

From NNDC

‘Members voted for the three Unitary Council model for Local Government Reform, each proposed council will be c 300k residents. We would be in the East Norfolk Council. Norfolk County Council is proposing one Unitary of c 900k. The Government will decide on the outcome.

Planning

It is anticipated the Inspector will move to finalise the few changes in the new Local Plan. This needs to be signed off by the Planning Inspectorate. Hopefully NNDC will be in a position to adopt by the end of the year.

This means NNDC can now demonstrate a 7.3-year supply of housing land. This gives the council greater control over where and how new homes are built.

Coastal

Work has begun to remove the Japanese knotweed from the clifftops at Overstrand. Discussions are taking place with Weybourne residents as to how to proceed should coastal erosion and flooding impact houses and the car park.

Benefits

In 25/26 NNDC has been allocated £103k for discretionary housing payments of which 37% has been allocated to 42 households. This supports tenancies, those facing homelessness and to stay in the community.

There were 2140 households in the housing list at the end of July. The greatest demand is for one bedroom properties but there are 232 households waiting for 4 beds+. 24 households were assessed as homeless. The most common triggers remain loss of private tenancy, domestic abuse and households no longer being able to stay with friends and family. As of end July there were 54 households in temporary accommodation of which NNDC has 28 units.

Financial Inclusion and Social Prescribing have been combined to form an Early Help and Prevention Service. Social prescribing does cover financial support but is moving towards housing, mental health and relief of isolation. The Financial Inclusion team helps with accessing benefits - the most common attendance allowance, PIP and housing benefit.

The allocation from Government for Disabled Housing adaptation is almost £1.8mill for 25/26. Bathroom adaptations, ramps and stairlifts are the most common adaptations but doors can be widened, kitchens modified etc.

Do come forward if you would like more information about any of this help which is available.

NNDC continues to receive referrals from the NNUH for patients who have been admitted with falls or frailty. The support offered empowers residents to stay safely in their homes, become stronger and more active and

improve their well-being and their income. Most common interventions are for aids and adaptations, benefit advice and safety advice.

Waste and Environment

A film and flexible plastic recycling trial is taking place in North Walsham. Domestic food waste collection will roll out late 2026.

Estates

The Cromer Visitor Centre has been let to a dental practice.

A number of parishes have approached NNDC regarding transfer of assets which may be impacted by Local Government Reorganisation. This will be reviewed soon.

Part of North Lodge Park in Cromer will be used as a pay and display car park.

Finance

The current end of year projection for 25/26 is a surplus of £138k but it is still early days. This is mostly due to staffing savings and additional income.

Sustainable Growth

The in year allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£400k) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (£440k) is supporting businesses and communities to address identified local challenges. One is addressing fuel poverty through promoting energy efficiency for households. You can apply for support for this via the website or myself.

There is High Street and Town Centre support available.

Regarding tourism, it seems visitor numbers are up but spend down.

Customer Support

Use of online forms to contact NNDC is up 50% on last year.'

Mobile connectivity

Presently Norfolk as a whole is supposedly ranked 86 out of 96 areas for mobile coverage with Vodafone being pretty poor on 5G delivery in Norfolk (0.3% coverage). EE and Three are leading the 5G rollout, with coverage in over 100 towns and cities each. EE has committed to full nationwide 5G coverage by 2028, and Three is on a similar trajectory. O2 currently covers 94 towns and cities and had aimed for 50% population coverage by 2023. No firm date for full coverage has been announced. Vodafone has 5G in 94 towns and cities, but its rollout in rural areas like Coastal Ward is slower and will inevitably lag behind easier wins in urban and 360degrees coverage areas. I understand Vodafone is supposedly not expected to provide terrestrial 5G more widely to rural areas such as Coastal Ward until 2028/2029.

Vodafone, in partnership with AST SpaceMobile, is preparing to launch a satellite-based mobile broadband service by 2026. This service aims to provide 2G, 4G, and 5G connectivity directly to standard smartphones, especially in areas with poor terrestrial coverage. These Direct-to-Device (D2D) satellite services are being supported by Ofcom, which is currently consulting on regulations to enable their use. The aim is to improve coverage in remote areas and provide backup connectivity during terrestrial outages. Other mobile network operators (MNOs) may also participate in satellite-based services, but Vodafone is supposedly the most advanced in its plans.

Norfolk County Council has mapped mobile coverage across Norfolk using refuse lorries. This covers EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. You can see the findings - very different from what the providers say - on <https://app.streetwave.co/coverage-checker/norfolk-council/map>

This information is a step in the right direction but I'm not sure is sufficiently detailed. NNDC is calling in the mobile network providers in January to discuss why coverage is so poor and what can be done about it.

Broadband connectivity

It's difficult to get dates from Openreach for broadband upgrades to full fibre for villages. Openreach says issues with broadband speeds need to be reported directly to your provider in the first instance and hopefully this will inform and speed up the upgrade process.'

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