

County Council agrees budget.

Councillors have backed a budget that "delivers for Norfolk", in the face of major challenges facing local government.

The key headlines from the budget agreed today are:

- £122m of investment to meet demand and cost pressures next year - including £34.6m for inflation, £38m for legislative requirements, £39.7m for demand and demographic issues and £9.6m for policy decisions.
- £41.5m of new savings, including £9.6m from transforming how the council operates.
- A proposed 4.99% increase in the County Council's share of Council Tax, in line with the Government's capping level (2.99% for general Council Tax and 2% for adult social care). This would increase the Council's share of band D bills to £1,672.11. A 4.99% rise would generate £24.9m.
- A small number of the budget proposals have been identified as requiring consultation, as they may relate to a policy or service change. Cabinet will take decisions on these proposals in the summer, after considering the consultation results.

Cabinet to vote on £457m plan for Norfolk's Highways and Transport.

The proposals, which are due to be discussed at Norfolk County Council's Cabinet at its meeting on Monday 4 March, cover investment in highways maintenance, cycling and walking schemes, traffic management and public transport infrastructure across Norfolk between now and 2027.

Further allocations from the £10m investment in highway maintenance by Norfolk County Council are proposed, alongside £4.51m from the Network North Road Resurfacing Fund 2024/25. These works include resurfacing roads and footways, bridge maintenance and regular activities such as surface dressing.

The investment, set out over the financial year 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27, includes funding from Norfolk County Council, the Department for Transport, developer contributions such as Section 106 and CIL funds and other sources of funding. The element to be paid by Norfolk County Council in 2024/25 was approved earlier this week as part of Norfolk County Council's budget, which councillors voted on at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 20 February.

The Capital Programme also covers work on major schemes, including the Long Stratton Bypass, Norwich Western Link and West Winch Housing Access Road.

The three year plan follows the Government's 2023 autumn statement, which proposed funding allocations for 2024/25 through to 2026/27. The plan also includes funding from a number of other streams, including the Transforming Cities Fund and the Bus Service Improvement Funds from which Norfolk County Council has successfully secured funding.

The council's cabinet is recommended to approve the latest schemes when it meets at 10am on Monday, 4 March. The papers for the meeting are available [online](#). The meeting will be livestreamed and a recording available to view afterwards on the County Council's Democratic Services [YouTube channel](#).

Have your say on Norfolk saving proposals.

These proposals are part of £41.5m of savings that Norfolk County Council needs to make to balance its budget for 2024/25. The Council faces difficult decisions to deliver on its ambitions for the people of Norfolk against a difficult economic climate and more than a decade of reduced funding.

These proposals fall within the councils' Community and Environmental Services department, which includes Norfolk Highways, Libraries, Museums, Waste Management and the Norfolk Record Office.

The three proposals being launched today are:

- **Street lighting:** To switch off some streetlights across Norfolk in areas where it is considered safe and appropriate to do so.
- **Norfolk Record Office (NRO):** To introduce pre-booking of visits and change opening hours.
- **Recycling centres:** To reduce opening hours at some recycling centres to deliver a more consistent approach, in line with neighbouring authorities.

Between them these proposals could save approximately £457,000 a year.

The council is consulting the public on these proposals from today, 15 February, to midnight on 22 March 2024. The consultation survey is available on the council's Citizen Space platform at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/savingsproposals

Proposals on streetlighting involve switching off 2% of streetlights across the county to save money and reduce carbon emissions. Norfolk County Council has identified 34 locations where the council plans to switch off some street lights. This represents 1.35% of the Council's target of 2%. Further locations will be identified at a later date.

Approximately 1,000 of the 54,000 street lights that the county council manages across the county would be switched off under these plans. It is expected that this could save up to £200,000 per year and cut carbon emissions annually by 76 tonnes, providing an environmental benefit and significantly contributing towards the council's Climate Strategy.

The proposal for introducing pre-booking and changing the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office would extend the current limited Friday service to a Thursday with the same 10am to 4pm opening hours and maintains a full service on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.30am until 5pm.

Finally, proposals to reduce the opening hours at some recycling centres in Norfolk would see 13 recycling centres close on a Wednesday, in line with the centres in neighbouring Suffolk. The additional six recycling centres in Norfolk operate part time and are already closed on Wednesdays. This proposal could save around £200,000 a year.

CLLR Michael Dalby

Michael.Dalby.cllr@Norfolk.gov.uk

07306886552