

Norfolk County Council Budget 2017/18

The 2017/18 Budget for Norfolk County Council will see NCC invest just under £1.4 billion in Norfolk over the next year.

The budget supports the Council's four priorities - Excellence in Education, Real Jobs, Good Infrastructure and Supporting Vulnerable People - and continues to support a shift towards earlier intervention services which reduce the long-term demand for council services.

-The County Council's share of the council tax is increasing by 4.8 per cent to £1,247.94 - a rise of £57.15 for a Band D property, or around £1.10 extra each week
-A 3% Adult Social Care Precept permitted by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is included, with a further 1.8% to fund the recommendations of the service committees

Children's Services

More children are being educated in good or outstanding schools - this was highlighted in the Ofsted Annual Report in December 2016, with Norfolk the fifth most improved county nationally for the proportion of pupils at good or outstanding secondary schools over the past four years, and the 18th most improved for primary schools. Norfolk is also one of the most improved in the region for children at the end of the early years' stage achieving a 'good level of development'. And Norfolk's colleges and sixth form colleges are all rated 'good' by Ofsted.

Norfolk has also moved into the top-half of the GCSE league table - Provisional GCSE results for 2016 have put Norfolk above the national average for the first time in a decade.

Adult's Services

In November 2016 Norfolk County Council launched the **In Good Company campaign** - working with partners, including charities and the local media - to combat loneliness and raise awareness of the wide range of support on offer in Norfolk. Since the campaign launched, we've received hundreds of pledges from individuals and organisations - all of them promising to do something, no

matter how small, to help tackle loneliness in their community. Now Norfolk businesses and community organisations are being urged to apply for a new quality accreditation mark for their work to combat loneliness in the county.

Community and Environmental Services

The latest tranche of Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) Programme will see high-speed broadband coverage reaching more than 95% of Norfolk homes and businesses by spring 2020. This brings the total investment in the BBfN programme to £68m since it launched at the end of 2012. Currently, 87% of households and

businesses in Norfolk can get a superfast broadband service, more than double the number four years ago (42%).

Our transport infrastructure priorities

A47 - Norfolk County Council leads the A47 Alliance, bringing together key stakeholders to lobby for improvements to the trunk road. We have been lobbying Highways England for early delivery of three sections of dualling programmed to begin in 2020 - including the North Tuddenham to Easton section. The Alliance Steering Group is currently gearing up to influence the trunk road programme for the next round of improvements due to be delivered between 2020 and 2025. We have already met Highways England to lobby for our two priorities in Norfolk in this next period: the dualling of the Acle Straight and Tilney to East Winch.

Good progress on the NDR - it was a productive first year for the construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road which will provide Norfolk with high-quality infrastructure that will serve the county, its people and the economy for years to come. Work is going well, with most of the 1.5 cubic metres of bulk excavation complete, three roundabouts in use at the western end, bridge beams installed or imminent on four of the eight bridges, and nearly 9 kilometres of carriageway complete with base asphalt layers. A new Tarmac plant at Postwick will this year supply nearly 150,000 tonnes of asphalt for the 20km dual carriageway. Planting of the 300,000 shrubs, trees and hedgerow plants is well under way.

Towards the Norwich Western Link - now that the NDR is under construction, we have begun to consider the business case for a Norwich Western Link. This would both ease local traffic conditions and provide a strategic link to the west

of the city. Initial work has focused on gathering feedback from local communities and developing a stakeholder group. We are also beginning to assess the economic viability of the project, and if the business case proves positive, we will press for funding and scheme delivery.

NCC's Annual Road Surface Dressing Programme began in the middle of April. The £10.4 million programme will see over 320 miles of road set to be surface dressed in Norfolk this year, in a cost effective process which will extend the durability of the existing road surface and provide a new skid-resistant surface to help reduce the risk of accidents.

An independent survey of Norfolk residents resulted in the County Council being ranked third out of 28 similar councils for **satisfaction with highways and transport services** - the third year in a row that Norfolk was in the top three. One of the biggest increases in satisfaction was for street lighting which saw us move up from 18th to 9th position in the rankings.

The Library and Information Service won the national Libraries Change Lives Award for its pioneering work in partnership with Norfolk Public Health to promote healthier lifestyles. This work is being taken up as an example of good practice by libraries across the UK, enhancing the reputation of the Norfolk Library Information Service.

Each year Norfolk Libraries run the **Summer Reading Challenge** to encourage children to continue reading during the summer holidays and to make a significant

contribution to improving literacy. In summer 2016, 14,413 children and young people took part in the challenge. 57% were girls and 43% were boys.

William Richmond

County Councillor for Dereham North (including Scarning)

Norfolk County Council