

Norfolk County Council Annual Report 2020/21

County Councillor Ron Hanton

East Flegg Division

Once again I am pleased to present my annual report to you as your County Councillor
As always, this year has proven to be a busy, challenging and enjoyable one for me.

Norfolk County Council Composition

Norfolk County Council is a Conservative led Council comprising of different political groupings and individuals

The current composition is:

- Conservative – 53 members.
- Labour – 16 members
- Liberal – 9 Members
- Independent – 3 members
- Non-Aligned – 1
- Vacancies - 2

(Total 84)

The County Council operates a Cabinet System and some members have specific and important responsibilities as Cabinet Members. Other Councillors sit on the many other committees and outside bodies.

I currently sit on the following committees and outside bodies:

- Norfolk County Council Scrutiny Committee
- Norfolk County Council Corporate Parenting Board
- Norfolk County Council Environmental Policy Members Oversight Group
- Norfolk County Council Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
- Great Yarmouth 3rd River Crossing Members Steering Group
- Great Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group
- Norfolk Coast Partnership
- Hemsby & Winterton Community Liaison Group

In my private capacity I am also the unpaid Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Safety (CCTV) Company, which operates all the safety cameras in the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

The East Flegg Division comprises, Somerton, Winterton, Hemsby (includes Newport), Ormessby St. Michael and Ormessby St. Margaret (includes Scratby & California).

During the last year a number of community concerns, issues and enquiries have been raised with me, These would include:

- Coastal Erosion
- Trees
- Highway and Footpath Closures
- Highway faults, potholes and maintenance

- Highway Signage
 - Street Cleaning.
 - Public Transport provision and other issues
 - Traffic Management, parking concerns and speeding
 - Fly Tipping
 - Cleaning and unblocking soakaways, pipes and road side grips
 - Gritting
- (not an exhaustive list)

Members Divisional Allowance

Utilising my £6,000 Members Divisional Allowance I have supported schemes and provided monies for the following highway considerations;

- Dropped Kerb
- 2 x White H Bar painted road markings
- Traffic Signs
- Sam 2 Speeding Camera
- Replacement Bus Stop shelter

Norfolk County Council highlights for 2020/21

Norfolk Statistics

- 6,200 miles of highway, 3,000 miles of footway, 5,000 bridges and structures and 53,000 streetlights across Norfolk (40% of which are environmentally friendly LED)
- 98.0% of highway inspections completed within timescale
- 99.% of highway inspections completed within timescale
- 227,000 tonnes of rubbish dealt with
- 52,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for 20,000 people
- Under 1,000 Looked After Children (LAC) (0-17yrs population)
- 95% of Norfolk homes have superfast broadband coverage

The 2021/22 Budget

A £439 million net revenue budget, a £102 million boost for roads and infrastructure and a 3.99 per cent Council Tax rise has been agreed to support communities, the economy and the environment across the County.

Further, there will be an investment of £45.7m to meet cost and other pressures in services, including £28.2m in adult social care, £7m in children's services and £10.5m in community and environmental services.

Within the investment of £102m in the capital programme, taking the total infrastructure programme to £537.66m, these include £11.5m for supported housing for young adults, £4m for children's residential homes and investment in the Long Stratton bypass and new libraries.

Additionally there will be an investment of £2m to respond to flooding, including an additional £350k in revenue budget provision, £235k in highways spending to reduce road flooding risks and £1.5m for the creation of a new flood reserve to fund urgent works and repairs.

New service from Norfolk Libraries helped families learn from home

Families that were struggling with home learning have a new place to turn to for advice and support.

Norfolk Libraries has set up a phone line which serves as a first stop for parents and carers in the county using new devices to teach their children.

The phone line aims to provide a friendly voice to families that aren't familiar with home learning technology, including those that have received a new laptop or tablet as a result of Norfolk County Council's 'Every Child Online' campaign.

Norfolk libraries has scrapped late fees for children as part of post-pandemic reading push

Norfolk County Council has agreed have agreed ambitious plans for the Norfolk Libraries and Information service to improve children and young people's reading skills which have been diminished nationally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This includes the removal of overdue charges for everyone under the age of 16, universal membership of the county's e-library through Norfolk's schools and the introduction of a new '1000 books before school' reading challenge.

Norfolk participating in new contact tracing scheme

Norfolk County Council is to oversee all Covid contact tracing in the county, building on the County's successful work to identify close contacts of those who have tested positive for the virus.

The "Local-0" scheme will see cases passed without delay to local tracers at the same time as an individual who tested positive for coronavirus is invited to complete the online contact information. The current approach passes cases from the national NHS Test & Trace taskforce onto local tracers only after the national team has been unable to make contact over a period of 24 hours.

Every Child Online campaign launched

A new campaign which aims to ensure every school age child has a digital device and internet connection to learn remotely at home was launched.

Norfolk County Council has been working with Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) on the campaign backed by the EDP newspaper to make sure no child is left behind in their learning because of digital disadvantage.

The County Council has already co-ordinated the sourcing, prioritisation, and distribution of over 5,000 laptops and tablets, either directly to youngsters or to their schools.

Major highway improvement schemes started in 2021

A multi-million pound programme of road maintenance continued into 2021 with major schemes getting underway in Great Yarmouth, Downham Market and Stalham.

The improvements have been made possible thanks to the £22m highway funding for Norfolk that the Department for Transport announced in May 2020, to fund schemes in the 2020-21 financial year.

Norfolk received more than any other local authority in the East of England for maintenance and repairs to the county's roads, bridges, pavements and cycle paths.

The £120m Great Yarmouth 3rd River Crossing scheme to build a twin leaf Bascule Bridge carrying four lanes is now well underway.

Additionally, at £1.2m the mechanical and electrical upgrades for the 90-year-old Haven Bridge in Great Yarmouth is the largest scheme to be funded as part of the £22m programme.

Some upgrade works were completed in the autumn, but other work, which will resolve many of the issues caused by the lifting bridge's ageing equipment, started in February and is expected to take 13 weeks to complete.

The £22m funding award is in addition to Norfolk County Council's existing highways capital maintenance budget of £38.6m for the year 2020-2021.

Surge of Beryl Bike rides in 2020 as Norwich pedals to greener future

With over 11,000 riders, close to 70,000 trips and 266,303 kilometres ridden on Beryl Bikes this year, Norwich can boast to being a greener place for residents and visitors throughout 2020.

Beryl, the local bikeshare provider, has played a large role in the area's transport habits last year, helping NHS and key workers take essential trips during the first national lockdown, easing pressure on public

transport and providing the wider public with an affordable and convenient way to get from A to B. The 68,900 trips taken by Beryl Bike are equivalent to 43.92 tonnes of CO2 saved.

Also in 2020, in partnership with Norfolk County Council, Beryl became the world's first provider of a city-wide multimodal smart fleet including pedal bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters. This choice of vehicles provided residents of Norwich with a chance to take a variety of journeys in a safe, sustainable and convenient way.

Norfolk hits top spot for second year running in road and transport survey

For the second year running Norfolk has come first among its peers in a national highways and transport survey.

Over the summer 3,300 people in Norfolk were asked for their views on topics such as road safety, highway maintenance, congestion and public transport as part of the National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey 2020.

The results are ranked against other participating councils from across the country to give a nationwide picture of how Norfolk is performing.

Out of the 29 County Councils and larger unitary authorities in the peer group, Norfolk secured the top spot for overall satisfaction and saw the highest above average scores in both satisfaction with 'traffic levels and congestion' and 'condition of highways'.

Norfolk Flooding Alliance created

In response to winter flooding seen across the County, the Norfolk Flooding Alliance has been created. Led by Lord Dannatt and including bodies such as District Councils, Anglian Water, the Environmental Agency, internal drainage boards, along with Norfolk County Council, the challenges posed across the County can be addressed and tackled.

Housing boost for people with disabilities

One hundred and eighty-one supported housing units are set to be developed in Norfolk, to help people with disabilities live more independent lives.

The County Council will seek to invest £9m-£18m of capital to develop supported, adapted and specialist housing over the next 10 years, to improve people's lives, reduce hospital admissions and reduce care costs by £1.9m per year.

Grant scheme launched to provide free expert advice and cash to help businesses 'Go Digital'

A new grant scheme launched last December will enabled micro, small and medium-sized businesses to make better use of digital technology through funding and one to one support.

Go Digital was launched by Norfolk County Council to help businesses based in the county identify digital opportunities. It will provide expert one-to-one consultancy and the ability to apply for grants of up to £500. Digital opportunities included how to sell products and services online, reach new customers using social media, build customer databases, develop new or existing websites and attract new visitors, or how to work out the best homeworking options for teams.

More vulnerable children in Norfolk supported to remain with their families

A £12-£15 million five-year programme to transform support for children and young people enabled more youngsters to remain with their families.

National statistics reveal the number of children looked after by Norfolk County Council's Children's Social Care was lower, per 10,000 children than that of England (64 vs 67).

Children in care gets below the 1000 barrier

The current numbers of children in care are down to 994, this is from a high of 1200 just over 12 months ago.

This has been achieved by working better and closer with families, to keep children in their family unit and is part of our transformation programme. This is a far better outcome for the children and with Average costs for a child in care at £50,000/annum savings are made. The full savings (200 x 50) haven't been fully

realised because the unit costs of our children remaining are on the higher side but this does indicate the impact children in care have on the budget.

We have also increased our in house fostering meaning we use less agency places where again significant savings are with the difference being around £1000/month.

New Norwich recycling Centre takes shape.

Construction of one of two new recycling centres for the Greater Norwich area is well underway.

A 300 tonne crane is currently on site at the new £2.75m Norwich North recycling centre as sections of what will be a 500,000 litre tank, an integral part of the comprehensive water management system on site, are manoeuvred into place. This tank is the largest of its kind at any of Norfolk's recycling centres and will ensure any surface water runoff stays within the site.

Work on the major project started late last year, and includes a new access road to the recycling centre, which is located on land off the A140/A1270 junction near the airport.

Personal Message

Disappointingly, this will be my last report as your representative, as I will not be contesting the forthcoming County Council Elections, scheduled to be held on the 6th May 2021.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you all for your support and friendship in the past and I wish you and all the community the very best of luck for the future.



Councillor