

Parish Report – March 2025

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Norfolk announced as priority area for new powers and funding

Norfolk is set to receive new powers and funding following a Government announcement, with the County being a key focus for devolution and local government reform.

Ministers are aiming for a devolution deal that covers both Norfolk and Suffolk, including the creation of an elected mayor. They also plan to replace the existing "two-tier" system, where key services are shared between county and district councils, with unitary authorities.

For more details on the story so far, including the Government's devolution white paper and answers to frequently asked questions from the Local Government Association, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/devolution. You can also [watch our video explaining devolution and local government reform](#).

In addition, we have responded to the Government request for an 'Interim Submission' of our views for Local Government Reorganisation. A copy can be read attached.

Norfolk's highways set for major investment in the year ahead

This month Norfolk County Council Cabinet has reviewed a series of investments and improvements to the county's highways infrastructure.

Documents reveal how 97 Norfolk parishes will benefit from projects funded through the Council's Parish Partnership scheme. The North Coast Division sees a £12,000 scheme going ahead in Hunstanton. The 2025/26 programme is designed to deliver what local communities have requested, including trods, village gateways, bus shelters, and vehicle-activated signs.

The programme is jointly funded by Norfolk County Council and contributions from Town and Parish Councils. This year, Norfolk County Council plans to contribute £425,476, enabling a total investment of £848,702 for local projects.

Once again, I urge Parish Councils with available CIL funds to come forward with schemes that we can work on together to submit for approval. The scheme is always over subscribed.

The Cabinet has also reviewed the highways capital programme, which highlights successes from the previous year and outlines how highways maintenance funding will

be allocated for the coming 12 months. This includes an additional £15 million from the Department for Transport (DfT).

With this extra funding, an additional 100 miles of roads in Norfolk will be resurfaced this year, supporting the Council's proactive approach to highway maintenance that helps prevent potholes. The funding will also provide additional resources for local repairs and patching across the county.

Funding boost for active travel in Norfolk

Active Travel England have today announced an additional £4.45million for active travel in Norfolk as part of a [wider nationwide funding package totalling almost £300million](#).

The additional £3.35m for 2025/26 is an outline allocation at this stage and comprises both capital and revenue funding. This means it will be used to fund new active travel initiatives and behaviour change programmes in addition to the delivery of new infrastructure but no decisions on which schemes will be funded have been made.

The next step will be to prepare proposals for Active Travel England once we receive further details on how the allocation can be spent in the coming months.

New apprenticeship starts in Norfolk increase by a staggering 11%

Apprenticeship starts with Norfolk businesses and organisations surged by 11% in the first three months of the 2024/25 academic year, compared to a national increase of less than 1.5%.

From 1 August to 31 October 2024, there were 2,025 new apprenticeship starts in Norfolk, marking a rise of 199 from the same period in 2023/24. This represents the highest number of starts in this timeframe in over five years.

Apprenticeships Norfolk reports growth across all age groups, with starts up by 7.4% for those aged 16-18, 9.6% for 19-24-year-olds, and 14.6% for those aged 25 and over. Notably, the 16-18 age group saw its strongest first-quarter performance in over five years.

Department for Education (DfE) data also highlights an increase in recruitment, with the number of 'newly recruited' apprentices (those employed for up to three months at the start of their apprenticeship) rising by 10.4% from the previous year. This translates to 94 more starts.

In terms of employer size, non-levy funded apprenticeships, typically started by small to medium-sized businesses, grew by 10.3% (69 more starts) compared to 2023/24. Larger businesses also saw growth, with an 11.2% increase, adding 130 more apprenticeships.

More household hazardous waste days to be held at Norfolk's recycling centres

As part of the Norfolk County Council budget for the upcoming year, additional household hazardous waste events will be held across the county. These events will take place at seven recycling centres this spring, supplementing the usual autumn events.

The free events will be held throughout April and May 2025, and residents must use the recycling centre booking system to attend. Bookings will open one week before each event.

These events are exclusively for residents disposing of hazardous household waste. They are not open to businesses, groups, or other organisations. If residents do not have hazardous waste to dispose of, they will be directed to an alternative site, as the events are expected to be in high demand.

The spring hazardous waste events will be held on the following dates:

- 4 and 5 April at King's Lynn
- 11 and 12 April at Dereham
- 25 and 26 April at Thetford
- 2 and 3 May at Norwich North
- 9 and 10 May at Hempton
- 16 and 17 May at Caister
- 23 and 24 May at Norwich South

Please note, there will be no hazardous waste events over the Easter weekend.

A list of acceptable items for disposal at the hazardous waste days can be found here:

www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste