

A brand-new Government brings new challenges and unknowns. We are fairly late in our budget and face a delay in when and what funding we will receive and possible changes to our statutory polices

We signed The County Deal with last Government bringing money and responsibility to Norfolk.

The government have decided not to honour that deal !!!!!!!

More than £600m of investment to create jobs, homes and infrastructure has been scrapped, after the Government halted Norfolk's devolution deal.

Government don't support the idea of a Norfolk-only deal.

They don't like the idea of a directly elected council leader, elected by the public - even though this would not have involved additional bureaucracy.

They prefer a mayoral system that brings more bureaucracy and cost to the County

Other National updates

Education and Skills

Curriculum and Assessment Review - government launch

The government, on 19 July, [launched an independent review](#) spanning from Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 5. The review will look at the key challenges to attainment for young people, and the barriers which hold children back from the opportunities and life chances they deserve - in particular those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, or with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Currently, academies and independent schools don't have to follow the national curriculum. However, following the review, the government says that all state schools, including academies, will be required to by law to teach the national curriculum, giving parents certainty over their children's education.

The views of experts, parents, teachers and leaders will be pivotal to the recommendations and a call for evidence will be launched in September 2024.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) research report

A new independent report, published on 23 July, commissioned by the LGA and County Councils Network, concludes that current SEND arrangements are not working for pupils, families or authorities, and that the root causes of this crisis are systemic and require national reform.

The report [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England](#) involved speaking to a wide range of stakeholders engaged with the SEND system across local authorities as well as parents, schools, health services and children and young people with SEND.

The report findings outline how councils are struggling to cope with a more than doubling of children on Education, Health and Care Plans, within a system that creates 'perverse incentives' to shift responsibility between public bodies, and inadvertently creates adversarial relationships between local authorities and parents. It finds a system weighted down by legal disputes through tribunals and an over-reliance on special schools due to a loss of parental confidence that mainstream schools can meet their children's needs.

It recommends that government invests in mainstream schools, builds capacity to meet children's needs and reduces reliance on specialist schools. It also recommends resetting the vision and guiding principles of SEND towards inclusion, prevention and earlier support which would cater for young people who do not have a statutory plan, with such plans.

Other suggested reforms include a new 'national framework' for SEND and 'Local Inclusion Partnerships' to enable more effective assessments, commissioning and collaboration between councils, school and health that the report says could be supported by the creation of a National Institute for Inclusive Education as an independent arbiter.

Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children - National Audit Office

The [National Audit Office](#) (NAO) published a number of central government related value for money reports on 23 July. These include one on educational outcomes for disadvantaged children.

The NAO report [Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children](#), says that the Department for Education (DfE) has a strategic priority to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children but does not yet understand the outcomes resulting from a significant proportion of its expenditure on this priority. It finds that DfE does not have an integrated view of its interventions, nor milestones to assess progress and when more may need to be done.

The NAO estimate that £9.2 billion of DfE spending 2023-24 is focused on supporting disadvantaged children and narrowing the attainment gap between them and their peers, with half of this comprising disadvantage elements of its core funding for schools. However, despite this investment, disadvantaged children perform less well than their peers across all areas and school phases. The gap continues to widen for key stage 4 when children leave school and while the attainment gap for those finishing primary school narrowed slightly in the past year, it remains wider than it was a decade ago.

To make progress and secure value for money, the report says that DfE should build more evidence of what works, look strategically across its interventions and how it allocates its funding, and work effectively across government to address the wider factors to make progress on this complex issue.

Skills England - government launch

The [government launched Skills England on 22 July](#). The new organisation will develop in shadow form within the Department for Education ahead of parliament passing legislation to officially establish its role and remit.

Skills England intends to bring together central and local government, businesses, training providers and unions to meet the skills needs of the next decade across all regions, providing strategic oversight of the post-16 skills system aligned to the government's Industrial Strategy. It will also identify the training for which the new growth and skills levy will be accessible and hold responsibility for maintaining a list of levy-eligible training.

Health

NHS financial management and sustainability 2024 - National Audit Office

The [National Audit Office](#) (NAO) published a number of central government related value for money reports on 23 July. These include one on NHS finances.

The NAO report, [NHS financial management and sustainability 2024](#) concludes that the scale of challenge facing the NHS today and foreseeable in the years ahead is unprecedented.

It describes huge increases in demand: 50 million more GP appointments were provided in 2023-24 compared with 2019-20; 1 million more accident and emergency attendances were recorded; and the Health Foundation predicts a 39% increase in the number of people with a major illness between 2019 and 2040 - to 9.3 million.

The report finds that there is now a backlog of 7.6 million patients waiting to start treatment - 3 million more than before the Covid-19 pandemic began.

Additionally, the NAO says that there is an £11.6bn estimate (from 2022-23) of the work required to bring NHS England's estate assets up to an adequate physical condition, and a £1.4bn cost of non-pay inflation in 2023-24 beyond what was budgeted for in NHS England's funding settlement.

The report says that NHS financial sustainability will be significantly affected by what happens in other parts of government and in wider society. It recognises that the wider determinants of health such as diet, exercise, education, and the environment could prevent ill health occurring in the first place.

The NAO report also says that it is their view that the extent to which citizens choose to and are assisted to lead active lives and have healthy diets, and get access to good social care when they need it, is critical to determining what kind of financial future awaits the NHS.

Transport

The [National Audit Office](#) (NAO) published a number of central government related value for money reports on 23 July. These include one on the condition of local roads.

Condition and maintenance of local roads - NAO value for money report

The [NAO report finds](#) that the Department for Transport (DfT) does not have a good enough understanding of the condition of local roads and does not use the limited data it does have to allocate its funding as effectively as possible.

The report concludes that despite their importance as a vital part of the local transport infrastructure, used every day by millions of people, the condition of local roads is declining and the backlog to return them to a good state of repair is increasing.

Local authorities are not required to report the condition of unclassified roads, which make up 62 per cent of their networks, leading to "significant gaps" in the government's understanding of the quality of road surfaces. The report states that the lack of information received by the DfT means it does not know the impact of its funding for local roads maintenance, which totalled £1.1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year.

The NAO notes that unlike its longer-term funding for the strategic road network, DfT's funding for local roads has generally been short term and provided through multiple funds. They find that the increasing backlog in road maintenance work hinders local authorities in undertaking preventative work that could deliver better value. The NAO says that DfT needs to plan now for how it will support local authorities to meet challenges on the road network, such as climate change and the introduction of autonomous vehicles. They recommend that the DfT review their approach to allocating capital funding to local authorities for local road maintenance to ensure its allocative effectiveness.

Housing announcements

The government has announced a range of measures that they say are intended to boost housebuilding in areas most in need, help more people buy their own homes, remove the largest barriers to economic growth, and get Britain building again. These include:

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

The Government has [released a promised consultation](#) on its updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The consultation seeks views on the government's proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework in order to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system. They are also seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

The consultation closes on 24 September 2024.

New Housing Targets

In addition to proposals to revise the planning system, the [government has set new targets to deliver 1.5 million more homes](#).

All councils in England are to be given new, mandatory housing targets to deliver new homes by 2029 and the new targets will flow into the development of local plans.

Councils will have to review their green belt land if needed to meet their own target, identifying and prioritising 'grey belt' land, which the government has now defined and includes land on the edge of existing settlements or roads, as well as old petrol stations and car parks. Grey belt sites will only be built on if they meet the Government's 'golden rules' that half of homes are affordable, the plans enhance the local environment and the necessary infrastructure is in place, such as schools and GP surgeries.

Further announcements about the government's plans to invest in social and affordable housing, including support for councils to help them deliver affordable housing, will be made at the Spending Review in October 2024.

Launch of new towns taskforce

The Deputy Prime Minister has asked regeneration expert Sir Michael Lyons to lead [an independent New Towns Taskforce](#) to deliver the government's vision for a new generation of new towns. Sir Michael's team is expected to work 'in lockstep' with mayors, local leaders and communities to advise on the right places for new towns, listening to those who know their areas best. Key principles for the new towns are outlined below.

- The programme of new towns will create large-scale communities of at least 10,000 new homes each, with many larger than this.
- The programme will include large-scale new communities that are separate from existing settlements but expect that a far larger number of new towns will be urban extensions and regeneration schemes.
- These new communities will be governed by a 'New Towns Code' - a set of rules that developers will have to meet to make sure new towns are well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places where people want to live.
- The Government state that new towns will have all the infrastructure and public services necessary to support communities. The towns will also help meet housing need by targeting rates of 40% affordable housing with a focus on affordable social rented homes.

The taskforce will recommend appropriate locations to government within 12 months.

Chancellor's statement on public spending inheritance

[Chancellor Rachel Reeves addressed the house of commons](#) on 29 July to say that findings of a Treasury spending audit reveal £22 billion of unfunded pledges inherited from the previous Government this year. She set out a number of commitments to tackle the overspend and to set out full fiscal plans alongside a Spending Review at the budget on 30 October.

In her [full statement](#) the Chancellor also pledged to "ensure that never again do public service budgets get set at only a few months' notice". She said spending reviews would take place every 2 years, with a minimum planning horizon of 3 years, to avoid uncertainty for departments and to bring stability to the public finances.

Key proposals to scrap or review the previous government's policy commitments as below:

Care reforms

The Chancellor confirmed that she was scrapping previously proposed changes to the care system, including the £86,000 cap on the cost of care an individual can pay over their lifetime, saving the Government over £1bn by next year.

The social care plan would have introduced a cap on the amount an older or disabled person would have to pay towards their support at home or in care homes from next October. After spending £86,000 on their care, people with a high level of need would have had their care costs paid for by local authorities. The threshold for getting some council support to pay for costs, before exceeding the cap, would also be made more generous.

The previous government had already delayed these plans by two years and did not implement the National Insurance rise which was meant to fund them.

Advanced British Standard Qualification proposals scrapped

First announced in October 2023 by the former Prime Minister, the Advanced British Standard proposed bringing together A Levels and T Levels into a baccalaureate-style qualification, increasing the number of subjects that students take to provide increased breadth in the 16 to 19 curriculum.

The Chancellor said that she will discard this proposed new qualification.

As mentioned in last week's member brief, the new government had [already announced its own review of the curriculum and assessment](#) from Key Stages 1 to 5 (from primary school to college/6th form).

New hospitals programme review

The Chancellor announced a review of the hospital building programme ahead of the Autumn budget. This casts fresh doubts over previously pledged plans to replace the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn and the James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston.

Transport infrastructure review

The Chancellor said that the public spending inheritance audit included transport projects over budget, delayed or unfunded. It also revealed unfunded transport projects of nearly £800m committed next year. She said that the government would undertake a review of all these commitments and would not move forward schemes that had not yet commenced and were unaffordable. The planned A303 Stonehenge tunnel scheme, A27 Arundel bypass, and projects that had not yet commenced in the restoring our railways programme (none were in Norfolk) were also immediately cancelled.

The DfT then launched their [internal review of DfT's capital spend portfolio](#) that they say will bring in external expertise, move quickly to make recommendations about current and future schemes, and support the development of a long-term strategy for transport.

Norfolk County Council is on course to hit its 2030 carbon emissions savings target (Tranche 1), according to the latest data.

The council has reduced its emissions by 61% compared to the baseline from 2016/17. This impressive result has been achieved by implementing a range of measures, such as improving energy efficiency in its buildings, switching from gas to electric heating, and installing energy-efficient LED street lighting.

In June 2023, Norfolk County Council launched its Climate Strategy. This set out the council's approach to addressing its own emissions but also how it can support Norfolk's development as a low carbon and climate resilient place to live, visit and do business. The council have published over 130 actions outlining the practical steps being taken to meet their climate ambitions.

In a report to the council's Infrastructure and Development Committee, the council have set out the progress they have made so far, and the next steps needed to reach net zero for the council's own estate by 2030.

The council's project to replace Norfolk's streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs has been a resounding success. To date, it has saved £16.5 million, 88.75 million kWh in energy and more than 26,000 tonnes of carbon. The project is now in its final phases, with the remaining 5% of streetlights to be converted by April 2025.

Norfolk County Council's climate approach was recognised in the 2023 Council Climate Action Scorecards which saw the authority ranked second among England's County Councils for its climate action approach.

Autumn Flood Risk in Norfolk

The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) are urging residents to think about how they can protect their homes from flooding after a wet spring and cool summer is set to raise the threat of rising waters to Norfolk earlier than normal this year.

Norfolk groundwater levels remain high, while Environment Agency readings show that East Anglian river flows in June were up to 172% the long term average as additional water remains trapped in the system.

NSFA say that checking your house and prepare for possible flooding may make the difference between thousands of pounds of flood damage and keeping your home and family safe. They advise that guttering, ditches and drains need to be free of blockages to avoid water building up around your home and that installing water butts can provide additional storage to avoid water pooling on the ground.

Additionally, owners of properties in at risk areas can make further preparations. These range from simple approaches, such as keep valuables upstairs and bricks stored ready to raise up furniture in the event of a flood, to investigating the wide range of property flood resilience products available, from emergency barriers and self-expanding sandbags to non-return valves for household drainage pipes and waterproof front doors.

Further information and advice about flood and water management is available on the county council's web pages [here](#).

Long Stratton bypass update

Senior council leaders and delivery partners recently visited the site at Long Stratton to view progress. The bypass is a priority infrastructure project for Norfolk County Council and is considered key to supporting the delivery of much needed housing and employment growth in the area.

Norfolk County Council has worked in collaboration with South Norfolk Council, Norfolk Homes Ltd and Norfolk Land Ltd to develop the proposals to deliver the long-awaited bypass of Long Stratton, which will cut congestion and support the local economy.

Preliminary works have been underway since the start of this year, with the main construction commencing in late May, following the final approval of the council's full business case from government.

The constructor said that the major earthworks programme will continue throughout this year, followed by construction of the overpasses and roundabouts from early 2025 that will begin to link the new road back into local routes and the existing A140.

The project is expected to be complete by late 2025.

Anyone with any queries or concerns during the construction can email Long.Stratton@octavius.co.uk or call 01737 944 831.

Bag yourself a bargain...



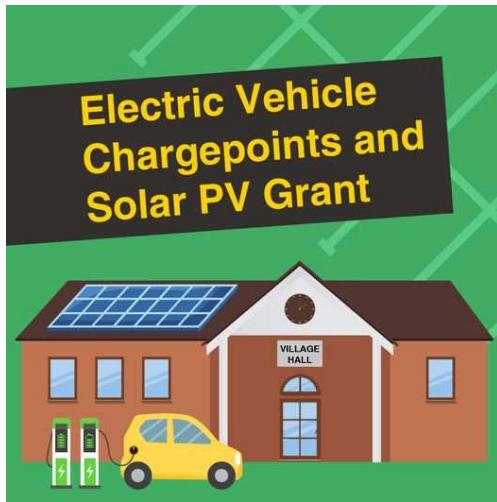
Discover Hidden Gems for Your Home & Garden at Your Local Reuse Shop! ☀️

Looking for high-quality, pre-loved treasures? Look no further! Dive into a world of unique finds at your local reuse shop.

From stunning furniture and charming ornaments to beautiful pictures, bikes, and garden tools - we've got it all!

Every item in our shop has been generously donated, giving it a second chance

Our inventory is always changing with new donations, so each visit is a new adventure. You never know what amazing surprises await you!



We're offering grants of up to £20,000 for Parish and Town Councils, as well as community groups, to have electric vehicle charge points and solar panels fitted at their premises 🚗⚡

Find out more and download the application form here - <https://orlo.uk/9waeZ>

Lithium Batteries Fire Warning

Residents across Norfolk are being reminded of the importance of buying lithium-ion batteries for a range of everyday devices only from reputable and safe retailers, to ensure they meet UK safety standards and aren't a fire risk.

As a Safety Bill about the rechargeable batteries is due to go before the House of Lords on Friday (6th September), Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service and Norfolk County Council's Trading Standards team is investigating a house fire which is believed to have been started by a battery which was charging.

The occupants of the house in Bowthorpe managed to escape the fire last Tuesday evening, and a subsequent fire investigation has concluded that the fire started with the battery, purchased from an online retailer, and charger.

"Unfortunately, this fire has started with a battery and had devastating consequences for the residents as their home has been significantly damaged," said Emry Gough, Head of Prevention at Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service.

The Trading Standards department is currently working with fire investigators and the householder to find out more about the retailer and exact battery and charger involved.

Lithium-ion batteries are found in a range of devices including; mobile phones, tablets, laptops, mobility scooters, e-bikes, e-scooters, e-cigarettes and hover boards.

You can reduce the risk of fires by checking batteries regularly and ensuring you only buy from reputable retailers so that products meet UK safety standards.

Look out for warning signs of problems, such as wear and tear, overheating, an unusual smell, unusual sounds or a battery or charger that is bulging out of its usual shape. If you see any of these signs, turn it off, unplug it and take it outside if it is safe to do so.

Other tips to help keep you safe in the home are:

- Only charging batteries when you are at home and while you are awake.
- Charging devices and batteries on a solid flat surface.

- Ensuring batteries and chargers meet UK safety standards.
- Charging in a location that does not block your emergency exits, should a fire occur.
- Using the charger that came with the battery and if you need a replacement charger or battery, only buying it from a supplier recommended by the device manufacturer.
- If your battery, charger or device is smoking, turn it off if safe to do so. If you see a fire, leave the room shut doors and get out of the property and then call 999.

If you believe you have a sub-standard product, you can report a problem with a trader or a product to Trading Standards by contacting our partners the Citizen's Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Safe disposal of batteries

Lithium batteries should not be placed in the same bins as your regular rubbish or recycling due to risk of fire. Fires have broken out in waste and recycling lorries because people have put batteries in their bins.

Some councils in Norfolk run a special weekly battery collection service. Check with your local authority for advice on how to safely dispose of batteries. [Find your local council](#).

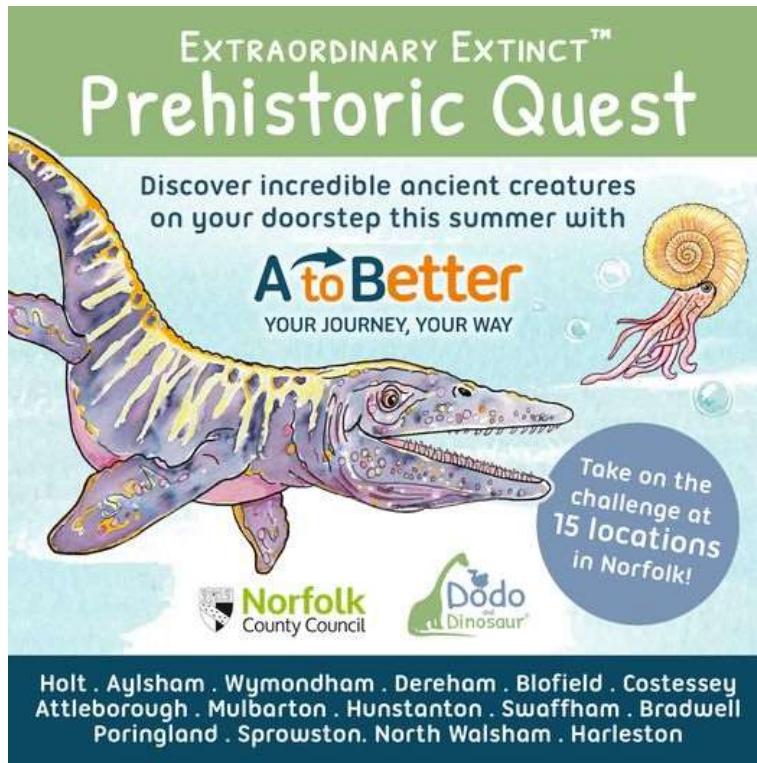
You can find more safety advice about lithium ion batteries at [Stay safe with lithium batteries - Norfolk County Council](#)

Find out more about the national battery safety campaign here: [Battery Safety campaign | Electrical Safety First](#) and the Lithium-ion battery safety bill due in the House of Lords here: [Lithium-ion Battery Safety Bill \[HL\]: HL Bill 8 of 2024-25 - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)



[Water refill at libraries](#)

[Hazardous Waste days](#)



Norfolk County Council's [AtoBetter team](#), supported by [Norfolk Museums Service](#), have collaborated with Norfolk-based children's publisher Dodo and Dinosaur to launch an adventure for residents this summer with the Extraordinary Extinct™ Prehistoric Quest.

From Saturday 20 July to Tuesday 3 September, people are being invited to step outside and unearth the Extraordinary Extinct™ prehistoric creatures that once called Norfolk their home.

The quest offers people the chance to explore Norfolk's rich history and local treasures while promoting sustainable travel habits along the way.

Maps can be collected from a participating library at one of the 15 locations across Norfolk. Participants can complete fun fossil facts and reveal the mystery word to enter a competition to win over £1,000 worth of local prizes.

This is fun and free family activity to find out more about your local community and to discover new ways to get from A to B.

SCAMs

Information Alert - Flyers offering roofing work

Cold Calling Alert - Doorstep cold calls in the Dereham area

Information Alert - Copycat websites

Scam Alert - Automated telephone cold calls claiming to be from Visa

Scam Alert - Fake parcel delivery emails

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep cold callers offering garden work

Cold Calling Alert - Telephone cold calls regarding loft insulation

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from NatWest

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep cold callers selling household products

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from Microsoft