

County Councillor Report for August 2026

Norfolk County Council Chief Executive

Following a short recruitment process, Norfolk County Council voted on the appointment of Dennis Bacon as its chief executive at a full council meeting on Friday 14 August.

Changes to fridge and freezer collections due to national capacity issues

A national shortage of specialist recycling and treatment capacity is affecting fridge and freezer collections across the UK.

From Thursday 6 August, Norfolk County Council will only accept unwanted fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances at the county's largest recycling centres.

Full details of the affected sites and what is accepted are available on the council's website:

[Changes to fridge and freezer collections at Norfolk's recycling centres.](#)

The recycling centres that are still accepting fridge, freezers and other cooling appliances are:

- Caister Recycling Centre
- Dereham Recycling Centre
- Hempton Recycling Centre
- King's Lynn Recycling Centre
- Norwich North Recycling Centre
- Norwich South Recycling Centre
- Thetford Recycling Centre

Where possible, residents are asked to:

- Use retailer take-back or recycling services when buying a replacement appliance.
- Keep using appliances that remain safe and in working order.
- Consider reuse, repair or donation options for working appliances.
- Delay disposal, where safe and practical, until national treatment capacity improves.

Residents should only take fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances for disposal if it is absolutely necessary. If safe to do so, they are encouraged to hold on to unwanted appliances temporarily to help ease pressure on the national system.

Why is this happening?

This is a national problem. Councils across the country are having difficulty dealing with fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances.

To dispose of these items, they must be taken to specialist facilities. They cannot easily be sent somewhere else when those facilities are full or closed.

Fridges and freezers can contain harmful gases and insulating foams. These must be removed safely under controlled conditions.

Recently, there has been a spate of incidents which have seen these specialist processing plants put out of operation, including the recent fire at a treatment facility in Thetford. This has created excess pressure on the entire system, throughout the country. Norfolk County Council is following other authorities in limiting where we are accepting these types of items.

Norfolk County Council is working closely with the government and the Environment Agency to try and find a solution, and in the meantime has secured temporary storage arrangements to house these items while we wait for them to be collected.

** Cooling appliances include any appliance containing refrigerant gases or cooling circuits, such as refrigerators, fridge freezers, freezers, wine coolers, air conditioning units, dehumidifiers, water coolers and similar equipment.*

Fire & Rescue Service continuing to respond to high summer demand

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is continuing to raise awareness to the public around the threat of wildfires in Norfolk.

Demand has been especially high on Norfolk's firefighters this summer, with 1,270 emergencies attended in July. Resources have continued to be stretched.

The Service has shared posters with parish councils across the county with advice on how to prevent outdoor fires, and worked with Norfolk Trails and the Norfolk Resilience Forum to produce signage on the county's trail posts on what to do in the event of fire. You can request these via norfolkresilienceforum@norfolk.gov.uk.

They are continuing to work with other groups including local wildlife trusts, Forestry England, and Heritage Railways to discuss the increased risks of the hot and dry weather.

Further fire safety advice is available on the county council webpages [here](#).

New social homes for Norwich

Work has started on a major east Norwich scheme to deliver 127 new social rent homes on a former County Council brownfield site, with investment of up to £40 million.

The scheme will increase affordable housing, provide specialist accommodation, make use of brownfield land and support better value adult social care.

It includes 77 homes for people aged 55 and over eligible for care and support, 22 supported living homes for adults with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autistic people, and 28 family homes.

The older people's housing will include 54 one-bedroom and 23 two-bedroom wheelchair-accessible apartments, with shared facilities including a café, hairdresser, spa bathroom, guest suite and communal garden. Supported living will comprise 12 apartments and 10 bungalows, with on-site support from Places for People.

Norfolk County Council is contributing £5.5 million through its Independent Living and Supported Living capital programmes. Places for People and Homes England will fund the remainder. The scheme is expected to save around £1.2 million a year by reducing demand for residential care.

Wastewater capacity and housing growth issues

A [new report from Local Government East](#) warns that wastewater infrastructure is becoming a significant barrier to housing delivery across the East of England.

Wastewater capacity constraints can affect whether planned homes, local infrastructure and economic growth can be delivered in the right places and at the right time.

The report highlights concerns that treatment works and sewerage networks are reaching capacity in parts of the region, creating uncertainty for communities, councils, developers and those preparing or responding to Local Plans.

Local Government East calls on Government to accelerate investment in wastewater infrastructure, prioritise schemes that unlock housing and economic growth, strengthen collaboration between councils, regulators and water companies, and ensure that environmental improvements and housing growth are planned together.

The report is timely, as it raises issues relevant to recent Government changes to the National Planning Framework and the Environment Agency's consultation outcome related to water management issues.

National Planning Policy Framework update

The Government has published a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#), alongside wider reforms intended to create a clearer, more rules-based planning system, increase housing delivery and support economic growth. The new framework takes effect immediately for planning decision-making.

The revised framework introduces a stronger presumption in favour of sustainable development, places greater emphasis on housing growth and development around well-connected railway stations, increases the weight of national policy in planning decisions, and is intended to speed up delivery of homes, infrastructure and economic growth across England

For Norfolk, a key issue is to clearly ensure that increases in housing delivery are matched by timely investment in infrastructure and local services.

Environment Agency consultation responses to water management issues

The Environment Agency's Significant Water Management Issues consultation ran from November 2025 to May 2026, with responses from environmental groups, water companies, farmers, businesses, councils, partnerships, community groups and residents.

The [responses](#) will inform the next river basin management plans, with draft plans due for consultation from December 2026.

The main message was the need for faster progress, stronger collaboration, better evidence, clearer funding and action that tackles the causes of environmental decline, linking water, nature, climate, communities and growth.

Key concerns included wastewater pollution, agricultural and urban runoff, chemicals, plastics, PFAS, road pollution and other emerging contaminants.

Respondents also supported nature-based solutions, including wetlands, river restoration, sustainable drainage, peatland recovery, floodplain reconnection and coastal habitat restoration.

Cllr Jan Davis
Blofield & Brundall Division
Norfolk County Council
20/08/2026