

Norfolk County Council Updates 02-10-25

One council for Norfolk plan submitted to Government

The Government is being urged to back plans for better services, local decision making and bigger savings, by replacing Norfolk's eight councils with one.

Norfolk County Council's cabinet has agreed to submit a business case to the Government, setting out how creating a single council for Norfolk could save £39.8 million each year and deliver the greatest benefits for Norfolk. This decision followed a discussion by the full council on 25 September.

The Government wants to have fewer councils, known as unitary authorities, which run all services in their area. It asked existing councils to submit detailed proposals by 26 September. It is due to consult the public on different council options this autumn, before making a final decision, expected in spring next year.

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

You can find out more at [Local government reorganisation - Norfolk County Council](#).

Support our Stoptober campaign

Norfolk County Council is encouraging residents to stop smoking for good this Stoptober, to help improve their health. The campaign theme is 'Let's Quit together' - joining thousands of others who are committing to quit this Stoptober and making use of the wide range of support available in Norfolk.

With around 99,000 smokers and 1,240 smoking-related deaths in Norfolk each year, quitting is the best step for better health. Evidence shows that stopping for the 28 days of Stoptober makes you five times more likely to quit for good.

Residents can [find support and services](#) on our website, including:

- [Smokefree Norfolk](#)
- [Allen Carr's Easyway](#) seminars
- GP and pharmacy stop smoking services
- The Ready to Change stop smoking [30-day health challenge](#)
- Nicotine replacement therapies
- Group and one-to-one support
- The NHS Quit Smoking app.

To help with the campaign, members are encouraged to:

- Visit our [Ready to Change help to quit smoking website](#) and our [support with stopping smoking webpages](#) and signpost them to others.
- Share Stoptober social media posts from Norfolk County Council's Facebook, Nextdoor and LinkedIn accounts.

Your chance to be one in a million – help plant more trees in Norfolk

We are inviting residents, schools, businesses, and community groups to take part in Norfolk's 1 Million Trees project. Since 2020, thousands of trees and hedges have already been planted and we need your help to keep growing.

Through our subsidised scheme, you can apply for native tree packs (with protection included) at up to 50% off. This year, the council is also offering a limited number of 'Taller Tree Packs' grown at Gressenhall Community Tree Nursery.

How you can help:

- [Apply for a subsidised tree pack](#)
- Encourage your parish council, local groups or landowners to get involved
- [Tell us about any trees you've planted since 2020 so we can add them to the county total](#)

Flourish Awards

Our recent Flourish Awards ceremony celebrated and recognised individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions across the county, as part of our shared ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish. The ceremony was hosted and compered by young people at The Assembly House, in Norwich, with over 140 guests.

This year, the Flourish Awards received more than 600 nominations, drawn from inspiring individuals, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) organisations and groups, schools, statutory organisations including health, education, criminal justice and local authorities, and local businesses.

Further details, including the list of winners, are available in our press release [here](#).

Consultation: Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn Transport Strategies

Norfolk County Council has launched a public consultation on updated transport strategies for Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, inviting residents, workers, visitors, and interested organisations to share their views on future travel options.

The proposed strategies set out the transport infrastructure needed over the next five to ten years to support sustainable growth, while protecting local culture and heritage. Both borough councils and key stakeholders have contributed to the development of these plans.

Improving transport is essential for sustainable housing and economic growth, tackling inequality, improving health, and supporting regeneration. Enhancements to walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport will help everyone choose cleaner, healthier ways to travel.

The consultation opened on 24 September and closes on 5 November 2025. Further information and a link to the consultation is available in our press release [here](#).

National Updates

Fair Pay Agreement to be established for care workers

The Government has [announced](#) a £500m investment to establish the first Fair Pay Agreement (FPA) for adult care workers, aiming to improve pay and tackle chronic staff shortages in the sector. It has also launched a [public consultation to gather views on the design of the fair pay agreement process](#), which closes on 26 January 2026.

Following the consultation, the Government aims to lay secondary legislation and stand up the new negotiating body in 2026. The Government will conduct negotiations in 2027 with enough time to prepare the sector for implementation ahead of 2028 to 2029.

The Local Government Association (LGA) [welcomed](#) the move in principle, noting that care staff play a fundamental role and that better pay is crucial for recruitment and retention. However, it

warned that, without a firm commitment from central government to fully fund the resulting pay increases, council budgets (and care providers) would struggle to absorb the costs, which would likely undermine the policy's success.

Warm Home Discount Scheme consultation

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has launched a [new consultation](#) seeking views on the design of the Warm Home Discount scheme.

The consultation aims to secure the continuation of support for around 6 million households for winter 2026 to 2027 and into the next scheme period, after current regulations expire on 31 March 2026. It sets out the government's proposals for the new scheme period and asks for feedback, particularly from Warm Home Discount recipients, consumer groups and charities with an interest in fuel poverty.

The consultation closes on 20 November 2025.

GP appointments online

From 1 October 2025, patients will be able to request appointments, ask questions and describe symptoms online throughout the day rather than calling their surgery or visiting in person. This will help free up practice phone lines for those who need them most and make it more convenient to access appointments.

Further information is available in the Government's press release [here](#).

Targeted maintenance grants for students to be reintroduced

The Department for Education [has announced](#) that students from some of the country's lowest income households will benefit from the return of targeted, means-tested maintenance grants for higher education, at college or University - to be paid for by a new levy on international student fees.

The grants will offer vital financial support to eligible students from low-income households, helping to ensure that cost is not a barrier to accessing higher education.

Further details will be set out in the Autumn budget, and further plans for higher education reform are expected to be announced soon, as part of the post 16 education and skills white paper.

New Commissioner to champion tenant farmers across England

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) have [announced](#) their appointment of Alan Laidlaw to a new role of Commissioner for the Tenant Farming Sector.

[Alan Laidlaw](#) will act as a trusted and impartial point of contact for tenants, landlords and advisors, ensuring fair practice and tackling poor behaviour across the sector.

The Commissioner will promote the standards set out in the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Code of Practice, working closely with Defra and the Farm Tenancy Forum, the government-industry group that advises Defra on supporting and improving the farm tenancy sector in England.

Work is underway to provide ongoing information on the [Commissioner for the tenant farming sector GOV.UK page](#) and setting up communication channels. Input is welcomed from farmers, landlords, agents, industry organisations, and anyone involved in the sector on what would be most useful to include