

NCC Update 07/03/2025

## **Norfolk County Council updates**

### **New council system could save millions of pounds**

A new report shows millions of pounds could be saved by having fewer councils in Norfolk.

The Government wants to see all councils in Norfolk replaced with fewer, unitary councils –that would be responsible for all services in their area. They have invited Norfolk County Council and the seven district councils to submit interim proposals on 21 March and then develop detailed proposals by 26 September.

Up to £29 million per year could be saved by having one unitary council in Norfolk, according to new figures. The figures are in the county council's draft interim submission for local government reorganisation in Norfolk, which was published on 4 March.

The county council's initial work suggests that having one council would save the most, followed by smaller savings for two councils. Having three or more would cost more money.

The draft interim submission report also highlights a range of potential benefits from having a unitary council system, including:

- ending confusion - people would know that one council would deliver all services in their area.
- delivering value for money - with fewer sets of senior officers, councillors and council headquarters, freeing up money to invest in services.
- joining up services, to make them more effective - such as bin collection and waste disposal and enabling housing and social care to work more closely together.
- ensuring strong local links, through close working with town and parish councils, or local boards.

The council's scrutiny committee will consider the report on 12 March, before the cabinet finalises it on 18 March. The scrutiny committee report is available online [here](#).

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

Further updates on local government reorganisation and devolution can be found [here](#).

### **Free mini health assessment on the go with new digital Health Stations**

New digital Health Stations are being installed in two supermarkets in Norfolk, enabling residents to receive fast and free updates on their health. The new Health Stations, implemented by Norfolk County Council through [SiSU Health](#), are standalone and self-service. They are free to use and will provide residents with a fully automated mini health assessment in under five minutes.

The two Health Stations will be installed at King's Lynn Tesco Extra and Asda Great Yarmouth on 17 February 2025 and will be available in the two supermarkets for one year.

Residents will be able to access multiple health assessments at the touch of a button, such as blood pressure, heart rate, height, weight, and BMI, as well as assessments on their physical activity, wellbeing, and smoking and alcohol levels.

After receiving an instant set of results, the user is provided with next steps and recommendations for their health, and signposting to local support and further information.

### **Free electric blanket testing at libraries across Norfolk**

People in Norfolk are being invited to a series of free electric blanket testing events taking place across the county next week.

From Monday 10 to Thursday 13 March, Norfolk County Council Trading Standards and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will be holding drop-in sessions at libraries across the county, so people can have their electric blankets tested by an expert free of charge and stay safe and warm. They can also speak to friendly staff from both services to find out more about product safety, fire safety in the home and how to best protect themselves and their loved ones from scams.

The free electric blanket testing events will be held at the following locations.

#### **Monday 10 March**

10.30am-12.30pm Cromer Library

2.30-4.30pm Gorleston Library

#### **Tuesday 11 March**

10am-noon at Thetford Library

2-4pm at Wymondham Library

#### **Wednesday 12 March**

10am-noon at Hunstanton Library

2-4pm at Dereham Library

#### **Thursday 13 March**

10am-noon at Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library (The Forum)

2-4pm at Diss Library

Further information about electric blanket safety is available on the council website [here](#).

### **Connect to Work grant funding for Norfolk**

Connect to Work is a central part of the Government's Get Britain Working strategy, designed to link up health and employment services and deliver the mutually reinforcing outcomes of employment and improved health.

Connect to Work will primarily support disabled people, people with long-term health conditions and those with more complex barriers to employment and who wish to work, reducing economic inactivity and driving inclusive economic growth.

More than 4,000 people in Norfolk who face barriers to employment including disability and long-term health conditions are to be helped through a new programme of support.

Further details available are in the press release [here](#).

### **Joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse in Norfolk**

An inspection team, from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, visited Norfolk in December to look at the multi-agency response to unborn children and children aged 0 to 7 who are victims of domestic abuse. JTAs look for strengths, areas for improvement and areas for priority action. No priority actions were identified in Norfolk.

The JTAI praised the "strong and collaborative" partnership arrangements in Norfolk that are helping ensure that most unborn and young children who are victims of domestic abuse are getting the support they need.

Inspectors said: "Domestic abuse is seen as a 'priority for everyone' in Norfolk," praising the "synergy" between partners and the strong governance arrangements. They highlighted co-production with children and young people, and the early identification of need for most children as strengths, alongside the work to support and protect unborn children.

However, inspectors also said there was more to do to understand the cumulative harm to children of repeated domestic abuse, as well as ensure more timely information sharing in a small number of practice areas.

Further information and a link to the report findings is available in the county council press release [here](#).

### **National updates**

#### **Plan for Neighbourhoods**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have published a [prospectus](#) that sets out the principles and objectives of the Government's new Plan for Neighbourhoods.

Local communities in 75 deprived areas across the UK will be given £1.5 billion of Government funding through the new "plan for neighbourhoods" scheme.

In Norfolk, the selected areas are Great Yarmouth, Kings Lynn and Thetford.

Each selected area will receive up to £20 million with local Neighbourhood boards of residents, businesses, and campaigners deciding how to spend the money on projects ranging from youth clubs to health services, with funding available from April 2025.

MHCLG have also published a [list of pre-approved interventions](#) and [policy toolkit](#) that outlines the powers available to communities and local authorities.

#### **Government consultation on plans for North Sea clean energy**

The Government is consulting on plans to put the North Sea at the heart of Britain's clean energy future and to drive economic growth.

The [consultation on Building the North Sea's Energy Future](#) sets out the next steps in the government's overarching objective for the North Sea - to make it a world leading example of an offshore clean energy industry, building on the UK's world-class oil and gas heritage.

The consultation sets out a framework for the future of energy in the North Sea and plans to unleash the North Sea's clean energy future and ensure prosperous and sustainable transition for oil and gas

The Government says it is committed to working with industry, communities, trade unions and wider organisations to develop a plan that will ensure a phased transition for the North Sea – creating tens of thousands more jobs in offshore renewables.

The consultation also includes delivering the Government's commitment not to issue new licences to explore new oil and gas fields in the UK.

The consultation is open until 30 April 2025.

### **Digital inclusion action plan and consultation**

The Secretary of State for Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has published a [Digital Inclusion Action Plan](#). The plan aims to close the digital divide in the UK, ensuring that everyone has the access, skills, support and confidence to engage in the modern digital society and economy, whatever their circumstances.

The Government says that whole of the UK will be given the chance to boost their digital skills and access vital technology under their new inclusion plan

The first five actions look at local-level support, skills, devices, accessible government services, and evidence around health outcomes and health inequalities. It focuses on young people, older people, people with disabilities, people currently out of work, and low-income households.

The government is asking for views and examples of good practice from local and combined authorities, businesses, charities, community groups and individuals.

[The consultation and call for evidence](#) is open until 9 April 2025.

### **National youth strategy- consultation for young people**

Ahead of publishing a National Youth Strategy, the Government has launched a national campaign and listening exercise to let young people have their say on support services, facilities and opportunities they need.

The campaign will be encouraging and supporting thousands of young people aged 10-21 (aged 25 with SEND) to help shape the Youth Strategy.

Young people will be able to submit their views on a range of topics including what issues matter to them in their local area, what services they think should be available to young people, and how money should be spent in their area – delivering on the Government's Plan for Change to spread opportunity across the country.

Input will be collected by the Government in a range of ways, including via an online survey, plus physical events, including peer led focus groups and workshop sessions, so young people can offer views in their own words.

[Deliver You](#) is the name of this national campaign across England. The Government says that the campaign, co-created with young people, is an ambitious and exciting opportunity for young people to share their views, experiences, and ideas - and to tell the Government what really matters to them.

[The Deliver You survey](#) is open until 16 April 2025.