

01/08/2024

Cabinet to consider budget savings proposals

Norfolk County Council's cabinet is being asked to consider proposed changes to key services, following recent public consultations.

Earlier this year the council put forward plans to:

- Reduce opening hours at recycling centres to deliver a more consistent approach, in line with neighbouring authorities. This would mean that all recycling centres in Norfolk would be closed on Wednesdays.
- Switch off 2% of streetlights across Norfolk in areas where it is considered safe and appropriate to do so.
- Introduce pre-booking for visits to the Norfolk Record Office and a new paid services to increase income generation.

Further information about these proposals is available [here](#).

The council's cabinet are being asked to agree to implement each proposal at a meeting on Monday 5 August. You can watch the meeting, live or afterwards, and read the reports online [here](#).

Cabinet to consider adult social care charging policy

Norfolk County Council's cabinet is also being asked to consider proposals to change the way that people are charged for adult social care services while living in their own home.

The council has consulted on two options to bring the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) in line with the government's rates which, if adopted, would save the council over £1million each year.

The MIG is the minimum amount of income that someone is left with after paying for their care. Norfolk County Council currently applies a higher level of Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) than the government's rates for people aged 18 to pension age who receive non-residential care services.

The cabinet will consider the findings of the MIG equality impact assessment, the consultation report, recommendations from scrutiny, and the council's financial position. They will then be asked to adopt either option 1, option 2, or ask officers to find alternative savings proposals that would add to the existing £88.250m of Adult Social Care savings targets.

Cabinet will consider the report when it meets at 10am on Monday 5 August. You can watch the meeting, live or afterwards, and read the report online [here](#).

Extraordinary Extinct™ summer activities across Norfolk

Norfolk County Council's [AtoBetter team](#), supported by [Norfolk Museums Service](#), have collaborated with Norfolk-based children's publisher Dodo and Dinosaur to launch an adventure for residents this summer with the Extraordinary Extinct™ Prehistoric Quest.

From Saturday 20 July to Tuesday 3 September, people are being invited to step outside and unearth the Extraordinary Extinct™ prehistoric creatures that once called Norfolk their home.

The quest offers people the chance to explore Norfolk's rich history and local treasures while promoting sustainable travel habits along the way.

Maps can be collected from a participating library at one of the 15 locations across Norfolk. Participants can complete fun fossil facts and reveal the mystery word to enter a competition to win over £1,000 worth of local prizes.

This is fun and free family activity to find out more about your local community and to discover new ways to get from A to B.

Further information and a list of the 15 locations in Norfolk is available [here](#).

PUBLIC INFORMATION: Next of Kin appeal

The Norfolk Coroner's Service are appealing for help to trace the family of a man who died at his home address. 83-year-old Stanley Riches, who lived at an address in Wroxham, died on the 28 July 2024.

There were no suspicious circumstances and, despite carrying out enquiries, no next of kin have been identified.

Anyone with information relating to Stanley should contact the Coroner's office in Norwich on 01603 774773. coroner.referral@norfolk.gov.uk

National updates

Housing announcements

The government has announced a range of measures that they say are intended to boost housebuilding in areas most in need, help more people buy their own homes, remove the largest barriers to economic growth, and get Britain building again. These include:

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

The Government has [released a promised consultation](#) on its updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The consultation seeks views on the government's proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework in order to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system. They are also seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

The consultation closes on 24 September 2024.

New Housing Targets

In addition to proposals to revise the planning system, the [government has set new targets to deliver 1.5 million more homes](#).

All councils in England are to be given new, mandatory housing targets to deliver new homes by 2029 and the new targets will flow into the development of local plans.

Councils will have to review their green belt land if needed to meet their own target, identifying and prioritising 'grey belt' land, which the government has now defined and includes land on the edge of existing settlements or roads, as well as old petrol stations and car parks. Grey belt sites will only be built on if they meet the Government's 'golden rules' that half of homes are affordable, the plans enhance the local environment and the necessary infrastructure is in place, such as schools and GP surgeries.

Further announcements about the government's plans to invest in social and affordable housing, including support for councils to help them deliver affordable housing, will be made at the Spending Review in October 2024.

Launch of new towns taskforce

The Deputy Prime Minister has asked regeneration expert Sir Michael Lyons to lead [an independent New Towns Taskforce](#) to deliver the government's vision for a new generation of new towns. Sir Michael's team is expected to work 'in lockstep' with mayors, local leaders and communities to advise on the right places for new towns, listening to those who know their areas best. Key principles for the new towns are outlined below.

- The programme of new towns will create largescale communities of at least 10,000 new homes each, with many larger than this.
- The programme will include large-scale new communities that are separate from existing settlements but expect that a far larger number of new towns will be urban extensions and regeneration schemes.
- These new communities will be governed by a 'New Towns Code' – a set of rules that developers will have to meet to make sure new towns are well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places where people want to live.
- The Government state that new towns will have all the infrastructure and public services necessary to support communities. The towns will also help meet housing need by targeting rates of 40% affordable housing with a focus on affordable social rented homes.

The taskforce will recommend appropriate locations to government within 12 months.

Chancellor's statement on public spending inheritance

[Chancellor Rachel Reeves addressed the house of commons](#) on 29 July to say that findings of a Treasury spending audit reveal £22 billion of unfunded pledges inherited from the previous Government this year. She set out a number of commitments to tackle the overspend and to set out full fiscal plans alongside a Spending Review at the budget on 30 October.

In her [full statement](#) the Chancellor also pledged to "ensure that never again do public service budgets get set at only a few months' notice". She said spending reviews would take place every 2 years, with a minimum planning horizon of 3 years, to avoid uncertainty for departments and to bring stability to the public finances.

Key proposals to scrap or review the previous government's policy commitments as below:

Care reforms

The Chancellor confirmed that she was scrapping previously proposed changes to the care system, including the £86,000 cap on the cost of care an individual can pay over their lifetime, saving the Government over £1bn by next year.

The social care plan would have introduced a cap on the amount an older or disabled person would have to pay towards their support at home or in care homes from next October. After spending £86,000 on their care, people with a high level of need would have had their care costs paid for by local authorities. The threshold for getting some council support to pay for costs, before exceeding the cap, would also be made more generous.

The previous government had already delayed these plans by two years and did not implement the National Insurance rise which was meant to fund them.

Advanced British Standard Qualification proposals scrapped

First announced in October 2023 by the former Prime Minister, the Advanced British Standard proposed bringing together A Levels and T Levels into a baccalaureate-style qualification, increasing the number of subjects that students take to provide increased breadth in the 16 to 19 curriculum.

The Chancellor said that she will discard this proposed new qualification.

The new government had [already announced its own review of the curriculum and assessment](#) from Key Stages 1 to 5 (from primary school to college/6th form).

New hospitals programme review

The Chancellor announced a review of the hospital building programme ahead of the Autumn budget. This casts fresh doubts over previously pledged plans to replace the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn and the James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston.

Transport infrastructure review

The Chancellor said that the public spending inheritance audit included transport projects over budget, delayed or unfunded. It also revealed unfunded transport projects of nearly £800m committed next year. She said that the government would undertake a review of all these commitments and would not move forward schemes that had not yet commenced and were unaffordable. The planned A303 Stonehenge tunnel scheme, A27 Arundel bypass, and projects that had not yet commenced in the restoring our railways programme (none were in Norfolk) were also immediately cancelled.

The DfT then launched their [internal review of DfT's capital spend portfolio](#) that they say will bring in external expertise, move quickly to make recommendations about current and future schemes, and support the development of a long-term strategy for transport.

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

Kind regards

james