

Norfolk County Council Updates

Government decision on county council elections

The Government has [announced](#) their decision that this May's county council elections will not go ahead, so that the council can focus on local government reorganisation and devolution.

Norfolk County Council leader Councillor Kay Mason Billig's response is available in our news release [here](#).

Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance – improvements in Hickling and Sutton

Partners from the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) have been working together and taking action to tackle long-standing flooding challenges in Hickling and Sutton.

Both villages suffered from severe impacts during recent storms, including Storm Babet in 2023. In Sutton, not only was there flooding from the staithe but this was compounded by the flooding of the foul sewers into roads, gardens, and properties.

In response, NSFA partners including Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water and the Water Management Alliance (WMA) have worked collaboratively to deliver a comprehensive programme of improvements. Further details of the approach and actions taken in each area are detailed in the news release [here](#).

The work of the NSFA has also recently been highlighted in parliament, as outlined in the national updates below.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service to open new fire cadet unit

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is inviting young people aged 13–17 to apply for a new fire cadet unit opening later this year at Fakenham Fire Station. The service already runs cadet units in Diss, Hunstanton and Wymondham, where participants gain hands-on experience of firefighter life through weekly drill nights.

The new Fakenham unit will offer 15 places, and expressions of interest are open until Monday 9 February. Expressions of interest can be made via the Norfolk County Council website: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/cadets>.

Further information can be found in our news release [here](#).

Norfolk and Waveney ISC

People across Norfolk and Waveney who need urgent dental care are being encouraged to come forward, as extra NHS dental appointments are available.

The additional appointments are for people who do not have a regular dentist and need urgent or unscheduled dental treatment. They form part of a national programme delivering 700,000 extra urgent dental appointments, announced by the government last year.

People who need urgent dental care should contact NHS 111 online or by phone. You do not need to be registered with a dental practice to access this service.

Further details are available on the [Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System website](#).

National Updates

Flooding Bill highlights Norfolk flooding issues and partnership work

George Freeman, MP for Mid Norfolk, has [presented his Ten Minute Bill](#) on flooding to Parliament, highlighting flooding issues and good practice in Norfolk. He thanked local residents, councillors, the [Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance](#) (NSFA) and Aviva for helping shape the bill and also referenced the NSFA-hosted multi-agency summit on flooding and water management.

He outlined key challenges, including rising inland flooding, inadequate infrastructure for new housing, climate change, poor maintenance, limited funding and unclear responsibilities - noting that more than 30 agencies hold flooding responsibilities in Norfolk.

The bill proposes practical measures for flood prevention themed around responsibilities, funding, planning, and improved national and local data and flood mapping. It is scheduled for a second reading on 10 July 2026.

Environment Agency's coastal adaptation pilot - funding for Norfolk

The Environment Agency has [announced](#) funding to support new coastal adaptation pilots to help England's most at risk coastal areas prepare for climate change.

£18 million will be shared between coastal projects across the East Riding of Yorkshire, Norfolk and Suffolk to continue advanced coastal adaptation work. These areas have been at the forefront of developing innovative approaches to coastal transition and will help fund new long-term adaptation approaches.

An additional £12 million will also be made available to Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) to select projects that can deliver smaller scale actions.

White paper sets out reforms to policing

The Home Secretary has [announced](#) major reforms to policing. A white paper titled '[From local to national: a new model for policing](#)', sets out a comprehensive package of reforms to policing that aim to create a police service that is more rooted in local communities and focused on their needs. Proposals include:

- The formation of a new National Police Service
- A commitment to an improved, consistent local policing service
- Reviewing the overall number of police forces and the police funding formula
- Overhauling police governance
- Delivering a workforce strategy
- Mandating national standards for leaders
- Implementing a new police performance system, among other measures.

Police Performance Framework

Alongside the white paper on police reforms, the Government have published a [Police Performance Framework](#). This sets out how they will measure performance against a wide range of activity and is intended to improve public trust and confidence in the police.

Free AI training for all

The Government has [announced](#) that every adult in the UK is eligible to take free courses to gain practical AI skills for work – as the joint government and industry programme sees a major expansion to upskill 10 million workers by 2030.

Hundreds of free online AI courses will be made available under a government scheme involving firms such as Google and Microsoft, with 14 industry-benchmarked courses offering digital badges on completion.

Open to all UK adults online, taking as little as under 20 minutes, the courses aim to give people the skills needed to use simple AI tools effectively in the workplace and teach the use of AI for tasks like drafting text, creating content and completing administrative tasks, to free up time to focus on other work.

Courses are available on the Government's [AI Skills Hub](#).