

**TO ALL PARISH COUNCILS IN THE ELMHAM & MATTISHALL DIVISION
MONTHLY UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR PAUL CARR - JULY 2026**

Norfolk County Council Updates

New Party in control

Reform UK are now in overall (minority) control of the County Council. The Party has been elected on the promise of providing best value services to residents in Norfolk and is committed to eradicating wasteful expenditure.

Much work is being done now that the new Cabinet have settled in and have started to engage with the Council Officers

New Chief Executive

We are currently recruiting a new CEO after the previous officer resigned.

My involvement as a County Councillor

Since being elected to Norfolk County Council in May 2026, I have been busy undergoing various induction training, and other task specific training including mandatory training.

I have been appointed to the following Committees:

- **Strategy and Corporate Select Committee (Including Trading Standards, Norfolk Fire Service and the NCC Constitution)**
- **Adult Social Services and Public Health Select Committee**
- **Audit and Governance**

These committees are very influential in key areas of the Council.

My first meetings took place in July. These were very enlightening and covered some key areas and emphasised how crucial the next few years will be for us all.

You can watch these select committees on the Council's YouTube channel.

I plan to meet all Parish Councils in due course.

You can contact me on:

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The following is a brief update on some of the key issues and activity from the past month:

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

Local Government Reorganisation remains one of the most significant issues facing Norfolk. In March 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed, announced the Government's decision to replace the existing two-tier system (Norfolk County Council plus seven **district, city, and** borough councils) with three new unitary authorities: Greater Norwich Council, East Norfolk Council, and West Norfolk Council. This is subject to Parliamentary approval via a Structural Changes Order, with implementation targeted for April 2028.

However, we now have a new Prime Minister and a new Minister in Angela Rayner. We have written to the new Minister to get an update on their plans

Judicial Review Developments

On 25 June 2026, Norfolk County Council (under its new Reform UK administration) formally submitted a judicial review application to the High Court challenging the Government's decision-making process. This follows a pre-action protocol letter sent earlier in June. The Council has also instructed officers to pause non-essential work on implementing LGR pending the outcome.

We await the Court's response

- Residents should be aware that any changes would affect local services, planning, highways, and council tax over the coming years.

As more information emerges - particularly regarding the court's decision on permission - I will provide further updates.

Library reopens after refurbishment

The Millenium Library in Norwich has reopened after a 2 month £1.3 million refurbishment to mark its 25th year.

It is one of the Country's best and most visited libraries. Please do visit



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CASTLE Museum overspend

Undoubtedly a splendid asset to Norfolk, its final revamp cost of £34million compared to a budget of £18 million is astounding and unacceptable. We are currently reviewing how this was allowed to happen, and greater controls will be implemented.



Parish & Council Partnership Scheme

The Deputy Leader has written to all Parish Councils regarding the continued success of this funding scheme.



Letter to Parishes
28.7.26.pdf

Please review your local requirements to ensure you benefit from this scheme.

Free bus travel for children in August

Families across Norfolk can benefit from more affordable days out this summer through a new scheme offering free bus travel for children throughout August.

As part of the Government's Great British Summer Savings initiative, children aged 5 to 15 can travel for free on many bus routes across the county. The scheme is

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intended to help families reduce travel costs and make it easier to visit Norfolk's attractions, events and destinations during the school holidays.

The scheme also aims to encourage greater use of public transport, supporting sustainable travel and helping families access leisure, cultural and community activities.

Five of Norfolk's main bus operators are taking part, so children aged 5 to 15 can travel free throughout August on services operated by First Bus, Sanders, Stagecoach, Border Bus and Central Connect.

Further information about participating operators and Good Journey attractions is available at www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/summersavings.

Summer holiday activities and support for older children

Norfolk County Council's Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) is running summer holiday activities for older children, including new Chill on the Hill sessions in the grounds of Norwich Castle. TYSS has teamed up with Castle Quarter to run free, relaxed activities in Castle Gardens every Thursday from 2pm to 6pm, including music, creative activities, games, video gaming, karaoke and art.

The sessions are aimed at young people aged 11 to 17 and provide a safe place to meet friends, socialise and take part in positive activities.

TYSS works with young people across Norfolk in the places and spaces where they choose to meet. Specialist youth workers provide advice, support and positive activities, working alongside community organisations.

Weekly activities will also take place at Jenny Lind Park in Norwich, St George's Park in Great Yarmouth, MUGA Mania in King's Lynn and Castle Park in Thetford.

Further details about the service and summer activities are available on the county council's [Targeted Youth Support Service web pages](#).

National Updates

The Big Conversation on Adult Social Care

Baroness Casey of Blackstock has [launched The Big Conversation on Care](#), offering the public a direct role in shaping the future of adult social care in England.

Between now and April 2027, The Big Conversation will give people across England the opportunity to say what they want and expect from a future National Care

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Service, including on the tough questions on who it should support, what families should reasonably be expected to do, and how the country should pay for care in a fair and sustainable way.

The Big Conversation will run in two phases. The first phase from July to November, will ask people about the values and principles we should all expect from a care system and who should be eligible for support. The second phase will focus on how care should be funded and how reform should be delivered.

Everyone is encouraged to participate and have their say. Further details and a link to take part are available at [The Big Conversation on Care | The Casey Commission](#).

Local Issues

I have continued to work on a range of local issues raised by residents, including highways, planning matters, environmental concerns and access to local services. If you have an issue you would like me to look into, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Council Business

Recent council meetings have focused on a range of important topics, including council finances, service delivery and future priorities. I have continued to represent the interests of residents and ensure that local concerns are raised where appropriate.

Community Engagement

It will be a pleasure to attend community events, meet with local organisations and speak with residents about the issues that matter most to them. These conversations are invaluable in helping shape the work I do on your behalf.

Keeping in Touch

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact me. Your feedback is always welcome, and I remain committed to representing the interests of everyone in our community.

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OUR SAVINGS THIS MONTH

- 1. We have identified many cases of significant overspends and lack of scrutiny by the previous administration.**
- 2. Where it is still possible, savings will be made in these areas. A report on these matters is due out next month.**
- 3. Many more savings are anticipated as our intensive review of all expenditure continues.**

Next report: Due to holidays, the Council has very few meetings in August so my next report will be for September.

Best wishes

Paul W Carr FCA.



Parish or Urban areas within the Division:

Bawdeswell, Billingford, Bintree, Bylaugh, East Tuddenham, Elsing, Foxley, Gateley, Guist, Hockering, Lyng, Mattishall, North Elmham, North Tuddenham, Sparham, Twyford, Yaxham.

