

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT JULY 2024

Norwich Western Link planning application

The planning application for the Norwich Western Link is now available. The Norwich Western Link is a 3.8 mile dual carriageway to connect the Broadland Northway from the A1067 Fakenham Road to the A47 west of Norwich.

[View, or comment on, the Norwich Western Link planning application FUL/2024/0022.](#)

New Business Board seeks members to boost Norfolk's economy

Experienced and influential members of the local business community have been given the opportunity to join the Norfolk Business Board.

The new board is looking for candidates who are interested in enhancing skills in the county and boosting the local economy.

The new board has been created following the integration of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) into Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

The board will meet 4-6 times a year and work closely with partners such as district councils, neighbouring counties and national economic and trade bodies.

Norfolk Business Board representatives will:

- Be responsible for shaping the economic growth agenda for the county
- Use their expertise to shape and influence strategic thinking, policy, and funding decisions for the county
- Be a voice for industry to advocate across sectors, geographies, and business types. This will be at a local and, when required, national level.
- Help us to create an environment where local business can flourish and grow the economy

Further information about the role is available. [Visit the Norfolk Business Board representative recruitment page.](#)

Construction on long-awaited Long Stratton bypass begins following funding announcement

The main construction work on the new bypass for Long Stratton has begun, following the approval of the full business case from government. This follows the preparatory works undertaken over the last month.

Construction of the road is expected to take 18 months, with the road expected to open by the end of 2025. The work will be undertaken by Octavius Infrastructure Limited who were appointed as the main contractor in January 2024.

The proposed new A140 bypass will be a single carriageway road that will provide a new roundabout junction at Church Lane to the north, extending from this junction on the east side of Long Stratton going south for approximately 3.9km, where it will re-join the existing A140 near Oakside farm.

The current estimated overall cost of the bypass is approx. £46.9m with funding primarily sourced from central government, a £14.5m commitment from the Greater Norwich Growth Board, local developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Norfolk County Council has worked in collaboration with South Norfolk Council (SNC), Norfolk Homes Ltd and Norfolk Land Ltd to develop proposals for the long-awaited bypass, which was granted full planning permission by South Norfolk Council in September 2023.

Norfolk Libraries – Summer Reading Challenge 2024

The Summer Reading Challenge is a highly successful national programme aimed at maintaining or improving the literacy of 4-11-year-olds over the long summer break. It's key to our strategy in supporting children to become more confident readers and is a tool to promote the benefits of reading to families.

Last year 11,261 children joined the Summer Reading Challenge in Norfolk (an increase of 27% on the previous year) and this year we hope that number will grow even more.

This year's theme is 'Marvelous Makers' and is about creativity. It has been developed by The Reading Agency in partnership with Create, a leading arts charity, and public libraries.

Children are being encouraged to explore new books and stories while taking part in free library activities - from arts and crafts to music, dance and more. There is a booklist for inspiration, but the emphasis this year is on the fact that children can read anything they like - from comics to recipe books - to take part in the challenge and collect rewards for their reading.

The library service recommends reading around six different books, but children can set their own reading goals. There is also a mini-challenge available so that pre-school children don't miss out.

Norfolk and Suffolk awarded Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Status

LVEP's support and grow the visitor economy. As well as having a nationally recognised status, they provide strong local leadership and management of their destinations. They also have access to expert advice, toolkits and training. In July 2024 a new LVEP of Norfolk and Suffolk joined the programme alongside 33 existing LVEPs. The LVEP will have a key role in growing the visitor economy and strengthening the case for future funding.

Sleep Awareness Campaign aims to improve sleep and boost health for young people

Norfolk County Council has launched a new Sleep Awareness Campaign which highlights the importance of good sleep for health and wellbeing in young people.

Specifically targeting those aged 14 to 25, it focuses on three themes including mobile phones, exercise, and natural light, providing tips for getting a good night's sleep and offering a range of resources to help achieve better quality sleep.

Evidence shows a link between sleep deprivation and depression and reduced mental wellbeing, which is particularly prevalent amongst young people. Adolescents should achieve between nine to ten hours of sleep every night, but early school starts and later bedtimes often mean young people are getting much less than the recommended level.

For more information and to access all the available tools and resources to support better sleep, visit www.fyinnorfolk.nhs.uk/sleepbetter

More buses between Norwich and the north of Norfolk thanks to bus service improvement plan

Residents living in the North of the county are set to benefit from the latest bus service improvements which will see more frequent buses, and later buses, operating between Norwich and Cromer/Sheringham and Holt.

The increased services, which are all operated by Sanders Coaches, began on 2nd June and are funded by money that Norfolk County Council secured from the Department for Transport (DfT).

Improvements include:

- A later bus back from Norwich on the X55 service at 22:40 to allow a way back to North Walsham after evenings out in the city.
- Coupled with an increased frequency to the X44/44A service which operates between Sheringham and Norwich a new fast service X41 will be added and this will allow buses to run every half an hour throughout the day Monday to Saturday between Aylsham and Norwich previously every 45 minutes. This benefits those living on route in places such as Aylsham Marsham Hevingham St Faiths and Hellesdon.
- Extra buses on the fast X40 and new X41 journeys will get you to the City or Coast where you can join other services to explore Norfolk further.
- X41 fast buses will serve 3 stops in Aylsham - Burgh Road - Tesco and Norwich Road.
- With the introduction of the X41 from Burgh Road off peak 43 service buses will now serve the west of Aylsham travelling from Willow Park - via Cawston road then Norwich road on route to Norwich.

This is one of a number of service enhancements which are being funded by the £49.55 million funding which Norfolk County Council was successful in securing from the Department for Transport (DfT) to use on improving bus services across the County over the next three years.

Approximately £12 million of the funding has been allocated to provide new or expanded bus routes and increase service frequencies on key routes, including more evening and weekend services.

Norfolk celebrates 500 refugees resettled

Norfolk is celebrating the milestone of helping over 500 refugees build new lives in the county over the past seven years.

Since 2017, 501 refugees have been resettled in Norfolk with help from Norfolk County Council's People from Abroad Team. These individuals have built new, independent lives in Norfolk, safe from the persecution they were forced to flee.

They have settled in Norfolk since the opening of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons scheme in February 2017, which was subsequently incorporated into the government's UK Resettlement Scheme that continues to support refugees. The individuals resettled in Norfolk were referred to the United Kingdom by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. As part of these schemes, work to support these refugees is funded by the UK government and is carried out by Norfolk County Council in collaboration with all seven district, borough and city councils, health and voluntary sector partners.