

Updated 23 July 2026

This weekly briefing highlights key Norfolk County Council updates, national developments and information councillors can share with constituents, parishes and stakeholders.

Service updates: Current disruptions to council services are available at [Norfolk County Council service disruptions and closures](#).

Norfolk County Council Updates

Love Your Market Town Grant scheme reopened

Councillors are encouraged to share this grant opportunity with local town councils, businesses, community groups and other partners who may have ideas to increase footfall and encourage people to spend more time in Norfolk's market towns.

Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 are available for projects such as events, town trails, themed festivals and other activities that support local pride of place, bring people into town centres and encourage residents and visitors to shop locally.

The scheme is supported by Norfolk County Council and district councils. Further details, examples of successful projects and information about how to apply are available [here](#).

Initial ideas must be submitted by 31 August 2026.

Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library to reopen

The Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library will reopen at 10am on Wednesday 29 July after a £1.3 million refurbishment. The library welcomes around one million visitors a year and is one of the country's busiest public buildings.

Improvements include a new entrance, more study space, refreshed children and teenage areas, better accessibility, charging points and a new events space. The temporary Forum pop-up closes on Friday 24 July.

Redundancy support for job losses at British Sugar

The council's Redundancy Support Service is helping employees affected by British Sugar's proposal to stop beet processing at Cantley from the end of February 2027. The proposal, subject to consultation, puts around 104 jobs at risk at a site important to the local economy and farming supply chain.

The Cantley site has operated for more than a century and is an important part of the local economy and farming supply chain. British Sugar has said it intends to concentrate beet processing at Wissington, Bury St Edmunds and Newark.

The council's support offer can help affected workers find new employment or self-employment opportunities, access benefits and wellbeing advice, develop skills, and get practical help with CVs, applications, interviews and mentoring.

Businesses facing challenges and the possibility of making redundancies can also contact the service for a confidential discussion and be signposted to support.

Councillors may wish to signpost affected residents, employers and local partners to the service where appropriate.

More information is available at [Redundancy Support Service](#).

Norfolk Trading Standards - further action on illicit cigarettes and tobacco

Norfolk County Council's Trading Standards team, working with Norfolk Police, HMRC and district councils, has continued enforcement against illicit tobacco and vapes, with more than 123,000 illicit cigarettes seized across Norfolk since May 2026.

Recent inspections in Great Yarmouth seized 10,820 illicit cigarettes and 4kg of rolling tobacco. The work protects residents, and supports legitimate businesses. Anyone with

information about illegal tobacco sales can help by reporting it through the following channels:

If you are being coerced into preparing, distributing or selling illegal tobacco, you can report it to HMRC online by searching 'report fraud HMRC' on GOV.UK, or by contacting the HMRC Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.

Members of the public wishing to report illegal sales of vapes, cigarettes or tobacco can contact Citizens Advice by calling 0808 223 1133.

Flood resilience improvements

Woodton Primary School, near Bungay, has benefited from flood resilience work through Reclaim the Rain, a joint Norfolk and Suffolk County Council project testing ways to reduce flood risk and improve water resilience in small rural communities. The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance has highlighted the work as a good example of practical, community-based flood management tailored to local needs.

The £6.4 million project is funded by government and managed by the Environment Agency as part of the £150 million Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. It runs until March 2027.

Six Norfolk and Suffolk schools have introduced sustainable drainage and water management measures through the Department for Education's SuDS in Schools programme, match funded by Reclaim the Rain.

Police & Crime Commissioner Norfolk

On 16 July 2026, Reform candidate Colin Sutton was elected Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner. One of his first tasks will be to consult the public, partners and Norfolk Constabulary on a new Police and Crime Plan.

More information about the PCC is available [here](#). The PCC is scrutinised by Norfolk's Police and Crime Panel, with more information on the county council webpages [here](#).

NHS Norfolk and Suffolk Mental Health Plan

NHS Norfolk and Suffolk Integrated Care Board has [unveiled its Mental Health Strategic Plan 2026-2031](#), including a planned £20 million expansion of Mental Health Support Teams to every school and college in Norfolk and Suffolk by 2030.

The plan draws on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments developed with Norfolk and Suffolk County councils and highlights links between poor mental health, deprivation and wider health inequalities, including diagnosed depression among around 15% of adults locally. This is relevant to Norfolk County Council because mental health affects demand across children's services, adult social care, education, community safety and prevention. The plan aligns with the council's focus on early help, reducing inequalities and managing demand on acute services.

National Updates

Commitment to end rough sleeping

The new Prime Minister has [committed to ending rough sleeping](#), backed by an initial £340 million to provide 1,200 homes and intensive support for at least 3,000 people. The announcement emphasises prevention and joined up working between national and local government, health, housing providers and the voluntary sector. It cites annual rough sleeping costs of £20,128 per person, compared with £1,426 for a successful prevention intervention.

Further details of a five-year programme are due before the autumn.

The [Local Government Association response](#) welcomed the ambition but stressed the need for sufficient long-term funding and councils being empowered to lead locally.

£2 bus fare cap from January 2027

Single bus fares in England will be capped at £2 for 2027, replacing the existing £3 cap and backed by £400 million of extra government funding. The cap will benefit longer-distance passengers, including rural and coastal communities where fares can be higher, and it supports access to work, education, services and appointments.