

Norfolk County Council Updates

Budget proposals for 2027-2028

Norfolk County Council has published initial 2027-28 budget proposals to address a projected £35.9m gap and growing service demand. Consultation will take place on relevant proposals, with final decisions due in February 2027

The council has identified £32.3m of savings and efficiencies, but further action is needed to close the remaining gap as demand for services continues to grow.

Key proposals include:

- Earlier intervention and neighbourhood support to reduce demand for adult social care
- More support for children to remain within or return to family networks, alongside expanded family help services
- Higher income from infrastructure fees and charges

They also include details of a proposal to close Docking recycling centre, as recently highlighted in the local press and set out in a county council news item [here](#). Cabinet will consider the proposals on 5 October, and is asked to agree to begin public consultations on relevant elements before final decisions are made.

The plans will be reviewed when government funding is confirmed and the County Council will make final budget and council tax decisions in February 2027. Full details are available in the Cabinet papers [2027-28 budget proposals](#).

Improving roads and tackling potholes

Norfolk County Council is trialling Roadmender, an innovative repair system designed to improve local roads, reduce disruption and provide better value for taxpayers.

The technology supports preventative maintenance by repairing cracks and early deterioration before potholes develop.

Rather than digging out and replacing sections of road, repair material is applied directly to damaged areas, enabling quicker repairs with less waste.

The trial will help assess whether the approach can deliver longer-lasting, more sustainable repairs across Norfolk's highway network.

National Updates

Proposed new National Care Service

The Prime Minister has [announced a new settlement for older people](#): a state pension that rises every year, no personal care charges and a high-quality National Care Service to give peace of mind in later life.

It is proposed the new National Care Service will be introduced in phases as the savings increase from adjusting the Triple Lock, and as workforce and provider capacity are built up. It will be fully funded.

Baroness Casey's independent Commission, informed by public deliberation, will recommend how the proposals should be implemented. Its report is due in summer 2027.

It is noted that the proposed service will not cover bed and board, for which existing means-tested council contributions will remain. Councils will continue to exclude the value of a home from financial assessments where a partner or dependent relative lives there, and deferred payment agreements will remain available to help eligible people avoid having to sell their home during their lifetime to meet care costs.

Improving public health – new tax on vaping

The Government has [introduced a new Vaping Products Duty](#) on all vaping liquids supplied in the UK. The measure is intended to support public health objectives by helping to discourage youth vaping and reduce nicotine dependence, while maintaining a financial incentive for adult smokers to choose vaping over smoking, which remains more harmful.

Planning and Environment

Natural England's [new Operational Statement](#) focuses specialist planning advice on environmentally sensitive cases, with councils expected to determine more routine applications. For Norfolk, this may mean:

- Greater reliance on strategic approaches to nutrient neutrality, habitat protection and nature recovery.
- More influence for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy on growth decisions.
- Less detailed Natural England advice on routine planning applications.

Environment and coastal communities

You may wish to note and share a national exercise seeking local evidence to help protect England's marine environment and coastal wildlife.

The Marine Management Organisation's "Your Coast – Explore, Enjoy, Protect" campaign includes a [national call for evidence](#) on how recreational activities affect protected marine habitats and wildlife.

With major protected areas including The Wash and the North Norfolk Coast, Norfolk communities, the Government's call for evidence may therefore be of particular interest to local communities, marine users, conservation organisations and businesses that rely on a healthy coastal environment.

Homelessness prevention

The Government [has confirmed](#) that it will bring forward amendments to the Social Housing Bill. Additional measures are intended to help retain more social homes, strengthen homelessness prevention and ensure social housing is allocated to those who need it most.

A new Duty to Collaborate will require public services to work more closely together to identify people at risk of homelessness and consider what action they can take within their existing responsibilities to help prevent homelessness.

Culture and communities

Culture is increasingly being recognised as a driver of community wellbeing, local pride and economic growth, with councils expected to play a stronger leadership role in shaping cultural opportunities for residents.

The Local Government Association and partners have recently published a [National Cultural Framework](#) which argues that councils should play a greater strategic role in shaping cultural investment and services in their areas. The framework highlights culture's contribution to economic growth, health and wellbeing, community pride and stronger local identities.

The report says that local authorities are well placed to lead place-based cultural development through services such as libraries, heritage, arts, festivals and community spaces. It calls for clearer responsibilities, stronger local accountability and more place-based approaches to funding and investment.