehouse, Charles Road, Holt, NR25 6DA

15 January: The Treehouse, Charles Road, Holt, NR25 6DA

16 January: Co-op, Polka Road, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, NR23 1JG

17 January: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS

20 January: Great Yarmouth Library, Tolhouse Street, Great Yarmouth NR30 2SH

24 January: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS

27 January: Tesco Extra, Blue Boar Lane, Norwich NR7 8AB

29 January: Social Supermarket, 65 Hall Road, Norwich, NR1 3HL

30 January: Social Supermarket, 65 Hall Road, Norwich, NR1 3HL

31 January: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS

### **Highways maintenance funding for Norfolk**

Norfolk is set to receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance from central government funding.

On 20 December, the Government announced funding allocations for every local authority across England that can be used throughout 2025/6 on the roads in most need of repair, and to

deliver immediate fixes for communities and raise living standards across every area of the country.

In a recent survey, people from across the county gave Norfolk the highest (above average) score in satisfaction with the condition of the highways.

More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed across Norfolk since April 2024 and of those 99% were repaired by contractors within the agreed response times. Members and their constituents are encouraged to report potholes in Norfolk to the county council by completing their online form: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes).

Further information in Norfolk County Council's news release [here](#).

### **Improvements to bus services - passenger satisfaction increasing in Norfolk**

Improvements to bus services across Norfolk are set to continue into 2025 with works starting on bus priority measures in Great Yarmouth and Norwich.

[As outlined in the 20 December news release](#), from 6 January Norfolk County Council is carrying out work to speed up bus travel through Great Yarmouth by enabling two-way traffic through the Market Gates bus interchange. This will be done, in part by changing the direction of travel on some one-way streets around the town centre.

Also starting from 6 January is a scheme which aims to speed up bus travel into Norwich city centre by reducing congestion on the Dereham Road approach to Grapes Hill.

The ongoing improvements to bus services are contributing to increased passenger satisfaction – a recent independent survey showed a 6% increase in passenger satisfaction with the punctuality of local services.

Full details of all service improvements under the Bus Service Improvement Plan are available [here](#).

### **Bird Flu (avian influenza) in Norfolk - update**

The latest government [update on 24 December 2024](#) confirmed a further case of bird flu in Norfolk. All affected poultry will be humanely culled. A 3km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone have been declared around the premises near Hingham in South Norfolk.

Guidance on how to prevent bird flu and stop it spreading is available [here](#).

### **National updates**

#### **Proposed Commission for Social Care**

The Government has [launched a commission for adult social care](#). Health and Social Care Secretary, Wes Streeting, has appointed Baroness Casey to lead a commission to make recommendations and build consensus on how to reform the adult social care sector in England.

The commission has been asked to publish an initial report in 2026 setting out the key problems facing the sector and ideas for how to make medium-term improvements. The government says that the recommendations of this phase will be aligned with the government's spending plans that will be set out at the Spending Review in the spring.

A final report, due by 2028, is to make longer-term recommendations, including on the model of care, organisation of services and funding.

The commission is also intended to cut red tape for councils and the NHS. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) says it would 'hold local leaders accountable for improving care' to make improvements on emergency admissions, delayed discharges, and admissions to long-term residential care.'

The Commission's inception comes alongside some initial government funding of a £86m increase in the disabled facilities grant and a new shared digital platform for both NHS and care staff.

### **Government proposals for reforming elective care for patients**

Elective care covers a broad range of planned, non-emergency services – from tests and scans to outpatient appointments, surgery and cancer treatment.

The Government says that under measures in the [new NHS elective reform plan](#) published 6 January 2025, patients will be offered a wider choice of providers, and the process of booking treatments and appointments will be made as smooth, supportive and convenient as possible. The plan sets out a whole system approach to hitting the NHS 18-week referral to treatment target by the end of this Parliament. It includes expanded use of Community Diagnostic Centres and an increase in the number of surgical hubs to protect planned care from the impact of seasonal and other pressures.

The NHS elective reform plan encompasses several recent Government announcements and proposals such as:

- [Power to patients as government sets out plan to cut waiting lists](#)
- [Deal between NHS and independent sector to cut NHS waiting lists](#)
- [PM sets out plan to end waiting list backlogs through millions more appointments](#)

### **Bus fare cap update**

Following the Government's decision as part of the Autumn Budget to invest £150m in capping bus fares, the previous bus fare cap of £2 has now risen to £3 as of 1 January 2025.

### **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill update**

[The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#), had its second reading in Parliament on 8 January, it includes measures intended to reform children's social care and help reduce the number of children missing education.