

NCC report March 2025- Judy Oliver

Budget

The Council has approved a balanced budget for the 2025/26 fiscal year,

Key details are:

The council has a gross expenditure budget of £2.2 billion (£1.7 billion excluding schools). This includes:

- £700 million for Adult Social Care
- £367 million for Children's Services (non-schools)
- £283 million for Infrastructure
- £44 million for Communities and Environment
- £46 million for Fire Services

£572 million is the amount raised through Council Tax to fund the services provided by the council.

The 2025/26 budget includes an increase of £121 million, which covers:

- £31 million for inflationary pressures
- £35 million for legislative pressures (including the increase in the National Living Wage and higher Employers National Insurance contributions)
- £15 million for demand and demographic pressures
- Over £25 million to cover recurrent overspends from Adult and Children's Services in 2024/25.

While costs have risen by £121 million, funding has only increased by £32 million. The Government has eliminated the Rural Services Delivery Grant and reallocated funds from rural to metropolitan areas. To balance the budget, savings of £45 million will be implemented.

Council Tax: For 2025/26, Council Tax will increase by 4.99%, which includes a 3% rise for general Council Tax and a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care precept. A Band D household will pay £1,755.63 per year, or around £34 per week, for County Council services in 2025/26.

Local government reform

Norfolk will receive new powers and funding under devolution and local government reform. Ministers are aiming for a devolution that covers both Norfolk and Suffolk, including the creation of an elected mayor. As previously mentioned, they also plan to replace the existing "two-tier" system of services provided by both county and district councils, with unitary authorities.

Parish Partnership scheme

For the 2025/26 programme, Norfolk County Council plans to contribute £425,476, enabling a total investment of £848,702 for local projects with contributions from town and parish councils.

Highways capital programme

There is an additional £15 million from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the programme this year and with this extra funding, an additional 100 miles of roads in Norfolk will be resurfaced this year to help prevent potholes and provide additional resources for local repairs and patching.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship starts with Norfolk businesses and organisations increased by 11% in the first three months of the 2024/25 academic year, compared to a national increase of less than 1.5%. From 1 August to 31 October 2024, there were 2,025 new apprenticeship starts in Norfolk, marking a rise of 199 from the same period in 2023/24.

Apprenticeships Norfolk reports growth across all age groups, with starts up by 7.4% for those aged 16-18, 9.6% for 19-24-year-olds, and 14.6% for those aged 25 and over.

Household hazardous waste days

Additional household hazardous waste events will be held across the county this year. These events will take place at seven recycling centres this spring, supplementing the usual autumn events. The free events will be held throughout April and May 2025, and residents must use the recycling centre booking system to attend. Bookings will open one week before each event.

The events are exclusively for residents disposing of hazardous household waste. They are not open to businesses, groups, or other organisations.

There are no events in our local recycling centre but residents can visit any of the sites offering this service the nearest ones being on 2 and 3 May at Norwich North and 9 and 10 May at Hempton.

A list of acceptable items for disposal at the hazardous waste days can be found here: www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste

Employment

In Norfolk, 109,100 individuals (20.6%) aged 16-65 were classified as economically inactive in 2024, 1.5% higher than post-COVID and 30,100 (27.7%) had long-term sickness, compared to 23.7% in 2019. This is above the East of England's figure of 25.9% and the UK average of 27.2%. However, of those economically inactive in Norfolk, 32.5% (32,500 people) reported wanting a job, which is higher than the average in the East of England (18.6%) and the UK (17.6%).

'Connect to Work' is an initiative within the *Get Britain Working* strategy, aimed at linking health and employment services to achieve both improved employment outcomes and better health. The programme is expected to support up to 4,300 Norfolk residents from October 2025 to March 2030 and will primarily focus on supporting disabled individuals, those with long-term health conditions, and others with complex barriers to employment who wish to work. The programme aims to reduce economic inactivity and drive inclusive economic growth.