**Norfolk County Council highlights for 2021/22**

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| * Helping the NHS deliver over 2 million Covid-19 Vaccination to over 12yr olds in Norfolk * 70% of Norfolk streetlights converted, or work underway to convert to LED * Nearly 2,000 salt grit bins across the County for community use * During past 5 years on average 18,000 tonnes of salt used on Norfolk’s roads * 96.7% of highways inspections completed within timescale * 99.6% of dangerous highway defects dealt with within timescales set out in the Transport Asset Management Plan * 94% of Looked after Children (LAC) with an up to date Personal Education Plan * Completed 51,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for 20,700 people. * Major infrastructure projects under way or being developed * Co-ordinating work across the county to help Ukrainian refugees settle in Norfolk |

In the same way as the whole county responded to Covid, work is ongoing to welcome our **new residents from Ukraine to Norfolk**. In a faast moving situation key responsibilities are about keeping people safe through DBS checks and checks on properties.

A **£464 million** net revenue budget for 2022/23 has been agreed, **a £25m increase** from last year, with increased spending across key service areas and capital programmes, along with a 2.99 per cent Council Tax rise was agreed to enable Norfolk to build back better after the pandemic. The overall capital and revenue spend is £1.45bn. **Adult Social Services** will see an additional **£35.4m** of investment, against savings of £10.5m, **Children’s Services** will receive **£23.2m** of further investment, with **a further £10m** this year for the **SEND School Programme**, with £12m against planned savings and **Community and Environmental Services** will see an additional **£11.2m**, against savings of £3.5m. There is a new **£10m pothole fund** to draw upon, **new recycling centres** across the County, **£5m on library upkeep** and extension of services and **£12m on the Better Broadband project**.

The major financial challenge will come in 2023/24 which is why we are commissioning an organisational review to ensure we are as efficient and effective as we can be.

There has been substantial **Beryl Bikes and E-Scooters** uptake during the past year, with the average journey being over 3.5km (taking multiple car journeys out of the City) and multiple Local Cycling, Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) plans being developed across the County (including Greater Norwich, King’s Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Dereham).

**In a major boost to Norfolk’s ambitions to run a net zero transport system £3.2million in funding has been secured to introduce 15 electric buses to the network in Norwich.** The funding has been secured from Department for Transport (DfT) in a joint bid with First Bus for the ‘Zero Emission Bus Regional Access’ (ZEBRA) scheme. This bid is matched by £3.6m of local investment from First Bus and will deliver 15 battery electric buses which will be in operation by March 2024.

Norwich Western Linkis a key **strategic infrastructure project** alongside the Long Stratton By Pass and the West Winch Housing Access Road demonstrating how we are working across the whole county. The Great Yarmouth Third River Cross is due for completion in 2024.

Following analysis of the data obtained from our 2021 surveys re the **Western Link**, it was determined that there is a roost location used by a maternity colony of barbastelle bats (that has a significant level of environmental protection) near to part of the proposed road alignment. Work is currently being undertaken to assess, refine and develop the relevant length of the route alignment of the scheme and to assess and address the need for mitigation to minimise the impact of the scheme on the relevant area of woodland.

Norfolk County Council and New Anglia LEP were part of an ambitious cross-border project which helped to deliver a **unique package of Covid-19 recovery support for local businesses and people.** The C-CARE (Covid Channel Area Response Exchange) initiative, funded by the Interreg France (Channel) England programme which has allocated €2.2m for C-CARE in Norfolk, was set to reach businesses and people that were been hit hardest in the pandemic. In Norfolk the project will work to support over 600 people into employment or self-employment and provide support for up to 800 businesses.

As the national Great British Spring Clean launched on Friday 28 May 2021, there was good news for litter pickers as the county council announces that it was able to accept litter at any of Norfolk’s recycling centres. People can now bring up to three bags of the waste to a recycling centre for disposal as part of **Love Norfolk, Hate Litter.**

A new service to support some of Norfolk’s most vulnerable young people to live within families and achieve their full potential called **New Roads** launched on June 1st 2021. It was set up by Norfolk County Council with significant investment to give young people access to a dedicated support team that sticks with them, understands them, and helps them to achieve and succeed. Based out of two hubs, in Dereham and Norwich, the service’s aim is to give young people stability, reduce risk-taking behaviour and help to avoid the need for long-term residential care, as well as longer term costs to themselves, the wider system and communities.

**The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) has formally adopted an overall Strategy**, designed to enable county wide responses to flooding across all agencies involved. The Strategy, which lays out the NSFA’s vision, objectives, approach and structure, is a major milestone in the development of the Alliance, which was founded in 2021 to bring together all agencies and partners involved in planning for and responding to flooding in Norfolk.

**A new single point of contact for flooding in Norfolk has been launched, allowing residents to report any sort of flooding quickly and efficiently**. In the event of flooding residents can call 0344 800 8013 giving residents a single point of contact and allowing reports to be made swiftly. Alternatively, residents can continue to report flooding online via [**our flooding pages**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/floods).  Where there is a potential risk to life from flooding people should still call 999 immediately.

**The Council’s £1.5m Flood Reserve Fund** will be used for additional highway and ditch maintenance, drainage asset improvements work and drainage grips and kerb drains on Norfolk’s highways, as well as operations to clear some of the county’s 145,305 gullies that help drain rain water.

Pavements, cycleways and roads all benefited from the county’s **£29m maintenance programme** taking place right across Norfolk. The crucial upkeep work is a key part of the £42 million budget for roads and infrastructure that was agreed in February 2021. This year £4.5m is being spent on maintaining pavements and paths, for example a £167,000 scheme to remove the existing worn and uneven pavement surface on Kennedy Avenue in Gorleston and replace it with a new smooth asphalt surface.

We have an ambitious **Local Transport Plan** supporting a growing economy, strengthening communities and reducing our impact on the environment. A carbon cutting commitment is central to the transport plan which supports the county council’s pledge to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, which councillors adopted as part of the authority’s Environmental Policy in November 2019.

Tripling the number of **Roadside Nature Reserves** in Norfolk were among a range of green measures agreed last July. Fewer cuts for rural roadsides, a pollinator action plan, and 188 more roadside nature reserves are all on the cards as part of plans to boost biodiversity along roads and paths across the county. There are plans to help **boost cycling and walking across the county**, and development of a new verge management policy which will include information for parish and town councils wishing to take on responsibility for verge cutting in their local area. The aim is to help involve local communities more in decisions about verge management near them.

**Norfolk County Council has been recognised for its outstanding support of the armed forces community in Norfolk,** following an announcement from the Ministry of Defence. The council has been given the Gold Award, the highest honour handed out through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The award is given to organisations that employ and support those who serve in the armed forces, service leavers, veterans and their families, with the Gold Award also acknowledging the Council’s partnership working through the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board.

The Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Norfolk, managed by Norfolk County Council’s Library and Information Service, ran a free online **Summer School in 2021** for 16-25-year-olds to help them decide whether starting their own business might be right for them.

Norfolk is to receive between £115m and £195m of funding as part of the **Government's Project Gigabit to provide 1GB per second broadband** to up to 119,000 premises. Contracts will be awarded from February 2022. Rural homes and businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk will get next-generation gigabit broadband brought to them under a £5 billion plan to level up internet access across the UK. It means families no longer having to battle over bandwidth giving people in rural areas the freedom to live and work more flexibly, with the speed and reliability needed to start and run businesses.

**Community and voluntary organisations across Norfolk were awarded £1m from the**[**Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/grants-and-funding/norfolk-social-infrastructure-fund) . Total awards were £1.02 million to 25 different organisations, with grants ranging £3,400 all the way up to £250,000. The fund saw 64 applications with funding requests that totalled almost £5million. This was more than double the number of applications received last year.

Most children in care in Norfolk are well looked after and receive good support for their emotional and mental health and education, **Ofsted inspectors have found** **as they praised the support for children in care get in Norfolk.** Ofsted’s visit follows a [**similar focused visit in 2019**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2019/10/consistently-strong-decision-making-helping-families-get-the-right-help-first-time), which looked at how the council responds to child safeguarding calls and referrals. Following that visit, inspectors described the quality of decision making as “consistently strong”.

**Norfolk Adult Social Services** have faced a level of unprecedented challenge in 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic, with national and local workforce shortages, rising demand in hospitals and the community and the continued infection risk posed by COVID-19 as well as other recurring respiratory viruses such as flu.

Action being taken by the Council includes:

* Expanding action to support people at home or, where appropriate, in short term residential settings
* Stepping up the council’s care recruitment campaign, to tackle staff shortages
* Providing wrap-around support for care settings
* Providing assistive technology, with 100 video phones sent out to homes
* Improving capacity in the Norfolk First Response service
* Supporting mental health services, with three new step down services

**The new Norwich South recycling centre opened at Harford on 1 December.** The £1.9m recycling centre is the sister site to the new Norwich North recycling centre that opened on 22 September. Together the two sites will provide improved recycling facilities for the growing greater Norwich area.The move to a larger site allows room for a one-way traffic system to smooth traffic flow and reduce queues, low-level bins meaning people will not have to climb steps to recycle their waste, and there is plenty of parking for cars, bicycles and vehicles with trailers.

**Bookings are now open for**[**The Big Norfolk Holiday Fun**](https://www.activenorfolk.org/public/bignorfolkholidayfun/)**, a programme of free activities that will run over the Easter holidays for 5–16-year-olds across Norfolk.** The scheme is provided as part of the government’s Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and is being delivered by Norfolk County Council in partnership with Active Norfolk.After the success of HAF over the Christmas break and some brilliant feedback from parents, it’s returning from 4 April though till 19 April with free activities for children eligible for means-tested free school meals.