



Standing up for Norfolk. 2026-30

Better Services • Better Value • A Stronger Future

Norfolk County Council's
Strategic Statement



Cabinet



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Children, Families and
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**Councillor
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Commercial Assets and
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**Councillor
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Highways and Transport



**Councillor
Scott Hussey**
Adult Social Care
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Foreword

We were elected with a clear mandate for change. People across Norfolk told us they wanted better services, better value for money, better roads and transport, proper support for children, families and vulnerable adults, and a Council that stands up for Norfolk.

When we took control of Norfolk County Council, we knew serious challenges lay ahead. During our first 100 days, we took a clear-eyed look at the council we inherited: how it operates, where the greatest pressures lie and how public money is spent. That work has shaped the priorities we are now setting for Norfolk.

That is what this document is about: our strategy to 2030. It sets out the direction we are taking: practical, focused and rooted in common sense. We will get the basics right. We will challenge waste. We will sharpen accountability. And we will make sure every pound works harder for the people of Norfolk.

To do this we will need to get the very best out of our greatest asset, our people. We will focus on better engagement across the organisation, bringing to life the public service values set out in this paper.

We are absolutely clear about the scale of the challenge and determined to deliver visible improvements. We will also continue to make the case for fair investment, local decision-making and arrangements that protect Norfolk's identity, communities and services.

We have already shown that we will stand up for Norfolk. We successfully stopped government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation which risked costing taxpayers nearly £100 million, disrupting vital services and distracting councils from the issues people really care about. And we will continue to challenge any policy or development that isn't in the best interests of Norfolk's communities.

At the same time, we will pursue devolution where it gives Norfolk a stronger voice, greater local control and the investment needed to support jobs, infrastructure and better services.

We have set our direction. Now we will deliver for Norfolk.



Councillor David Bick
Leader of Norfolk County Council



The Norfolk Journey.

What we've found, what we're doing
and our priorities.



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Our Roadmap for a Stronger Norfolk

We listened.
We looked closely.



The Norfolk
we **Found**



We found huge strengths
and serious challenges.



The **Action**
we are Taking



In our first 100 days,
we took practical action,
made tough choices and
focused on what
matters most.



The Norfolk
we will **Build**



We will build reliable
services, strong
communities and value
for your money.



We Will Focus on Five Priorities

1

Putting Norfolk's Residents First

Supporting families, protecting vulnerable people and making sure residents are heard.

2

Growing Norfolk's Economy

Backing business, supporting jobs and investment and helping high streets and market towns thrive.

3

Keeping Norfolk Moving

Fixing roads, improving transport and creating better-connected communities.

5

Running an Efficient and Effective Council

Spending wisely, challenging waste and focusing on what matters most.

4

Building Stronger Norfolk Communities and Places

Building safe, resilient and inclusive communities where people are proud of where they live.



The Norfolk we Found

A County with Huge Strengths and Significant Challenges

Before setting our priorities, we took time to understand the council properly. We looked at budgets, reviewed performance, met staff, visited services and listened to residents, businesses and communities.

What we found was a county with enormous strengths.

We found strong communities, highly innovative businesses, thriving market towns, and strong partnerships helping deliver better outcomes for residents. We found libraries and museums that are well used and valued, and communities with a strong sense of pride and identity. We found committed staff delivering much needed services.



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Beth Moseley Photography



Residents told us they want the basics done well.

We know what makes Norfolk different. We maintain one of the largest local road networks in the country, manage an extensive county farms estate, support nationally important natural assets, and provide services across a large and diverse rural and coastal county. These responsibilities are significant, and national funding arrangements simply don't reflect the pressure they place on local resources.

But we also found serious challenges.

We found a council under real pressure after decades of underfunding by central government has left so many important services needing urgent attention.

We found a highways network with a significant maintenance backlog of over £70m. We found increasing pressure on services for both adult social care and children's services, where funding and government policy hasn't kept up with the rising demand for support and the complexity of people's needs.

We've also found though that some long-term commitments and projects need better oversight and much closer scrutiny. We have seen some slow decision-making, processes that are too complicated and inefficient, which means projects can take too long to deliver or go significantly over budget.

Most importantly, we heard concerns from residents about whether the council is focused enough on the issues that matter most to them. Residents told us they want the basics done well. They want potholes fixed, safer roads and communities, supported town centres, reliable public services, and a council that spends public money wisely, is efficient and productive. They want quick decisions, clear accountability and results they can see in their daily lives.





The Action we are Taking

Turning Understanding into Action

Our first 100 days have been about practical action.

We've focused on understanding the council, and seeing services first hand. Cabinet members have visited highway maintenance projects, customer service operations, countryside sites, businesses, schools and community facilities. We've spoken directly to people using services, those delivering them and those affected by local challenges.

We then focused on making early decisions where they're needed most, and creating a clearer direction for the organisation. We have appointed a Cabinet with new portfolios that reflect Norfolk's priorities, and a new Chief Executive to get a grip on the council's governance, finances and priorities.



We've spoken directly to people using services, those delivering them and those affected by local challenges.

Where difficult choices have been necessary, we haven't avoided them.

We started a review of net zero programmes and capital schemes, to ensure they are needed and that they represent value for money. We redirected nearly £924,000 from the Highways Local Member Fund into road maintenance and over £1.2m into Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service to help meet immediate pressures. We've also confirmed the Highways Parish Partnership programme for 2027/28 to enable ongoing changes in communities to happen.

We protected nearly £6.3m of taxpayers' money from reviewing contract arrangements for Local Government Reorganisation. We made these decisions because resources should be focused on the services that matter most to residents and not to central government or political parties.

We've acted quickly where jobs and businesses have been put at risk. We mobilised support following announcements affecting employment in the county, like the proposed closure of the historic Cantley production plant. We are continuing to support high streets, market towns and local businesses. And we are strengthening relationships with organisations such as the Country Land and Business Association to address rural issues like water security and land infrastructure.

We have also reviewed Council owned companies to ensure they deliver the best outcomes for residents. For example in understanding the plans for Hethel Innovation Ltd to help them expand the scope of their activities, supporting start-up and scale-up businesses to reach their full potential.

We acted to stop the government's costly and disruptive Local Government Reorganisation plans for Norfolk. We will keep challenging government and opposing schemes, including large solar farms, that do not serve Norfolk's interests. We've formally raised concerns about waste and recycling systems, and made the case for fair funding and treatment of Norfolk's residents and communities.

Alongside this, we've continued to progress major projects and infrastructure investment like the West Winch Housing Access Road and Norwich Western Link. We've continued with service improvements, so important programmes like the adult social care transformation and SEND reform can keep moving forward, and implemented new ways of working so that we procure more efficiently and get better value from money for our taxpayers.





The Norfolk we are Building

Our Ambition for Norfolk

Our ambition is simple.

We want Norfolk County Council to be known as an excellent council that delivers excellent services.

We want Norfolk to be a place where services are reliable, communities are strong, businesses can thrive, vulnerable people get the support they need, and every pound of public money is spent wisely.

To achieve that ambition, we will challenge longstanding assumptions, simplify how the council works and focus relentlessly on outcomes rather than processes, so every service, budget and activity can show how it improves life for Norfolk residents.

We will have five key priorities.



Our Five Priorities.



Better Services • Better Value • A Stronger Future

Putting Norfolk's Residents First



What We Found

We heard that too many people in Norfolk feel ignored, with decisions made elsewhere that don't reflect the needs, priorities or realities of our county. We also found growing demand for council services, and pressures across services that support people throughout their lives.

What We Will Do

Stand up for Norfolk in Whitehall so the county's voice is heard and we secure fair funding for the services residents rely on.

Push back against national proposals that don't work for Norfolk, including inappropriate solar farm developments that risk changing the character of our towns, villages and countryside.

Deliver the SEND Reform Plan and improve access to the right support at the right time for children and families.

Raise awareness of our campaign to recruit more foster carers to strengthen local placement capacity and reduce reliance on independent provision.

Review how we use independent specialist and complex residential care placements to make sure we are achieving the best outcome for children in our care and the best value for money from providers.

Continue with the adults transformation programme to deliver the improvements identified in the CQC inspection and implement our "neighbourhood working" plans so we can support more people to live independently for longer, as well as deliver significant financial savings.

Actively listen to our residents' experience and feedback to improve how services are designed and delivered and review key areas of expenditure so services are sustainable and public money is focused where it has the greatest impact.

What Success Looks Like

Fewer children in residential care, whose needs can be met in a family setting

Strong support for families

Greater independence for older and vulnerable people, and people with learning or physical disabilities

Residents can access the support they need closer to home

Better value for money from public services



Growing Norfolk's Economy



What We Found

Norfolk has huge economic potential, with strong businesses, innovative sectors and distinctive local strengths that are not always fully recognised. But businesses are also facing uncertainty, rising costs and real pressures, especially in agriculture, rural industries and our market towns.

We believe Norfolk can grow without losing what makes it special. Strong market towns, thriving rural communities, successful farms and confident local businesses are all part of a stronger county.

What We Will Do

Actively position and promote our key sectors like agri-tech, advanced manufacturing and a diverse digital sector, and also our county as a national leader in economic innovation, to attract major inward investment and prove to government that Norfolk is ready to lead national economic growth.

Make the Council a true facilitator of growth by expanding apprenticeship schemes and helping established local companies scale up as well as supporting start-ups.

Promote Norfolk as a destination of choice to grow our visitor economy and support our hospitality sector, including by lobbying government to reduce the business rates and VAT burden on the sector.

Support market towns and high streets so they remain active, attractive and economically strong.

Work with employers, colleges and training providers to strengthen skills, apprenticeships and routes into good jobs.

Make a stronger national case for investment in strategic infrastructure and fair funding for Norfolk.

What Success Looks Like

More investment coming into our county

Stronger businesses

Thriving market towns with vibrant high streets

Better jobs and skills

A more prosperous Norfolk



Keeping Norfolk Moving



What We Found

Roads, potholes, transport and connectivity are among the issues residents raise most often. We found a highways network under significant pressure, alongside the need to maintain and improve infrastructure across a large rural county.

What We Will Do

Explore further options to help reallocate funds on what really matters to road users, for example implement more proactive, preventative highways maintenance which will help reduce the number of potholes that will form over the next year.

Tackle potholes and road defects using timely, cost-effective and long-lasting approaches, including large-scale trials to identify the best and most efficient repair techniques for Norfolk.

Progress major transport and infrastructure schemes such as the Norwich Western Link, that support growth, safety and better journeys and lobby government for investment in better rail infrastructure.

Implement the Bus Improvement Plan, to make better transport connections across rural, coastal and urban communities and deliver the Sheringham bus interchange before the end of March 2027.

Work with schools in Norfolk to help them develop their own up-to-date, community-led travel plans, making best use of the existing and wide-ranging support available by the County Council and partners.

Work with partners to ensure responsibilities for enforcement and its delivery around parking and poor driving standards near schools are clear, transparent and targeted to achieve maximum impact.

Use better data and local insight to target investment where it will make the most difference.

What Success Looks Like

Better maintained roads

Fewer potholes

Safer journeys

Better transport connections including travel to school

Stronger infrastructure for future growth



Building Stronger Norfolk Communities and Places



What We Found

We found residents who care deeply about community safety, fly-tipping, heritage, culture and protecting what makes Norfolk special. We also found pressures on services dealing with waste, fire prevention, environmental management and community assets.

What We Will Do

Work to put our Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service budget on a sustainable footing so we can continue to keep people safe and respond effectively to incidents arising from extreme weather events and other local risks.

Protect residents by tackling rogue traders, unsafe products and health risks, while helping people make healthier choices.

Work with communities, the NHS and partners to improve public health and wellbeing, tackle the causes of poor health and give everyone the opportunity to live a healthy life.

Work with district councils and partners to deliver a targeted public awareness campaign on the safe disposal of batteries and vapes, with a focus on reducing battery-related fires.

Tackle fly-tipping and waste crime by working with the new Police and Crime Commissioner, other partners and our communities.

Deliver the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy to restore nature across Norfolk's countryside, as well as protect and improve Norfolk's coast and heritage assets.

Ensure that our work on the trails network focuses on providing the most value for those who use it.

Look for opportunities to secure funding to support development of the library estate and strengthen museums and our cultural services so they continue to support communities and local identity.

Take opportunities to reduce blue badge misuse and fraud, including giving enforcement teams access to better information to help them to more easily identify misuse.



Building Stronger Norfolk Communities and Places

What Success Looks Like

Safer communities

Cleaner neighbourhoods

Protected countryside and coast

Strong cultural and heritage assets

Greater community pride



©Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
Mike Sudds Photography



Running an Efficient and Effective Council



What We Found

Residents expect the council to spend wisely, focus on priorities and provide value for money. We found opportunities to improve efficiency, strengthen accountability and make better use of resources.

What We Will Do

Produce a productivity plan to drive down costs and boost efficiency, so public money is managed responsibly and Norfolk County Council is leaner, more innovative and delivers value to taxpayers.

Implement a programme of priority actions to review contracts, spending to secure better value for money.

Look at areas of high spend, such as Home to School Transport, to find opportunities for innovation, efficiency and better value for money while maintaining service obligations.

Manage vacancies responsibly and reduce avoidable reliance on agency staff, and actively review occupancy to make better use of council buildings and land.

Fully review our internal traded services to ensure they are competitive, financially sustainable and deliver clear value for the council and its customers.

Use technology, artificial intelligence and automation to improve services while cutting unnecessary cost and delays.

Explore opportunities to generate sustainable income for the Council, from Norfolk County Council services and assets.

Strengthen accountability through a new organisational performance management framework and metrics.

We will ensure that the Norfolk Pension Fund remains well governed, delivers value for money for members and taxpayers, and is well positioned to respond to any national pensions reforms and devolution. We will work proactively with our investment partners to identify opportunities for long-term investment that benefits both Fund members and the wider Norfolk economy, while always meeting our fiduciary responsibilities.



Running an Efficient and Effective Council

What Success Looks Like

Better value for money

Greater productivity

Stronger accountability

Lower unnecessary costs

More investment in frontline services



Our People, Our Culture

We will focus on transforming our organisational culture, bringing key values to life across and through our workforce. By connecting our greatest asset, our people, to purpose, we will deliver better outcomes across the council and its services.

Great cultures build resilience and improve productivity, helping us deliver on our ambition to put Norfolk and its communities first.



Our Position on Devolution

We remain committed to getting devolution for Norfolk because it is one of the most important opportunities to drive long-term economic growth. Devolution will bring new funding and investment to Norfolk, and greater local control over decisions, enabling us to unlock new opportunities for businesses, improve critical infrastructure, support skills and jobs, and deliver better outcomes for residents. We will continue to work with partners and government to make devolution a reality for Norfolk.



Standing up for Norfolk.

Our goal is simple: to leave Norfolk stronger than we found it, and to build a council that is trusted by residents, valued by communities and recognised for delivering excellent services and lasting results.

We'll focus on the everyday issues residents care about. We'll challenge waste, demand value for money, and support excellent public services.

Above all, we'll keep standing up for Norfolk and make sure Norfolk's voice is heard loudly and clearly.



Norfolk County Council

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