

George Boyd: County Councillor's Report

Waveney Valley Division

November 2026

Devolution: what happens next

You may have seen reports that the Government could change the date of the mayoral elections, currently scheduled for May 2028. No formal change has been announced, so the position remains uncertain.

Norfolk County Council has renewed its consent to proposals for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA), reaffirming support for a devolution deal worth over £1.1 billion in long-term investment funding. The proposed MSA would take responsibility for areas including transport, skills, housing and economic growth, with the aim of bringing decision-making and funding closer to local communities.

The renewed consent follows changes to the Government's devolution framework and mayoral election timetable, and recommendations from the Strategic and Corporate Select Committee. Potential benefits include improved transport coordination, more locally tailored skills and employment programmes, a joined-up approach to housing and infrastructure, and a stronger regional voice in negotiations with Government. Suffolk County Council is expected to consider its own renewed consent in November.

Update on Norse Care

The decision was made not to proceed with the proposed sale of Norse Care and its 20 care homes to Stow Healthcare.

Following a review, councillors concluded the sale was not in the best interests of Norfolk residents and taxpayers and are now exploring alternative, locally focused options.

Services at Norse Care's 17 operational care homes will continue as normal while future arrangements are considered. Residents, families and staff remain at the heart of decision-making, with continuity of care continuing to be the priority.

Further updates will be shared as work progresses.

£140 million Business Investment Fund for East of England

A new £140m Investment Fund for the East of England has been launched by the British Business Bank.

The fund aims to increase the supply of early-stage finance for smaller businesses across the East, by providing funding to businesses that might otherwise not receive investment and helping to break down barriers in access to finance.

The fund aims to drive sustainable economic growth by supporting innovation and creating local opportunities for new and growing businesses. The East of England Investment Fund offers two commercial finance options:

- **loans** ranging from £25,000 to £2 million (fund managed by Eastmeare Finance)
- **equity** investments of up to £5 million (fund managed by Mercia Ventures)

You can read more about the East of England Investment Fund here: https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-options/nations-and-regions-investment-funds/east-of-england-investment-fund

Norfolk County Council challenges new rules on planning decisions

Norfolk County Council has formally challenged new Government planning regulations which came into force on 31st October 2026, arguing they could reduce local democratic oversight of planning decisions. The council has agreed to amend its constitution to comply with the new rules but has written to the Secretary of State, Angela Rayner, expressing concerns that councils will lose flexibility over which planning applications can be determined by elected members at committee.

The changes remove local arrangements that automatically refer applications to committee, such as councillor call-in rights or referral based on a set number of objections. The Government claims the reforms will create a more consistent national system and allow committees to focus on the most significant applications, while the council maintains that local knowledge and democratic accountability should remain central to planning decision-making.

Budget Consultation 2027-28

Norfolk County Council has launched a six-week public consultation on its proposed 2027-28 budget, running from 26 October to 7 December 2026. The council is forecasting a £35.9m budget gap, driven by increasing demand for adult social care and children's services, inflation, and reduced government funding. Residents are invited to comment on council tax levels and 86 proposed savings and efficiency measures worth £32.3m. Feedback will be considered before the council sets its final budget in February 2027.

Find out more and have your say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget

Broads Authority Appointment

I am pleased to have been appointed by Norfolk County Council as one of its representatives on the Broads Authority. In this role, I will help represent the interests of Norfolk residents in discussions and decisions affecting the Broads, including matters such as conservation, planning, navigation, tourism and the local environment.

If you are a resident, businessperson, or boat owner with any concerns, suggestions or issues relating to the Broads that you would like to bring to my attention, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I welcome hearing your views.

Contact Me

As always, I encourage residents to contact me with any local concerns or initiatives they would like me to assist with:

Email: george.boyd.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Phone: 01603 224263

In most cases, the best way to contact me is via email. Please include as much detail as possible so that I can effectively assist you with your enquiry.