

Highway Services

Changes to our offices

Norfolk County Council is opening an extra area office at King's Lynn, to improve highway services for the west of the county.

There will also be a new office for the south - at Ketteringham, just off the A11 Hethersett by-pass near Norwich. This will replace the current office at Watton. The existing area office for the north of the county remains open at Aylsham.

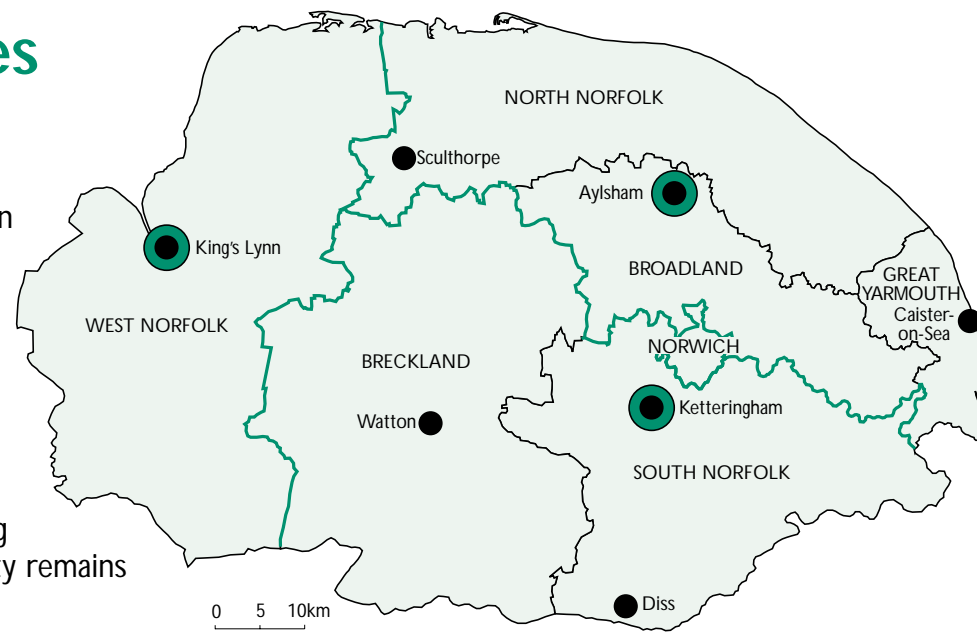
Most of the changes take place from April 2002, although the service for the west area will be delivered from temporary offices until a new permanent office opens at the Saddlebow Estate in King's Lynn, in the early summer.

North Area Office

Gas House Hill
Aylsham
NR11 6HY
Tel 0845 758 1762 (calls charged at the local rate)
(Broadland, North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth district council areas)

South Area Office

Station Lane
Hethersett
Norwich
NR9 3AZ
Tel 0845 758 1761 (calls charged at the local rate)
(South Norfolk and Breckland district council areas)



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West Area Office

The West Area Office will be operating from temporary premises until the early summer, when a new office opens at the Saddlebow Estate in King's Lynn. The temporary offices are not open to the public, but a full service will be provided by phone.

Tel 0845 602 1930 (calls charged at the local rate) - the number will be the same when the Saddlebow office opens (King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council area)

Highway service in Norwich will continue to be managed by the City Council and some of the main trunk roads in Norfolk (the A11, A47 and A12) are managed by the Highways Agency (tel 01473 830301).

This information is also available on the County Council website: www.norfolk.gov.uk

Sports Grants success

Six schools and their local communities will benefit from a successful bid by the County Council for grants from Sport England through the Lottery and Government-funded 'Space for Sport and Arts' initiative.

Altogether £2.2 million will be used to create sports and arts facilities at Abbey Farm Junior, Thetford, Alderman Swindell First, Great Yarmouth, Happisburgh First, Little Snoring Primary (with a further £164,000 from the County Council), and Mile Cross Middle School and Thorpe Hamlet First in Norwich.

Books of condolence

Books of condolence that were opened at all 48 Norfolk County Council Libraries and at County Hall, Norwich, following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother will remain available until May 3rd. They will then be bound into a single volume and presented to Buckingham Palace.

Messages of condolence can also be left on the official memorial website which can be accessed via the County Council's website: www.norfolk.gov.uk



If you would like 'Norfolk Agenda' in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact the Communications Unit on (01603) 222964 (minicom 223833)

Norfolk Matters

The Newsletter of Norfolk County Council



Highway Service changes back

Key decisions for May & June inside

Supporting People changes inside

Investing in Norfolk

Over £90 million will be invested in Norfolk's schools, roads, social services, fire brigade, libraries and other services in the County Council's capital programme for 2002-03.

The programme was approved by Cabinet in March, and further projects will be added in April or May once priorities have been established and funding clarified.

Out of the £90.8 million already approved, £28.5 million will pay for projects already underway or committed, including:

- Sheringham Special School - to provide a replacement for Edinburgh Road, Holt;
- Stradbroke First, Gorleston - completion of the new school;
- Taverham High - next phase of extensions, including a classroom block, dining and office improvements;
- Gaywood Primary - creating a single site school with Roseberry Avenue school;
- Rackheath Primary - replacement school;
- Dereham north-south link road - completion by early Summer;
- Housing with care schemes for elderly people, including Sprowston, Wymondham and Diss;
- New libraries for Dereham and Wymondham;
- Wells - Learning centre development in the library;
- Norfolk Records Office - continuing construction of the Archive Centre on the County Hall site.

High priority new projects and Local Transport Plan projects approved for starting in 2002-03 include:

- Catton Grove Middle School - replacement for the school destroyed by fire;
- Nar Ouse Regeneration - land acquisition for the access route early 2003;
- Long Stratton bypass - funding for public consultation;
- Sprowston Park and Ride - start of work, subject to planning consent.

Other more general allocations include £23.4 million for road structural maintenance, £9 million for routine road maintenance, £5.5 million distributed for use by schools; £4.8 million for National Grid for Learning development; £2.3 million for pedestrian and cycling schemes; £400,000 for safer journeys to school and £900,000 for local road safety schemes.

More detail is available through the County Council's website: www.norfolk.gov.uk. Click on the Your County Council button, follow the link to the Diary of Meetings and find the Cabinet agenda papers for March 18th.

• **Sports Grants success - back page**

Action on Abandoned Vehicles

Abandoned vehicles are an increasing problem in Norfolk, reflecting a national trend. The scrap value of old vehicles is so low at the moment that irresponsible owners see it as a cheap and easy method of disposal.

The County Council, District Councils, Police and Fire Service have reached a new agreement on policies and procedures for tackling the problem.



Signatories to the new agreement gathered at MC Dismantlers, Melton Constable, to mark its launch.

More details and key contact numbers are given on Page 6.



7,000 speak out

“Norfolk Citizens’ Panel”

Two out of three people quizzed in the county are happy with Norfolk’s ‘green and pleasant’ land, the latest findings of Norfolk’s Citizens’ Panel reveal.

Over 7,000 residents filled in and returned this latest Citizens’ Panel questionnaire,

As well as Norfolk County Council, the partnership includes Norfolk Police Authority, Learning and Skills Council Norfolk, Breckland Council, Broadland District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council and Norfolk’s six Primary Care Trusts.

This questionnaire was the first undertaken with market research company, MORI.

Other areas where Norfolk people are satisfied are:

- the level of social and health services available (59% satisfied vs. 20% dissatisfied)
- the quality of the built environment (54% satisfied vs. 13% dissatisfied)
- the standard of local schools (41% satisfied vs. 10% dissatisfied, with 31% not feeling they could give an opinion)

Other issues tackled in this questionnaire included access to local services, contact with the County Council, local policing services, council websites, satisfaction with Council Tax departments and methods of paying Council Tax.

For more information about Norfolk’s Citizens’ Panel please contact Anne Tansley Thomas on tel: (01603) 222844 email: anne.tansley-thomas.cex@norfolk.gov.uk

Forthcoming Consultations

The following plans are now available from Norfolk Social Services.

The Draft Norfolk’s Joint Physical & Sensory Disability Strategy April 2002 [NSS1].

We will be consulting on this strategy from April 2002-June 2002. During this period there will be local consultation meetings to discuss the strategy. Information about these meetings can be obtained from the number below and will be sent out with the plan.

Norfolk’s Joint Investment Plan for Services for People with Learning Difficulties 2002/03 to 2004/05. We welcome your comments on this plan.

Copies of the summary or full document for these plans are now available. The summaries will also be available in large print, on tape, Braille or another format or in a different language. All versions can be ordered from Social Services on 01603 223159 (minicom 01603 223242). They will also be available on the County Council website: www.norfolk.gov/council/departments/socserv/ssplans.htm or can be viewed at any library.

Consultation Feedback

Here is some feedback from recent County Council consultations.

Livestock Keepers Survey - As a result of this survey, Trading Standards has already changed to a more user-friendly approach to visiting livestock keepers where there is no evidence of malpractice. The department is also aiming to improve the way it communicates with livestock keepers and is exploring ways of regularly getting information to them. A website is also being developed so that people can access information, such as legal requirements, via the internet.

Acle Library Opening Hours - Over 120 people and organisations took part in this consultation about extending the library’s opening hours. Before the consultation took place the library was open on Mon 5pm to 8pm, Tues 2pm to 5pm, Thurs 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 5pm, Sat 10am to 1pm and not open at all on Fridays. Out of the 3 options given to extend the opening hours 59.4% plumped for opening the library on Fridays between 3pm and 6pm. As a result these opening hours started from Monday 1st April.

Fire Service in Norwich - preferred option

Members of Norfolk County Council’s Cabinet have now identified a preferred option for further consultation during the next couple of months.

The proposals include:

- **Two new fire stations to replace the pre-war station in the city centre which is no longer suitable for modern use.**
- **Modern training facilities for fire-fighters and facilities for community safety education at both new fire stations**
- **More frontline fire-fighters**
- **A new, modern Brigade Training Centre to provide operational training to all Norfolk fire-fighters and fire safety training for the public and business community**

Views on the preferred option are welcome. Write to Richard Elliott, Chief Fire Officer, Fire Service Headquarters, Whitegates, Hethersett, Norfolk NR9 3DN or email: chiefofficer@fire.norfolk.gov.uk



500,000th library visitor

UEA Student Amy Robinson, 20, struck lucky the day she popped into the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library in The Forum and became its 500,000th visitor

To mark the occasion, Amy received a host of goodies from Heather Bolt, Norfolk County Council’s Cabinet member with responsibility for Libraries, Museums, Records and the Arts.

The Library remains on course to receive an impressive 1.2 million visitors in its first year.



Summer challenge

School will be the place to be for 700 youngsters in Norfolk when the summer holiday starts - thanks to extra New Opportunities Fund support to the county’s University of the First Age Summer Challenge programme.

Challenges are being developed around sailing, mounting an exhibition, conservation, theatre studies, sculpture and design and technology. Many of the 700 places have already been taken up - even though it means returning to school in the first weeks of the holidays.

The 2002 Challenge will build on the successes of last year’s smaller programme. A 700-place programme for 2003 is also secure.

In addition, four Norfolk Special Schools have received three year funding to run their own summer school programme.

Bus station news

A new bus station with modern and safe facilities for Norwich is now clearly in sight. Norfolk County Council announced at the end of March that the current 3.3 acre site is being purchased from CGNU, with a view to developing a bus/coach station that everyone can be proud of. The site also offers the council the opportunity to develop a new purpose built city centre fire station. Final details are currently being negotiated.

Four options for hospital access

The public will be asked for their opinions on four possible options for access to the new Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital when consultation begins in June. A high level taskforce, chaired by County Council Leader Alison King, has decided not to continue to pursue a direct link from the A47 Southern Bypass, due to continued objections from the Highways Agency.

Norfolk leads on Green Register

Norfolk County Council has become the first local authority in the country to register as an associate member of the Green Register.

The Register lists professionals who are committed to sustainable building practices.

The County Council will act as its local branch, by providing application forms and organising training sessions.

Sustainable building puts the emphasis on using materials which are locally sourced, renewable, recyclable and low in toxicity. Contact Caroline Davison on 01603 222706

Business Byte opportunities for companies

There are still opportunities for companies to take advantage of the free business advice and a grant of £500 being offered by Business Byte.

Business Byte is supported by the European Social Fund, EEDA, Norfolk County Council, District Councils and Business Link. Its tailored, on-site information technology guidance and grants have already made a big difference to participating companies. Places are still available for businesses across most of the county.

For more information on Business Byte's 2-step consultancy and £500 grant contact Kate de Vries on 01603 664461.

Cultural Strategy

National and local cultural heroes joined forces in March, as comedian and actor Griff Rhys-Jones, and Norwich City's Bryan Gunn combined to launch the first cultural blueprint for Norfolk.

A survey in 1998/9 showed Cultural industries in Norfolk were worth £326million and increasing at 12% per year, the sector supported 5,800 jobs in the county, 1.8million people attended cultural events and £17million in funding was attracted by the cultural sector.

Norfolk: Live A cultural strategy for Norfolk is the result of a partnership of the County Council, and all seven District Councils in consultation with key partners from sport, leisure, arts, and heritage in the county. The strategy aims to make better use of existing resources, stimulate joint projects and secure increased funding for Norfolk.

For more information contact Mari Martin, County Arts Officer, on 01603 222269 email: mari.martin.art@norfolk.gov.uk



Golden Jubilee Celebrations in Norfolk

At the request of the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, a small county group is helping to co-ordinate events planned to celebrate for Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee and the number of those events is growing steadily. As part of this work, the group is busy compiling two separate lists of events. They serve the twin purposes of promoting and publicising the events that people wish to see promoted and ensuring that our emergency services have a list of all key events - including those that people do not want to see promoted outside of their own community.

It will be very helpful to us if event organisers would let us know about their plans and I am writing to invite your readers to help with this. People can do this in a number of ways.

Where people would like the details of their event to be publicised and promoted, they can do this in one of three ways:

- Log on to the county council's Golden Jubilee website (www.norfolk.gov.uk) click on the special icon and enter the details online
- Post them to Lindsay Stephens, Communications Unit, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DH, or telephone 01603 224471
- Send them to the relevant Golden Jubilee contact at your local district council

Where people do not want their event to be publicised outside of the local community, we would still like to hear about it so that the details can be added to the list we are compiling for the emergency services. It will not be publicised, but will be helpful for us to know about. In this case, please write or telephone Lindsay Stephens at the address given above - making it clear that you do not want the event added to the web database.

John Alston, Chairman, Norfolk Golden Jubilee Co-ordinating Group



Looking ahead: Key decisions for May and June

In a bid to make decision-making more accessible and transparent, a Forward Plan of Key Decisions is now being produced each month by Norfolk County Council. This new initiative will keep the public informed of the 'key decisions' being considered, when a decision will be made and by whom, and who we are consulting with.

It also gives the public a chance to make their views known in good time - in effect, throwing a door wide open on to the important decisions the council makes.

A 'Key Decision' is deemed that which is financially significant, or will have a considerable impact on local communities.

Leader of the Council, Alison King said, "I hope this plan helps people in Norfolk to understand how Norfolk County Council works and how they can play a part in issues that matter to them and in influencing decisions that are taken."

The plan spans the next four months, and will be updated on the first day of every month. It is available on our website www.norfolk.gov.uk, or you are welcome to visit County Hall anytime during office hours to inspect a copy.

Below are the key decisions to be taken in the coming months:

Subject and date of decision

Review of School Organisation
Decision due by Cabinet on 20 May

Dereham Library
Cabinet will make a decision on the future site of the library by June

Economic Development Operating Plan 2002-3
Decision due by Cabinet in May.
Consultation with other local authorities, Business support organisations, Shaping the Future Group and Economic development organisations

Review of Norfolk County Council's Members' Allowances Scheme
Cabinet will consider this issue in May, with a decision expected in July by the full County Council

Parking Standards
Cabinet to adopt a new set of standards for new developments across the county.
A decision is due between June and October

Access to UEA/Research Park/Hospital cluster, Colney, Norwich
Formal consultation with stakeholders should finish by the end of June.
Decisions to be made by Cabinet in September

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Strategy on the phasing of new housing in the Norwich Policy Area.
Decision due by Cabinet on 20 May

Waste Executive for Norfolk
Cabinet will look at establishing an integrated District and County Council framework for managing household waste, and will take a decision on this between May and July.

Who to contact for information

David Lennard Jones, Senior Education Officer
david.lennard.jones.edu@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 223474

Jennifer Holland, Head of Libraries and
jennifer.holland.lib@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222272

Michael Hand, Economic Strategist
michael.hand.cex@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222735

Greg Insull, Assistant Head of Democratic Services
greg.insull.dla@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 223100

David Higgins, Senior Engineer
david.higgins.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222789

David Pearson, Head of Technical
david.pearson.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 223223

Mike Moore, Head of Strategic Policy
mike.moore.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222728

Sam Ralph, Deputy Director of Planning and Transportation
sam.ralph.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 223402

Residential homes decision

A recommendation that five upgraded residential homes, originally proposed for transfer into the independent sector, should be retained by the County Council has been accepted by members of the Authority's Cabinet.

The decision is subject to an agreement being struck with staff in the coming months about how staff costs can be reduced.

The upgraded homes affected by the decision are: Aegel House in Aylsham, Beauchamp House in Chedgrave, Mountfield in Norwich, Mildred Stone House in Great Yarmouth and Woodlands in King's Lynn.

For the homes that have not been upgraded, the preferred option is to continue with the programme of moving to housing with care, with the buildings being owned by housing associations - but the staff staying with Norfolk Social Services.

Abandoned Vehicles

Around 2,400 vehicles were abandoned in Norfolk in 1999. District councils have a duty to remove them, but the current legislation means that a notice normally has to be left on a vehicle for seven days before it can be taken away. The Government is currently consulting on new legislation, which could speed the process up by reducing the notice period required before a vehicle can be legally removed. In the meantime the new joint agreement aims to make the current system run as efficiently as possible.

The County Council's duty is to make arrangements for the storage and disposal of abandoned vehicles, and it has just awarded seven new district contracts for this work to three local firms.

To report an abandoned vehicle, contact your district council as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Breckland | 01842 756405 |
| Broadland | 01603 431133 |
| Gt. Yarmouth Borough | 01493 856100 |
| King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough | 01553 616200 |
| North Norfolk | 01263 516208 |
| Norwich City | 01603 212329 |
| South Norfolk | 01508 533696 |
| or Norfolk Police | 01953 424242 |



Council Agrees Constitutional Changes

Changes in the way Norfolk County Council operates have been approved by members of the council which see the number of review panels reduced from ten to five.

The number of Cabinet members is unaffected by the changes, although their areas of responsibility are redefined in some circumstances.

The panels are:

Education and Cultural Services

Cabinet members are Alec Byrne, (Education) and Heather Bolt, (Libraries, Museums, Records and the Arts).

Social Services and Health

Cabinet member Chris Mowle. The scope of this panel's remit has been extended to take into account the increasing joint working between Health and Social Services.

Planning, Transportation and the Environment, Waste and Economic Development

Cabinet members Adrian Gunson (Planning and Transportation) Ingrid Floering Blackman (Environment) Alison King (Waste Management) and Evelyn Collishaw (Economic Development).

Fire and Community Protection

Cabinet member Harry Humphrey.

Corporate Affairs

Cabinet members Derek Turnbull (Personnel, Finance, Property and Corporate Affairs) and John Baskerville (Commercial Services).

This last review panel takes in the work of the previous Personnel Property and Finance and Performance Monitoring review panel and this includes issues such as the work of Norfolk County Services Ltd. and NPS Property Consultants Ltd.

The work of the council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, which puts decisions taken by the Authority and issues of public interest under the spotlight, continues unaffected.

'Supporting People' deadline nears

Right across Norfolk, vulnerable people are being helped to live more independent lives thanks to the support they receive from a whole range of different organisations, large and small.

The problems people face vary enormously - it could be drugs or alcohol, learning difficulty, mental health or resettlement after prison. The support - which does not include personal care - may be provided by wardens in sheltered housing schemes, by social housing landlords, or by support workers from charitable organisations.

From April next year (2003) a new system of funding this housing-based support comes into play. 'Supporting People' will replace Transitional Housing Benefit and other supported housing funding arrangements with a system administered by Local Authorities, Health and Probation. In Norfolk this could mean the transfer from Government to local administration of between £9 million and £12 million.

Under Supporting People, organisations can look forward to more secure, simplified funding, but they have to achieve quality standards and open themselves up to inspection.

Norfolk County Council and Norfolk's seven district councils are working with service providers to ensure a smooth change-over.

There are around 450 supported housing schemes in Norfolk, and more than 20 'floating' support schemes, where help is provided to people living in the wider community.

The larger service providers, such as housing associations and major charities, are well advanced in their preparations. However, it is quite a daunting task for smaller organisations or groups. Not all will choose to go down the 'Supporting People' route, but they need to understand the implications of such a decision.

Help is available by contacting Norfolk's Supporting People team as shown:

Breckland District Council:

Karen Hill, Housing Advice Manager, The Guildhall, Dereham NR19 1EE. Tel: 01362 656265.

Broadland District Council:

Darryl Smith, Housing Policy Manager, Thorpe Lodge Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0DU. Tel: 01603 703354

Gt. Yarmouth Borough:

Wendy Hicks, Housing Policy Officer, Greyfriars House, Greyfriars Way, Gt Yarmouth NR30 2QE. Tel: 01493 846268

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough:

Lorraine Douglas, Housing Policy Officer, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn PE10 1EX. Tel: 01553 616737

North Norfolk District Council:

Wendy Stanger, Policy and Development Manager Housing, PO Box 6, Cromer NR27 9EN. Tel: 01263 516183

Norwich City Council:

Diane Gilbert, Strategic Services Manager Housing, Housing Department, City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH. Tel: 01603 212908

Norfolk County Council:

Chris Greenhill, Supporting People Project Officer, Social Services Department, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2SQ. Tel: 01603 223079

South Norfolk Council:

David Cork, Assistant Chief Housing Officer, Swan Lane Long Stratton NR15 2XE. Tel: 01508 533754



Picture courtesy of www.johnbirdsall.co.uk