Norfolk County Council Update

Report to Honingtoft Parish Council

11 November 2026

Since my last report there have been a number of meetings at County Hall covering local government reorganisation, health and wellbeing, planning matters and wider county issues.

The biggest issue continuing to affect Norfolk is Local Government Reorganisation. Following the Government's announcement in September, the previous decision on the future council structure in Norfolk has been paused pending a wider national review. Whilst there is still a great deal of uncertainty around the eventual outcome, residents should be reassured that council services continue to operate as normal and there are no immediate changes for parish councils.

At its meeting on 5 October, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet considered the first detailed proposals for the 2027-28 budget. The Council is facing a projected budget gap of £35.927 million, driven by growing demand, particularly in adult social care and children's services, inflation and wider funding pressures. Cabinet agreed that 86 proposals, together worth £32.273 million in efficiencies and cost reductions, should go forward for public consultation. These include earlier support to help adults remain independent, measures to help more children remain with or return to their family networks, and proposals to increase income from infrastructure fees and charges. No final decisions have yet been made. The consultation is open until 7 December 2026, with the final budget due to be considered by Full Council in February 2027. Residents can take part at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget.

The Health and Wellbeing Board continues to concentrate on improving public health outcomes, reducing inequalities and strengthening links between health and care services. These issues are particularly important for rural communities where access to services can sometimes be more challenging.

Transport and infrastructure remain key priorities. Norfolk County Council is progressing work on future highways and infrastructure contracts to support ongoing maintenance and improvement of the county's road network. As always, I continue to raise local highway concerns on behalf of residents where required.

Education remains high on the council's agenda, with

continued work on school funding and digital connectivity. The council is also developing future arrangements for broadband provision to schools across Norfolk to ensure pupils have access to reliable digital services.

Home-to-school transport fuel pressures: The sharp rise in diesel prices is placing serious pressure on Norfolk's bus and coach operators and could affect the continued viability of public and home-to-school transport contracts. Operators have reported substantial increases in their monthly fuel bills, while the County Council estimates that the additional cost to home-to-school transport could reach £4 million to £5 million. The Council and local operators are pressing the Government for urgent financial assistance so that services can continue with as little disruption as possible for the thousands of pupils who depend on them, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Heating oil support: Norfolk County Council is currently operating the Norfolk Heating Oil Crisis Fund for households struggling with the cost of heating oil. Support is aimed at residents on low incomes, typically households with an annual income below £35,000, with savings, debts and individual circumstances also taken into account. Priority is given to households that are close to running out of oil and risk losing heating or hot water. Following an assessment, grants are generally around £350 per household, and help may also be available to arrange a payment plan with an oil supplier. Applications can be made at www.norfolk.gov.uk/HeatingOil. Residents who cannot apply online can call 0344 800 8020. Applicants should expect to provide two months of bank statements, details of outstanding debts and information about any existing oil payment plan.

Locally, I continue to work with officers and residents on issues affecting Honingtoft and the surrounding area and would welcome any concerns parish councillors wish me to pursue with the County Council.

Tom Dickerson
County Councillor for Launditch Division