

June County Councillors Report

From Norfolk County Council

'Illegal Cigarettes Seized

Following inspections carried out because of intelligence received by Norfolk Trading Standards, illicit cigarettes, illegal vapes and hand-rolling tobacco has been seized from businesses in Great Yarmouth and Norwich.

The inspections were carried out with Norfolk Constabulary as part of Norfolk Trading Standards' ongoing work to tackle the sale of illegal tobacco products and protect the public.

This is a useful reminder of the role of Trading Standards, which helps ensure businesses trade fairly and legally, investigates scams and rogue traders, and works to keep consumers safe.

Further information about Trading Standards, including advice and support for businesses and consumers, is available on the county council webpages [here](#).

Residents are urged to report concerns about the illegal sale of vapes, cigarettes or tobacco to Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service - staying safe with lithium batteries

Recent incidents in Norfolk have highlighted the risks associated with lithium batteries.

This reflects a wider national increase in lithium battery fires, linked to the growing use of items such as e-bikes and e-scooters.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is working with Norfolk Trading Standards to help prevent these incidents by promoting safety advice on buying batteries and devices safely, charging them correctly, using e-bikes and e-scooters safely, and disposing of lithium-ion batteries appropriately.

Further information is available on the county council webpages [here](#).

Skills England: Annual Skills Report

Skills England, the Government's national agency for skills, has published its first [Annual Skills Report](#). It sets out current and future skills needs across ten priority sectors linked to economic growth.

The report points to growing demand in sectors including clean energy, construction and digital, and highlights the importance of colleges, universities, apprenticeships and flexible training routes in helping people gain the skills employers need.

It also calls for a stronger skills system that supports the Industrial Strategy, responds more effectively to employers' needs, including SMEs, and helps more people into good jobs.

The main challenges identified are:

- tackling skills shortages and supporting workforce upskilling and reskilling
- encouraging greater employer investment in training and apprenticeships
- responding to the rapid adoption of AI
- improving employability pathways for young people
- building more responsive, place-based skills systems that reflect local economic need

The report stresses that addressing these issues will require strong partnership working between employers, education providers, local leaders and government.

Support for care leavers

The Government is expanding a programme to help children in care establish meaningful relationships for when they reach adulthood. It aims to improve outcomes for the 80,000 children in care across England, as many face significant challenges upon leaving the system. Following a pilot of 25 local areas given funding to employ coordinators, £8.4 million of funding from the Department for Education is being made available over the next three years, to ensure all children in care and leaving care are offered this support.

Norfolk County Council already has a [local offer of support](#) that sets out the support available in Norfolk to care leavers.'

Help with living costs

The Crisis Resilience Service offers financial support in the short term and ways to improve your financial resilience. Please reach out and if you have any difficulty with an application, get in touch. The Social Workers' drop ins at Heritage House, Wells, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in the month, or at the Glaven Centre, Blakeney, on the first Friday and 3rd Monday, can help fill in forms. No appointment needed.

Find out more at

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/41957/What-the-Crisis-and-Resilience-Service-is>

Food support can be accessed

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/accessingfood>

Help with utility bills can be found at

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/41958/Help-and-advice-with-utility-bills>

If you're on benefits you can get reduced broadband packages. I have a detailed information sheet on this so please do get in touch if you'd like to find out more.

If anyone in your household has a medical condition which means you use more water than usual, Anglian Water have a scheme (WaterSure) which caps your water bill. You do need a water meter and be on certain income related benefits.

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/extra-support/tariff-options/watersure/apply-for-watersure>

Dentistry

Applications are now open for the first 25 student places at the new dental school at the University of East Anglia. This first cohort are expected to start training Sept 2027. The undergraduate training program will be at a new £3million extension to the Edith Cavell Building. This is the first step in relieving the dental desert in Norfolk.

Every NHS dental practice offers urgent dental appointments - in North Norfolk this equates to approximately 170 appointments a month. These are accessed by calling 111. Please let me know if you have difficulty getting an appointment and I will raise this with the Integrated Care Board.

Children's Services

Children's services at NCC have been rated by Ofsted as outstanding across the board: overall effectiveness, the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families, the experiences and progress of children who need help and

protection, the experience and progress of children in care, and the experience and progress of care leavers. There was one area which was identified as needing additional improvement: the recognition and consideration of young carers who receive statutory services.

Education

25 new places for children with autism are being provided at Alderman Peel High School in Wells to help the children integrate into mainstream education with the right specialist help in place. These should be completed by October 2026.

Summer reading challenge

The theme for this year's Summer Reading Challenge is Read to the Beat. Children age 4-11 can sign up at their local library, choose their own books, set their own goals and collect reward stickers for every goal reached. Children who complete their goals by the end of the challenge receive a certificate and a medal!

The books can be read online or can be collected from the library. Find out more here [Summer Reading Challenge 2026 - Norfolk County Council](#)

Tech skills

If you need to borrow a laptop, smartphone or tablet and learn how to use them; find out how to get free mobile data or a more affordable broadband tariff; if you're not sure you're getting the best out of your mobile phone; or are worried about online scams, do contact the Tech Skills for Life team at Norfolk County Council on 01485536420 or 01493448246. Find out more at [Tech Skills for Life - Norfolk County Council](#)

Road safety and maintenance

The most effective way to report a Highways defects is by submitting it via Norfolk County Council's official '[Report a highways problem](#)' form on the website.

Alternatively, contact the Customer Service Centre by emailing highways@norfolk.gov.uk or calling 0344 800 8020. This allows the issue to be logged and acted on quickly.

If a defect is a pothole which wasn't fixed before a road was redressed, still report it via the defects portal, but highlight 'to the attention of a highways engineer' so it gets audited.

Similarly, if the problem is edge deterioration, please report it via the portal but highlight 'to the attention of highways rangers'.

There is still some money available in the Bus Stop Improvement Programme. This covers new bus stops, bus shelters and possibly trods. Contact me for more details.

Waste Recycling

The Wells Recycling Centre has shown a significant increase in usage since the booking system was introduced and there are no plans to close it.

My understanding is that recycling centres can accept large household appliances such as washing machines, tumble driers, dishwashers and cookers at recycling centres, but still not fridge freezers and small electricals including batteries and light

bulbs. This is because NCC has to apply for a new recycling facility as the previous one was destroyed by fire.

Business support

The New Anglia Growth Hub provides support to grow your business, make it more sustainable and resilient. There are events and funding opportunities, find out more at

<https://www.newangliagrowthhub.co.uk>

Go Digital Funding Programme

This provides free digital business support to small and medium sized businesses. Parish Councils are eligible if they run a community hub/facility/village hall which creates an income and which provides a benefit to the community. Successful applicants receive free digital advice on websites, social media, digital tools to support their business, and can request a £500 grant to help implement a digital action plan.

More detail on this at [Go Digital Application Form - New Anglia Growth Hub](#)

Dr Victoria Holliday
County Cllr Wells Division
victoria.holliday.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk
07557054629

Update June 26th

Big Holiday Fun back

This summer's Big Norfolk Holiday Fun programme is now live, offering more opportunities than ever before - from kayaking and climbing to cooking and coding! Between 20 July and 02 September, activities will take place across Norfolk, giving children the chance to stay active, try new things and make new friends during the school holidays.

There are still free spaces available for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals, alongside paid places for those who are not eligible. Families can choose from a wide range of activities and there are also plenty of SEND-specialist sessions too.

Sessions are delivered by organisations across the county, in partnership with Norfolk County Council and Active Norfolk - [click here to browse the full list of what's on offer](#). There's lots on in North Norfolk so do have a look. There is the Government promise of free bus travel for children in August but Sanders haven't yet committed.

Apprenticeships drop-in King's Lynn

Our Apprenticeship Team is holding a drop-in session on Monday 06 July at Priory House in King's Lynn. They'll be stationed by the lifts near the staff entrance between 12:00 and 13:30 and will be on hand to discuss all things apprenticeships.

A range of apprenticeship opportunities are available to suit everyone so it's a great chance to learn more by speaking directly with the team.

For more information about apprenticeships at NCC and the opportunities available, [visit our dedicated page on myNet](#).

Free workshops to help people drive safely for longer

In partnership with Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service, our public health road safety team is offering free workshops for drivers aged 60 and over to help them drive safely for longer. The workshop covers how driving can change as you get older, key Highway Code updates and practical tips with time to ask questions.

Family members wanting to find out about support available for older people to travel safely are also welcome to book a place.

[Click here to find out more and book a free workshop.](#) More workshops around the county will be added in the coming months.

Electrical Waste Update

We are currently unable to accept fridges and freezers and small electrical appliances for recycling in Norfolk. We are working hard to resolve this issue and are expecting services to be resumed in the coming weeks.

Electrical waste is dealt with through Producer Compliance Schemes, who arrange for safe recycling and disposal of the electricals via treatment plants, at the cost of the electrical retailers. The treatment plant that accepted the majority of Norfolk's electrical waste suffered a catastrophic fire in April and subsequently the business stopped operating. This has given a huge loss in the regional treatment capacity for these types of materials, and this was on the back of some significant national issues with fridges and freezers, following plant fires and site closures.

As we no longer have a treatment facility to accept our electrical waste, we have been referred to the Producer Balancing Scheme, which acts as a national regulator to ensure local authorities have their electrical waste collected. We have been accepted by a new Producer Compliance Scheme, who is currently working with treatment plants nationally to find capacity for our waste.

We are asking householders to hold on to electrical items that we cannot accept, to avoid the fire risk they pose within the waste stream and thanking them for their patience while we reestablish the service. I am sorry that this may be generating additional enquiries for you.

Our webpage is regularly updated at

[Electrical waste recycling](#)

Any questions can be sent to waste.management@norfolk.gov.uk

New SEND plan

Norfolk has published a three-year plan to improve support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Norfolk Local SEND Reform Plan has been developed following extensive engagement with children and young people, families, schools, early years settings, colleges, the NHS and the voluntary sector.

It sets out a shared approach across education, health and social care, with a focus on earlier support and a more inclusive system where the vast majority of children can flourish in mainstream education.

The plan responds to a Government request for all areas to submit a Local SEND Reform Plan by 19 June. It focuses on support that can be introduced now, ahead of national legislation which will bring further change.

Over the next three years, Norfolk will:

- Expand support for mainstream schools through the £5.9m 'Experts at Hand' funding available if the Government accepts the
- Create additional wraparound support to early years settings and further education providers aiming for 95% of 16 and 17-year-olds to be in education, employment or training.
- Further strengthen 'Team around the School' support to mainstream schools to help identify and meet needs earlier
- Through existing Zone Inclusion Partnerships across Norfolk's 15 school and community zones, increase peer-to-peer support between schools and trusts to share strong SEND practice
- Roll out a new three-tier approach developed with secondary schools to create improved support for children at risk of exclusion through 16 new social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) bases and centres, Local Partnership Planning meetings and targeted outreach
- Complete rollout of mental health support teams to all schools by 2028
- Aim to reduce waiting times for neurodevelopmental assessments to 18 weeks by 2028

- Continue the capital programme to expand specialist provision, and by 2028 double the number of Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) in mainstream schools resulting in around 40% of primary schools and over half of secondary schools hosting this provision. To date around 85% of children have remained in mainstream education as a result of this support.
- Roll out a framework focused on positive relationships and a nurture approach, that supports consistent and inclusive practice across all settings.

The plan builds on work already underway through the council's multi million pound Local First Inclusion programme to transform SEND education.

If approved by Government, the plan could see 90%, around £195m, of the council's historic Dedicated Schools Grant (SEND) deficit repaid.

Judicial Review submitted

A judicial review has been submitted by Norfolk County Council in response to the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme in Norfolk.

The Government's proposals would replace the current two-tier system of local government in Norfolk, comprising the county council alongside district, city and borough councils, with a new structure of three unitary authorities.

The submission of a judicial review represents an early stage in the legal process. The court will consider whether the case should be granted permission to proceed. If so, the case would move to a substantive hearing where the lawfulness of the Government's decision-making process will be examined.

Cllr update July 3rd

The Norfolk Crisis and Resilience Grant Fund

This grant programme run by Norfolk County Council supports people facing financial hardship and builds long-term resilience. It provides funding to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to deliver larger-scale, preventative projects across Norfolk. These should

- Help people avoid reaching crisis
- Build financial resilience over time
- Strengthen community-based support
- Work alongside (not duplicate) existing services in Norfolk

This programme does not fund one-off crisis payments, but focuses on earlier intervention and long-term impact

Grants of between £50,000 and £200,000 are available.

Organisations can apply if they:

- Are a VCSE organisation (e.g. charity, community group or social enterprise)
- Deliver services that benefit Norfolk residents
- Have appropriate governance and financial controls
- Have experience delivering community-based work
- Have the capacity to manage a grant of this size

Partnership bids are welcome, as long as a VCSE organisation leads the application.

This fund is not open to:

- Public sector organisations (including councils, town and parish councils, schools and NHS bodies)
- Individual applicants
- Private businesses applying for commercial gain
- Organisations with political associations or interests
- Organisations that mainly distribute grants to other organisations

NCC is particularly interested in projects that:

- Support people on low incomes or at risk of hardship
- Help people stabilise or increase their income
- Reduce financial pressures or unexpected costs
- Provide support that leads to longer-term change
- Strengthen local organisations and community networks
- Improve access to help and advice

Projects should contribute to at least one of these areas and demonstrate lasting impact.

Key details

Grants of £50,000 to £200,000 are available for projects running over 18 - 24 months

Applications will open in late June 2026 and close at midnight on 13 September 2026, with decisions expected in October

Organisations interested in applying should email communities@norfolk.gov.uk to register their interest or contact me on victoria.holliday.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Youth Jobs Grant for Businesses

From 30 June 2026, businesses can access the new Youth Jobs Grant, which will pay £3,000 for every eligible young person they hire and help more young people to take their first step on the career ladder.

To apply, employers need to complete an online application and accept a short set of terms and conditions. Jobs must be at least 25 hours per week and expected to last at least four months to be eligible for the grant.

Following a successful application, an eligible young person will be identified by the Jobcentre. If hired, the employer will receive funding in two instalments once employment and earnings have been verified by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Further information and a link to the online application form are available [here](#). Or let me know if you have questions.

Making websites easier to read

NCC is committed to making our websites, digital systems and information easier to use. We know that background colour can affect how easy text is to look at and read.

Complete this short survey to tell us how background colours affect you. Your feedback will help us make decisions about colours on our websites, digital systems and information.

The survey is anonymous and only has 8 questions. It's open until 1 August 2026

[Tell us what you think about website background colours - Norfolk County Council](#)

County Cllr report July 2026

Electrical waste collections resume at Norfolk Recycling Centres from 13 July

Electrical waste items and batteries will again be accepted at all Norfolk recycling centres from Monday 13 July.

You can book a visit to a Norfolk recycling centre on the county council website: [Norfolk Recycling Centre bookings](#) or by calling 03448008020.

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Fire Safety Campaign

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is running a fire safety campaign in response to the increased risk of outdoor fires during the recent hot, dry weather especially in higher-risk coastal and inland areas.

You can support the campaign by sharing the advice locally and displaying posters in appropriate community locations. Posters can be requested from norfolkresilienceforum@norfolk.gov.uk.

Further fire safety advice, including safety both inside and outside the home, is available on the county council webpages [here](#). You can also request a free home fire safety visit if you're worried about your or a friend, neighbour or loved one's fire readiness by filling in the online form at <https://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/>

Flood readiness

Flooding can happen at any time of year, including during the summer months. Sudden summer downpours can also cause flash flooding, particularly after prolonged hot and dry weather. Last summer, Norfolk County Council's Flood and Water team received 100 reports of flooding, including 54 confirmed cases of internal flooding. More than a third of home insurance flood claims occur between June and August, with almost a quarter occurring in July and August alone.

Flash flooding can happen quickly, affect homes and businesses not previously considered at risk, and may be difficult to predict.

You can find out more with practical flood preparation advice on the county council webpages [here](#).

Flooding anywhere in Norfolk can be reported via the Flooding Hotline on 0344 800 8013. In an emergency, or where there is immediate danger to life, residents should dial 999.

Help with living costs

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