



# Norfolk County Council

## Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates

### Updated 9 November 2023

This weekly briefing is intended as a resource to keep you up to date with the latest information and advice.

**Service updates:** The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#).

### Norfolk County Council updates

#### **Warm and Well Campaign**

The Warm and Well winter campaign to support people in Norfolk and Waveney to keep warm and well over the winter months was launched on 7 November.

The campaign, developed by ICS partners, aims to help local people understand the actions they can take to stay warm and well and manage their own health and wellbeing to help improve health outcomes for local residents and reduce the pressure on health and care services.

The campaign encourages users to visit the [Warm and Well campaign portal](#) where they can find information relating to winter health and wellbeing. It also signposts to partner and provider websites to access direct support around hardship benefits, mental health resources, and more.

Members are asked to :

- Signpost people you think might need support to the [Warm and Well campaign portal](#)
- Encourage any residents to take up the offer of their Flu and Covid vaccination when they're invited.
- Share, like and comment on any social media posts from Norfolk County Council and ICS Facebook and X, formerly known as Twitter.
- You can access the social media graphics via the [Google Drive folder](#).

#### **Flood Action Week, 13-19 November**

Monday 13 November is the start of Flood Action Week: an opportunity to remind residents to think about the threat of flooding and how they can protect themselves, their families and their properties. With many in Norfolk still dealing with the aftermath of flooding during Storms Babet and Ciaran, the week is particularly relevant this year.

This year Flood Action Week will be urging people across the country to sign up for Flood Alerts, to get up to date information on the risk of flooding in their area. If you wish to share

this message, you can do so by directing residents to visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

In addition, it is a good time to share the ways of reporting flooding as widely as possible: in the event of flooding residents can call 0344 800 8013 to report flooding, or visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding)

Anyone in immediate danger should always call 999.

### **Innovation funding – free webinar for Norfolk and Suffolk businesses**

The Innovation Grant Mentoring Project is once again inviting any Norfolk or Suffolk based business to the first of a series of free online webinars and workshops looking at innovation funding on Thursday 23 November at 12 noon.

Since the programme's inception in late 2020, seven businesses from Norfolk and Suffolk have been successful with their funding bids, with more than £1m of innovation funding being granted.

The 90 minute webinar on the 23 November entitled "What is Innovation Funding?" will explain more about innovation grant funding, who can be eligible for it, and what kinds of funds might be available. Speakers include the programme manager and experienced mentors. [Interested businesses can register for their free place now.](#)

The Innovation Grant Mentoring programme will be running a series of other webinars and workshops over the coming 12 months for businesses interested in innovation funding.

Businesses with innovation ideas ready to go can contact the team for an initial conversation by emailing [econdev@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:econdev@norfolk.gov.uk).

### **Funding for new ideas to inspire people to use their local town**

A £6,000 Love Your Town grant scheme is offering grants of up to £1,000 to organisations and groups who implement new initiatives to generate footfall and increase activity in the towns of Downham Market, Hunstanton and King's Lynn.

The scheme, funded by the UK Government and Norfolk County Council and supported by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, was launched on 30 October. It will fund projects that encourage Norfolk residents to use their local towns more frequently.

Applications are welcome from any local groups or businesses. The closing date for submitting expressions of interest is 8 December 2023.

Activity must be a brand-new idea and should support multiple areas or services within Hunstanton, Downham Market or King's Lynn, and have a link to creating interest or increasing footfall in these town centres.

A series of 'Dragons Den' style competitions will be held in January 2024, where local groups or businesses can present ideas to a panel to ask for a share of the funding.

Members are asked to promote the opportunity and to signpost people to further information and how they can express in bidding for a grant, link available [here](#).

## **Government updates – a focus on the King’s speech**

### **King’s Speech**

On Nov 7, 2023, King Charles set out the Conservative government’s legislative plans for the forthcoming parliamentary session in the King’s Speech.

The speech included a package of 21 bills (6 carried over from the previous session) with the aim of growing the economy, strengthening society, and keeping people safe. These include plans to run annual North Sea oil and gas licensing rounds, phase out smoking, toughen sentences for serious criminal offences, reform the leasehold system for houses, and regulate driverless vehicles.

Contrary to some expectations, the legislative plans did not include proposals such as curbs on the use of tents by homeless people, new rules to prevent councils from implementing measures to reduce neighbourhood traffic, a Mental Health Act reform bill, or a standalone bill on nutrients and planning.

The King’s Speech will be followed by the Autumn statement on 22 November 2023.

There is very little mention of local government or improvements to public services.

Further details of key bills potentially of relevance are outlined below. Full details of the King’s speech and all proposed bills available [here](#).

### **Automated Vehicles Bill**

The Bill will “set a rigorous safety framework for self-driving vehicles”. Including setting a threshold for self-driving vehicles in law, meaning only vehicles that can follow all road traffic rules without the need for a human to monitor or control the vehicle, will be classified as self-driving and allowed on the roads. Companies will also have to meet safety requirements from the point a vehicle is introduced onto the roads or face new sanctions.

### **Draft Rail Reform Bill**

The Bill supports reforms outlined in the Williams review and plan for rail white paper. It aims to transfer franchising authority functions, from the transport secretary to Great British Railways (GBR), establishing a single point of accountability for the industry. Pay As You Go ticketing will also be rolled out. However, it is considered unlikely the draft legislation will make it on to the statute books in this parliamentary session, or before the next general election.

### **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**

The Bill aims to tackle the largest cause of ill-health, disability and death in the UK, as well as ease pressure on the NHS. It intends to do this by creating the first smokefree generation by ensuring that children born on or after January 2009 will never be able to legally buy a cigarette by raising the legal age for doing so by one year, every year.

The legislation will also include measures to reduce the appeal of and accessibility of vapes to children. Government proposals include restricting flavours and the description of vapes so they are no longer targeted at children but are still accessible to adult smokers who want to quit. The legislation would also include on-the-spot fines for retailers who sell these products to children and a crackdown on illegal online sales by raising the online age limit.

### **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill - also referred to as Martyn’s law**

The Bill will improve protective security and preparedness of organisations across the UK, by mandating that those responsible for premises or events will need to consider terror risk and their response to a terrorist attack. The Bill will require publicly accessible venues to take necessary but proportionate steps, in line with their capacity, to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack and minimise harm. Premises and events with a capacity of 800 or above would be in the enhanced tier, while premises with a capacity of 100 to 799 would be in the standard tier.

If establishments do not meet the enhanced tier requirements, the regulator will be able to issue a maximum fixed penalty notice of up to £18m or 5 percent of worldwide revenue.

The standard tier will not impose unachievable conditions onto businesses that would result in them struggling, so the law is intended to be accessible, proportionate and deliverable for smaller venues.

A consultation will be published ahead of the Bill's introduction in Parliament, to ensure that its measures strike the right balance between public protection and avoiding undue burdens on smaller premises.

### **Leasehold and Freehold Bill**

The Leasehold and Freehold Bill aims to reform the current leasehold system. Measures announced in the bill include the ban on the creation of new leasehold houses so that all houses will be sold as freehold. This bill will also require greater transparency over leaseholders' service charges. The bill also plans to build on the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure that freeholders and developers must fund building remediation work.

### **Renters (Reform) Bill**

The Renters Reform Bill had received a carry-over motion in the last parliamentary session. This bill fulfils the Conservative government's manifesto commitment to reform the private rented sector.

Key measures included in this bill will end blanket bans on pets, strengthen landlord's grounds for possession and introduce a Private Rented Sector Ombudsman. The abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions has been delayed, as the government have committed to reforming the courts system prior to scrapping Section 21.

### **Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill**

The "Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill" will legislate for annual oil and gas licensing rounds. As part of the licensing process, the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) will have to be satisfied that tests under the "climate compatibility checkpoint" have been met before conducting each licensing round.

The government's view is that domestically obtained fossil fuels are cleaner and less expensive than relying on imports, so the law will continue to apply as long as the U.K. looks set to import more oil and gas than it extracts. This is likely to taper off as renewable sources of energy become abundant as the country moves towards net-zero.

### **Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill**

The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill, seeks to introduce a permanent ban on the export of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses for slaughter and fattening from Great Britain, stopping unnecessary stress, exhaustion and injury caused by exporting live animals. The government reasons that this Bill reinforces the UK position as a world leader on animal welfare.