

Improving our response

Proposals which should ensure a consistently high standard response to anyone contacting the County Council - no matter which method they choose - are contained within a new Contact Strategy, which has been approved by Cabinet.

The proposals include the development over the next two years of a new contact centre for the Authority. This would handle telephone calls, e-mail messages, fax communications (with the exception of business to business messages), and by the end of five years, all letter post.

The aim is to provide easier, extended and faster access to council services, making the best use of latest technology while maintaining direct contact between customers and staff. An action plan is being developed and further reports will be made to Cabinet.

P & T Director in post

Norfolk County Council's new Director of Planning and Transportation, Tim Malynn, is now in post.

His appointment followed the retirement of Martin Shaw after 25 years. Formerly Corporate Director of Environment & Regeneration at the unitary Luton Borough Council, Tim Malynn says he welcomes the opportunity to lead and develop Norfolk's planning and transportation services.

"The needs of local people and communities are changing all the time, which is why our links with partner authorities and other organisations are so important. Town and parish councils have unrivalled local knowledge and can help us shape our services to meet local circumstances," he said.

"I am already getting a real impression of the diversity of this county - from its market towns and urban areas, to some unique natural landscapes. Planning and transportation issues can take on an important extra dimension in rural areas, where transport access and protecting the environment are key concerns to local people."

Prior to his director's post at Luton, he held senior positions in planning, transportation and strategic policy with a number of other authorities including the county councils for West Glamorgan and Northamptonshire. He is a Chartered Civil Engineer and a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Unsung heroes

As part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, the Queen has created a new annual award to honour Unsung Heroes in the community. If you know of a group of people who volunteer their time to help others, then this is their chance to get the recognition they deserve.

If you know of a group (individual nominations are not acceptable) who regularly devote their time to helping others, improve the quality of life and opportunities for others in the community, and provide an outstanding service - then they could be in line for an award. To find out more, call 0845 000 2002 or visit www.goldenjubilee.gov.uk or email gaward@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk



Norfolk Matters

The Newsletter of Norfolk County Council



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Putting Norfolk first

'Putting Norfolk First' will be the theme of Norfolk County Council's displays when the Royal Norfolk Show makes a welcome return after two years.

With responsibilities ranging from the maintenance of Norfolk's 6000 miles of roads, to home care and the Fire Service, everyone in Norfolk relies upon County Council services to a greater or lesser extent. But even this is only part of the story, and the Show provides people with a way of finding out how the County Council spends public money on their behalf - and how they can make the most of those services.

This year, different departments have combined to create colourful and lively stands that people will find enjoyable, as well as informative.

For example, the Council's Education and Cultural Services have combined to create a stand (No 297) which has something for people of all ages - from pre-school toddlers, to parents looking for childcare, and anyone wanting to find out more about libraries and adult education. A performing area ensures that something is always happening - from circus science to story telling and even Flamenco and Indian Head Massage!

Road Safety (stand 270) will feature the ever-popular Olly Day Road Safety Magic Show, and, sharing the same pitch, Waste Management will feature a 'Slim Your Bin' roadshow, with displays on wormeries and composting, paint recycling, real nappies and the story of glass recycling.

The Fire Service is teaming up with ambulance service colleagues on stand 567/568 to show their work in road traffic accidents. They will also be showing their newest fire engines and have a 'pod' showing how to improve fire safety in the home.

The popular forestry and countryside stands will be at their usual position on the showground at pitches 40 and 43.

• The Chairman of the Council, Colleen Walker, will be officially receiving the Queen's Jubilee Baton on behalf of the County when it reaches the Show between 6-7pm on July 26th.

Spotlight on Emergency Services

The new Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Colleen Walker, is dedicating her year in office to the unsung heroes who make our emergency services among the best in the world.

Mrs Walker, who lives in Gorleston and represents Lothingland East and Magdalen West, said: "I think our emergency services really are terrific and it saddens me to hear that the fire service, police and other emergency workers have such a tough time from some sections of the public.

"It's the same story with the fire, ambulance, lifeboats, coastguards. You name the service and there will be men and women in it who are ready to risk themselves to help the general public."

As part of her theme, Mrs Walker is hoping to hold a party for 90 front line emergency workers from across the county at Yarmouth Racecourse in July.



Colleen Walker and new vice-chairman Neville Chapman

Next edition - September/October - will be available from September 12th.



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)

Acorn Grants available

Grants of between £500 and £10,000 are available to Norfolk community and voluntary groups who want to improve the job chances of local people.

The grant can fund a range of projects - but not capital works such as building projects.

Fay Sheldon, Acorn Grants Co-ordinator for the County Council, is looking for community or voluntary groups who have ideas for community-based businesses or projects that will improve the lives of local people, and move people towards work.

- The grants have helped kick-start the following types of projects:
- Training for homeless people, helping them gain practical skills, motivation, confidence and interpersonal skills
 - Support ‘buddies’ for volunteers with special needs
 - Job support worker for people with Asperger’s Syndrome
 - The start-up of a non-profit distributing business offering DJ music skills and creating jobs for local unemployed people

Acorn Grants are funded by the European Social Fund, and a wide range of local partners, including the county and district councils, the Learning & Skills Council, Business Link Norfolk, NELM Development Trust, EEDA and others.

There are two bidding rounds left this year; the deadlines are 30 August and 29 November.

To find out more contact Fay Sheldon on 07775 695975.

ROAD ACCESS FOR SW NORWICH

Part of south-west Norwich (between the B1108 Watton Road and the A11 Cringleford by-pass) is an important development area, now and in the future. It will benefit the city, Norfolk and the eastern region and road access is a vital issue for local residents and for much of the population of Norfolk.

As well as the University of East Anglia and the new Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, the area is home to several prestigious research organisations. It is also a residential area where many people live - and there are plans for more homes to be built. The scale of recent development is already having a significant impact on traffic.

Norfolk County Council has already taken practical steps to improve access, by developing better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and encouraging extended bus services.

The Council invited MPs and elected representatives from local councils to join a new Task Group to look at options for improving road access, now that a direct link from the A47 Southern By-pass has been ruled out by the government’s Highways Agency. If that view changes we will pursue the idea again in the future.

The County Council and the Task Group want to consult widely on these options and the result will be used by the Council to make decisions about any changes to roads in the area.

The consultation will run for six weeks until 9 August and all Norfolk’s district, town and parish councils, as well as other stakeholders, will be sent a copy of the leaflet and questionnaire by 21 June.

If you have not received your copy by then, please call Christine Rebis on 01603 222143.

Schools Decision

Changes in the organisation of schools in ten areas of Norfolk were agreed by County Council’s Cabinet on May 20th and will now go to the independent Schools Organisation Committee in December for approval.

The areas are Hunstanton, Swaffham, Long Stratton, Harleston, Loddon, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Martham, Caister and Stalham. Further discussions with schools and Church authorities will be necessary on details of the changes. The aim is to publish Public Notices in September.

The key issue has been the mis-match between First and Middle School age ranges and National Curriculum Key Stages. Nationally, 90% of schools have an age of transfer that coincides with the Key Stages, so that seven year olds and eleven year olds sit their tests in their last year of a school, before moving on to junior or high.

In Norfolk, middle schools which keep children until 12 have to meet all the demands of teaching the first year of Key Stage Three. In outlining the reasons for the decision, the Chairman and Leader of the Council, Alison King, said Cabinet believed that changing the age of transfer to High School from 12 to 11 was in the best educational interests of the school children of Norfolk.

Crime and disorder

Locally-based, multi-agency crime reduction partnerships have just undertaken the most comprehensive audit of crime and disorder ever undertaken in the county.

Residents were consulted about the findings and were asked to prioritise their crime concerns and identify other community safety issues that mattered to them. Although there were some local variations, the main crime concerns across Norfolk were identified as:

- Domestic burglaries, i.e. thefts from homes, and non-domestic burglaries i.e. thefts from sheds and garages.
- Theft of and from motor vehicles.
- Violent crime i.e. violence in public places and domestic violence
- Disorder i.e. anti-social behaviour, often alcohol-related.

Following on the consultation, each of the partnerships has developed a community safety strategy. Norfolk County Council is now developing its own cross-cutting community safety strategy which will look at its partnership commitments and at ways of involving all County Council services in crime and disorder reduction.

For more information please contact your local representative:

Breckland	Sandra Dewsbury	01842 755721
Broadland	Tim Horspole	01603 431133
Gt Yarmouth	Toni Keryell	01493 856100
Kings Lynn	Steve Earl	01553 692722
North Norfolk	Teri Howell	01263 513811
Norwich	Sue Lambert	01603 622233
South Norfolk	Alan Osbourne	01508 533633
Norfolk	Peter Burnham	01603 224490

Better disability services

Norfolk’s Joint Strategy for People with Physical or Sensory Disabilities is now out for consultation. The strategy aims to improve the health and well-being of people with disabilities through joint work, making sure that people with disabilities are fully involved.

The strategy will be discussed at forthcoming meetings of the district-based Disability Forums. We would like to gain as many views as possible on the proposals in the strategy, so if you would like a copy of the strategy summary document and the consultation questionnaire, please contact Maureen Lewis on (01603) 223159. The consultation closes on 31st July 2002.

Involving Young People

Norfolk County Council has been made a pilot authority for the Local Government Association standards for Active Involvement of Young People in Local Democracy. The standards give a framework for councils to look at how they currently engage children and young people in local democratic processes and to improve this.

As part of this work, young people have already been involved in the consultation on political structures, community safety audits and Norfolk Education Improvement Forum. Young people have also been involved in the recruitment and selection of headteachers, youth workers and Connexion’s senior management.

Work with young people in Norfolk has also been given a government grant of £20,000 towards setting up a Youth Bank - a national initiative, which involves young people giving grants to other young people for projects that will benefit groups or individuals. An additional £17,000 over 2 years has also been secured for engaging voluntary bodies in encouraging the involvement of young people in decision making.

For more information contact Robin Konieczny, Active Citizenship Co-ordinator
Tel: (01603) 485999
email: robin.konieczny.edu@norfolk.gov.uk

Pioneering Meals Scheme **Wins Top Award**

A pioneering scheme which gives people in Norfolk the chance to have a week's worth of ready-made meals delivered to their door - for just £2.70 a meal - has scooped a national award.

The mobile meals service known as 'Care Fayre' has signed up about 500 customers since its launch last summer and won top prize in the Cost Sector Catering Awards in London. The awards recognise innovation among food providers in the public sector.

Although it was set up initially to support Meals on Wheels for the elderly, Care Fayre - which sees a week's worth of frozen meals delivered to the door - has become an instant hit with a wide section of the community, including patients just released from hospital or recovering from chemotherapy and radiotherapy, people with learning difficulties and clients referred by GPs. Care Fayre drivers not only deliver meals, but keep an eye on more fragile and vulnerable customers.

Care Fayre was launched by Social Services last summer in partnership with Norfolk County Services (NCS) with the aim of extending the meals service into areas where deliveries are less frequent.

David Wright, Director of Norfolk Social Services, said: "I'm delighted by Care Fayre's success. The feedback we have had from Social Services clients has been extremely positive and I am sure others around the country will be looking at following Norfolk's successful example."

NCS Managing Director Peter Hawes said: "The team behind Care Fayre worked very hard to get things up and running in a short space of time and it's very gratifying to see us move from delivering 100 meals a week to over 1000 so quickly."

Penny Stokes, of NCS added: "There are almost 30 main meals to choose from and a dozen or so sweets, so we have got something to suit all tastes."

And if customers need a microwave or a freezer to store the food we can help them with that too!"

To find out more contact Phil Carter of Care Fayre at Heartsease High School where the service is based on 01603 436502.



Six term school year

Norfolk is joining other local education authorities in the eastern region in consulting on national plans to introduce a six term school year which, if implemented, would start in the academic year 2004/05.

The Independent Commission on the Organisation of the School Year recommends six terms of roughly equal length, with the aim of raising educational standards and reducing the pressure on teachers and children caused by long terms.

Changes would mean:

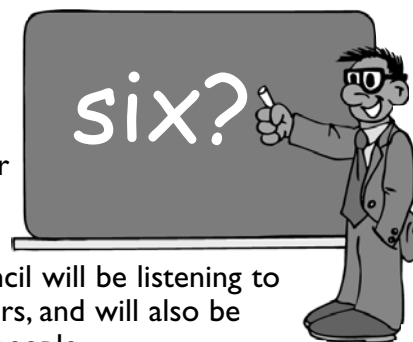
- a slightly shorter summer holiday
- a two week break in October
- the length of spring terms no longer affected by the changing dates for Easter

At Easter schools would still close on Good Friday and Easter Monday.

As well as sounding out the views of schools, governors and parents, the Council will be listening to the views of churches, business, unions, independent schools, colleges and others, and will also be conducting a survey of the Norfolk Citizens' Panel, which reaches over 7,000 people.

More detailed information can be found on Norfolk County Council schools website - www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk/sixtermyear.

Comments should be sent to Malcolm Reeve, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH. Consultation ends on June 30th.



Fast forward to key decisions in June and July

Each month, the Council publishes a Forward Plan of Key Decisions, setting out a clear timetable of important decisions to be taken in the next twelve months.

A 'Key Decision' is one that will have a sizeable impact on communities or is financially significant.

The plan shows who is making the decision and when, who they have consulted with and how the public can make their views known in good time. It is available to view at County Hall, or can be downloaded from our website - www.norfolk.gov.uk

Important decisions that feature in the current plan include:

- The council's **Race Equality Scheme**, which is due to be ratified by Cabinet on 17 June. For information or to make comments, please contact Joan Emerson, Policy Officer on 01603 223816 or email joan.emerson.cex@norfolk.gov.uk
- The '**Annual Progress Review**' of the **Local Transport Plan** will come before Cabinet on 17 June. Mike Moore, Head of Strategic Policy can be contacted about this on 01603 222728, or email mike.moore.pt@norfolk.gov.uk
- **Members' allowances** will be placed under the spotlight by the Cabinet on 17 June, with the full council ruling on 8 July. Information is available from Greg Insull, Assistant Head of Democratic Services on 01603 223100, or email Greg.insull.dla@norfolk.gov.uk
- Cabinet will look at the **Integration of Learning Difficulty Services** in June or July. Contact Amanda Reynolds, on 01603 223958, or email amanda.reynolds.socs@norfolk.gov.uk
- As part of the **E-Government Change Programme**, an update on the Contact Centre is due to be given to Cabinet in either June or July. Information and representations to Alan Tidmarsh, Head of Corporate Resources, on 01603 222000 or email alan.tidmarsh.cex@norfolk.gov.uk
- A decision on the use of the **modernisation fund**, part of the Schools Capital Programme, will be made on 15 July by Cabinet. Consultation is being carried out with schools, and the public has until 14 June to give their views. Contact: Chris Hey on 01603 223467 or email chris.hey.edu@norfolk.gov.uk
- **Grants for Listed buildings** is on the Cabinet's agenda for 15 July. Information is available from Michael Knights on 01603 222709 or email michael.knights.pt@norfolk.gov.uk. The deadline for representations is 28 June.
- Following consultation with East England Arts, Norfolk Arts Forum and the district councils, Cabinet will also decide the **County Arts Policy** on 15 July. Contact Mari Martin, Arts Officer, on 01603 222269 or mari.martin.art@norfolk.gov.uk.
- Social Services' **Residential Review** will be looked at again by Cabinet in July. For more information, a Residential Review website can be accessed through www.norfolk.gov.uk. Click on 'Caring' and 'Norfolk Social Services Department.' Or contact Ros Lyons - 01603 223434 email ros.lyons.socs@norfolk.gov.uk.

Guide to Norfolk County Council’s internet site: **www.norfolk.gov.uk**

The Norfolk County Council Internet site contains a great deal of information about the county council, the services we offer, and helpful information about other aspects of Norfolk life. If you’re not online at home, all of Norfolk’s libraries offer free internet access to registered users.

How is the site organised?

- The Norfolk County Council internet site groups information into eight areas, shown as buttons:
- Caring
 - Learning
 - Leisure
 - Living
 - Tourism
 - Travel
 - Working
 - Your County Council
- Also on bottom of the front page are smaller buttons linking you to;
- Latest news - press releases updated daily
 - Feedback - where visitors can ask questions and make comments
 - A to Z of Services - a complete listing of what we do.

Some of the sites and pages which can be found from the eight main buttons are as follows;

Caring

- Norfolk Social Services Department - includes all the department’s leaflets online
- Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths
- Youth and Community Services

Faster Web access

Free high speed internet access is now available at all Norfolk Libraries following the installation of broadband, the first step in a £1.3m project to bring the People’s Network to the county. Arrival of broadband marks the countdown to a new era in library-based IT technology and places Norfolk firmly in the premiership of libraries across the country.

By autumn this year around 120 extra PCs will have been installed in Norfolk libraries, supporting the launch of full word processing and access to more on-line resources such as Picture Norfolk - a database of historical county images.

Tourism website improved

www.visitnorfolk.co.uk, the official tourism website for Norfolk which is maintained by the Norfolk Tourism Management Partnership, has recently been upgraded. To find out more contact Feargus Mack on 01603 222742 or e-mail feargus.mack.visitnorfolk@norfolk.gov.uk For information on the Norfolk Tourism Management Partnership, visit www.shapingthefuture.norfolk.gov.uk/tourism.

Learning

- Education - For children and adults, plus information for parents and school governor support.
- Library and Information Service
- Norfolk Museum Service
- Norfolk Record Office

Leisure

- Norfolk and Norwich Festival
- ICON - A database of contact details for many of Norfolk’s clubs and societies

Living

- Demographic information - population figures, statistics and information about the 2001 census
- Biodiversity
- Green News

Travel

- Access to the Countryside - A site with information about walking, riding and cycling in Norfolk
- Roadworks today - You can search for current roadwork information using a parish or road name, or by clicking the district on a map.
- Getting to County Hall - Map with road and rail links
- Norwich Airport.

Tourism

- Time to Explore - information for visitors to Norfolk
 - Sheringham Bittern Line Railway
- We also have a large collection of links reflecting all aspects of life in Norfolk, including towns and villages that have websites and listings of Leisure and Arts activities

Working

- Jobs vacancies at Norfolk County Council
- Farmers Funding Compendium
- Links to External Funding
- Trading Standards - guidance for business and consumers
- Business-related websites

Your County Council

- County Council Members - names, phone numbers and electoral divisions
- How the Council works
- Diary of Norfolk County Council meetings
- Forward Plan (see page 5)

Information in your local area

We know that while most people contact us on the phone, many people in Norfolk will always want to get their information about Council services face to face, and provided locally.

These people tend to be older and may have a disability, so the way that we provide the information may well have to be more targeted and specific to their needs.

Norfolk County Council, and its partners in District, Town and Parish Councils, have been working with other agencies on how this might be organised.

Starting with two market towns - Aylsham and Swaffham - the group has been working with locally based staff, elected councillors, more than 1,000 local people, and even children in schools.

Ideas which are being considered are

- Developing a ‘county council shop’ in market towns
- Improving existing facilities, such as library or town hall information points
- Providing an information point in partnership with other agencies such as district or town councils, post offices or local partnerships
- Using existing local staff - such as home care assistants, youth and community staff or education staff - as information officers
- Developing local ‘advocates’ to provide a link to services for a group of parishes.

The pros and cons of each of these ideas are being discussed before we put together fully costed plans to develop one or more of them.

To find out more, or include your views or suggestions, please contact Anna Graves (01603) 223254, or email: anna.graves.pt@norfolk.gov.uk

The suggestions will be publicised more fully during July, with County Councillors considering the final recommendations in September.

Communications with Town and Parish Councils

Our relationship with Town and Parish Councils is important to us. Communication is one of the main aspects of any relationship and we are currently looking at ways that we can improve.

As a first step we invited a small group of Parish and Town Council Clerks to keep a record of all the correspondence we sent them. We then met with them at County Hall to find out what their main communications issues were. This was a very fruitful discussion where lots of positive suggestions for improvements were made.

We tested these suggestions by sending a questionnaire to Town and Parish Clerks. We have now received 186 replies and are analysing these, ready to report back in the next edition of Norfolk Matters.

Clerks, who receive most of the information we send out, have been the main focus for our work, but we are also keen to hear the views of Parish and Town Councillors. To request a questionnaire or make comments about communications, please contact Anne Tansley Thomas on (01603) 222844, e-mail anne.tansley-thomas.cex@norfolk.gov.uk

Parish transport grant

Plenty of Parish Transport Grant money is still available so we’d like to hear from you!

The grant is aimed at Parish and Town Councils for small-scale projects which tackle unmet transport needs. To date four grants have been awarded to Norfolk for projects covering 12 parishes.

For more information about PTG contact Sarah Durrant at the Countryside Agency on 01223 354462, or call Susan Saxby (western Norfolk and Breckland) on 01760 725794 or Emma Luxford (covering northern, eastern or southern Norfolk) on 01603 703336.

Application packs are available by calling 0870 333 0170

As well as the two rural taxi schemes awarded grants last year, two further grants have now been made:

Heacham & District Community Car Scheme has received just over£46,000 and is expected to be launched in July. Six Parish Councils were involved in the application.

Diss Express, a new service between Pulham Market and Diss, is expected to start in mid June. The application for £40,000 was made by Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council, although the project brought together four other parishes - Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary, Scole and Thelveton.