17-11-2026

County Councillor Report by Cllr Jan Davis for Strumpshaw Parish Council

November 2026

Norfolk County Council's 2027-28 budget – consultation

Norfolk residents are being encouraged to have their say on the county council's latest budget proposals.

Annual budget setting is currently underway at Norfolk County Council for the 2027-28 financial year – with a six-week budget consultation on the proposals.

Overall spending is set to increase next year - but with significant pressures being felt due to increased demand for council services, particularly in adult social care and children's services, and costs of inflation and reduced funding from central Government, the authority is facing a £35.927m budget gap.

Views are sought on a proposed council tax increase and 86 budget proposals totalling £32.273m in efficiencies and cost reductions, contributing significantly towards a balanced budget. People are being urged to take a look at the proposals and have their say. A final decision on next year's budget will be made in February 2027 following consideration of the feedback.

The consultation runs from Monday 26 October and closes on Monday 7 December 2026. Find out more and have your say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget

Local Government Finance Settlement

The Council has urged the Government to review the Local Government Finance Settlement, warning that it leaves Norfolk's crucial services underfunded.

In letters to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the council leader called for urgent action in the forthcoming Budget and highlighted a £148.5 million budget gap over three years, driven by forecast cost pressures of £343.3 million. See county council's news release here.

Norfolk renews commitment to the proposed devolution deal

Norfolk County Council has renewed formal consent for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). It would oversee transport, skills, housing and economic growth, with devolved powers, funding and access to a long-term investment fund exceeding £1.1 billion. Suffolk County Council also gave their formal consent last week. Renewed consent was needed after changes to the Government's mayoral election timetable and national devolution framework.

The first mayoral election is currently scheduled for May 2028.

Local Government Reorganisation - Government Announcement

On the 29th October the government made an announcement on their LGR programme. The original programme was paused to allow ministers to review the decisions taken so far. In summary, the Minister has now stated:

- The Government's LGR programme is no longer paused
- All of the previous decisions taken by government on LGR regarding Norfolk have been withdrawn
- The Government will now make new decisions, after carrying out a detailed review of the proposals that were previously submitted to them

For Norfolk, this means we expect a decision early in the New Year.

It is being suggested that shadow elections will take place in May 2028, alongside mayoral elections. The proposed timescale would see new unitary councils being launched in April 2029.

District council elections due to take place in May 2027 will proceed.

Crisis and Resilience fund

The Crisis and Resilience fund, funded by the UK Government, replaces the former Household Support Fund. It combines immediate support for residents facing hardship with longer-term action to help people avoid future crises. A total of 26 organisations from across Norfolk will receive funding through the next phase of the county's Crisis and Resilience Fund. The funding will help local groups provide advice, support and practical assistance to residents experiencing hardship.

Details and grant recipients are in the council's press release here.

For help with food and energy costs, including heating oil, visit: www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving.

Helping with heating oil costs – the Norfolk Heating oil crisis fund

Help may be available through the Crisis and Resilience fund for Norfolk residents struggling to afford heating oil and keep their homes warm. The council's autumn/winter heating support awareness campaign started on Monday 2 November.

Heating oil support and application details are on the council website here.

Council presses Government over rising school transport costs

Norfolk County Council is again pressing Government for help with rising home-to-school transport costs after ministers ruled out extra funding.

Higher diesel prices are adding pressure to coach operators and the council, which provides statutory school transport for around 19,000 Norfolk children.

The council wants the Government, local authorities and transport providers to find a sustainable solution to protect essential school transport services and ensure that children can continue to access education reliably and safely.

Consultation launched into proposed changes to Post 16 Travel Assistance Scheme

Norfolk County Council has launched a consultation into proposed changes to its Post 16 Travel Assistance Scheme.

The council currently spends about £8m a year on subsidising transport for students to travel to sixth form or college, but is facing increased costs and budget pressures.

Due to the council budget gap of £35.927 million in 2027/28, the council is having to review many of its services to ensure it can continue to meet its statutory duties. One area where savings are proposed is the post 16 transport budget, which is a discretionary service.

The proposed changes will mean increasing how much families using the scheme pay towards transport. The proposals seek to protect those on the lowest incomes, by increasing how much the council subsidises their transport. However, they would still see a small increase in costs over the next two years.

The consultation is available at https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/proposed-changes-to-post-16-travel-scheme and will run until Tuesday, 15 December.

Norfolk Crucial Crew upcoming events for young people

Led by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Norfolk Crucial Crew returns to give Year 6 and home-educated children practical, age-appropriate skills for emergencies and everyday risks.

Last year, more than 6,000 children took part through 165 schools and 130 home-educated children at seven venues.

Sessions cover home fire safety, first aid, CPR, water and online safety, and age-appropriate learning about consent, with partners including St John Ambulance, East Anglian Air Ambulance, the RNLI, Norfolk Police and Brave Futures.

Schools are invited annually at the end of the academic year. Home-educated families can join the mailing list via FireCrucialCrew@norfolk.gov.uk.

Partners strengthening community resilience in Norfolk

Norfolk agencies have renewed their commitment to helping communities prepare for emergencies and emerging risks, including extreme weather and wildfires.

The Government's national **Be Ready** and **Ready Together** campaigns already encourage residents to prepare.

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service recently convened a round-table with leaders from the National Emergencies Trust, Norfolk Resilience Forum, British Red Cross, Norfolk Constabulary, Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association, Norfolk County Council and the county's district councils.

Partners discussed combining their expertise and sharing information to support communities and keep people safe. Other organisations will be asked to help identify community groups and partners able to reach them.

Nominations for Blue Plaques

The Government has announced an expanded National Blue Plaques scheme covering more people, places and stories across England.

Plaques can now mark substantially altered or replaced sites, including homes, shops, workplaces, community buildings and streets. Sites must have a strong connection to a historical person or group who significantly contributed to human welfare or happiness and/or made an exceptional contribution to their field.

Historic England received £100,000 this year for the programme and community and grassroots grants. Funded projects include charity Creative Lives uncovering and sharing overlooked stories with East of England archives.

Norfolk councillors may wish to share news of the expanded scheme with residents, parish and town councils, and local history groups to encourage nominations from Norfolk.

Norfolk nominations are encouraged and open until 13 January 2027. Further details and how to apply are available here.

Questions on Norse Care and Springdale, Brundall, residential care home

At the Strategic and Corporate Select Committee on the 21 October, Cllr Jan Davis asked the following questions:

Question from Cllr Davis:

Following the withdrawal of the proposed sale of Norse Care and its 20 care homes, can the Cabinet Member for Commercial Assets and Revenue Generation indicate the total

costs accrued by this council of working on the Stow Healthcare deal, and any further anticipated costs including additional costs of continuing the contract with Norse Care?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Assets & Revenue Generation

It is not possible to confirm a cost at this point, however some of the costs incurred to date will relate to work which may have value to support alternative proposals being developed. It must be noted that the costs would have been considerably higher had the decision not been taken to withdraw from the sale with Stow. Decisions about the extension of the current contract will be considered by Cabinet alongside consideration of any associated financial implications in due course.

Cllr Davis asked a further supplementary question:

Could the cabinet member for Commercial Assets and Revenue Generation indicate if the council is exploring the opportunity to refurbish the currently closed Norse care homes, such as Springdale in my Division, as I have been asked by the parish council and interested residents.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Assets & Revenue Generation

We are looking at a number of options to ensure continuity of service and to come out with a resolution that financially works for the council.

As for renovating and bringing the three mothballed homes back into service, I'd say all options are on the table. Having inspected those homes, even with significant investment, given the need for dementia care, those homes did not lend themselves to the type of care that we require.

Cllr Jan Davis
Blofield & Brundall Division
Norfolk County Council
16/11/2026