



Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Fakenham Town Council

24th January 2024

Fakenham Library

The renovation works at Fakenham Library are now finished and the building now has a new roof, improved heating (utilising heat pumps) and replacement windows. The building is now warm and watertight for users and marks a significant investment by the County Council to ensure the future provision of library and related services for the town and out-lying communities.

Norfolk County Council updates

Public Health

NHS Health checks – January campaign

All County Councillors are being asked to promote the public health campaign in Norfolk, aimed at increasing the number of NHS health checks, which was launched this week (on 22nd January 2024).

The January awareness campaign encourages residents to look after their health in the New Year with an NHS Health Check. The campaign targets those areas in Norfolk with high deprivation and low take up rates of NHS Health checks.

The key message is **Stay healthy, book your free NHS Health Check today.**

- Anyone aged 40-74 without a long term health condition is eligible for an NHS Health check.
- It is a free check-up of overall health and can tell whether you're at higher risk of getting health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease and stroke.
- Prioritising prevention is one of the four strategic priorities for the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System, and our Public Health Strategic Plan 2022-27 sets out the ambition for increased access and take up of Public Health prevention services such as the NHS Health Check.

I encourage everyone who can to:

- Spread the word within your communities about the importance of getting an NHS Health Check.

- Signpost people you think might be interested in a health check to the website at [NHS health checks - Norfolk County Council](#)
- Share any social media posts from Norfolk County Council on platforms you may use such as Facebook and X

Smokers urged to switch to vaping to cut tobacco use

Members of the County Council are being asked to endorse proposals that would continue to see vaping promoted as an **alternative** to smoking, amid concerns that public perception is putting people off vaping as a tool to quit smoking.

Members of Norfolk County Council's People and Communities Select Committee met on 19th January, where they received an update on the Council's approach to vaping – including an emphasis on promoting vapes for smokers but discouraging vaping in those that do not smoke. They were asked to endorse proposals, created in partnership with the Norfolk Tobacco Control and Vaping Alliance, which support Norfolk residents to achieve 'healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives' by reducing preventable illness and deaths from smoking tobacco. Vaping is considered less harmful than smoking and people use it as one way of quitting harmful tobacco.

At the same time because the impact of vaping on health is not fully understood, the Council is taking measures to help prevent non-smokers from taking up vaping and to prevent the illegal sale of vapes to children and young people.

- The County Council recently developed a vaping toolkit for schools, providing high quality self-serve guidance and resources to help schools implement a whole-school approach to addressing the increasing challenge around vaping.

Adult Social Care

Supporting people to live independently is at the heart of Norfolk County Council's proposed five-year strategy for Adult Social Care, as the council reshapes its approach based upon feedback received from residents and service users.

- Members of the People and Communities Select Committee last week supported the proposed strategy which focuses on three key areas – prevention and early help, supporting people to live independently, and ensuring there is the right support for people with multiple and complex needs.

The strategy will now need to be considered by the council's Cabinet and Full Council before it can be fully adopted.

Dentistry briefing

NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB held an on-line briefing this morning (24th January) to update councillors from across Norfolk and Waveney on the challenges facing dentistry and the actions they are taking to stabilise services and to start to improve access.

It presented an opportunity for councillors to contribute to influence the development of the ICB's longer-term plans for dentistry. The meeting was chaired by the Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt, Chair of NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board.

Government updates

Street works proposals – government consultation

The Department for Transport has opened a public consultation on Street works: fines and lane rental surplus funds.

The consultation is on a series of proposals to prevent utility companies from letting roadworks overrun and clogging up traffic as a result. This is one of the first key measures from the government's Plan for Drivers that was published in October 2023.

The government says that the proposals would crackdown on disruptive roadworks. could ease congestion for millions of drivers, cut journey times, and generate up to £100 million extra to resurface roads. The [street works consultation](#) will close on 11 March 2024.

Ofsted report – children with complex needs

More than 9 out of 10 local authorities frequently struggle to find homes for children with complex needs, according to a new report from Ofsted.

Ofsted warns that many children with complex needs are living alone in homes, often with high numbers of staff, which risks leaving them isolated and vulnerable to mistreatment.

The report finds that most local authorities struggle to find homes for children with complex needs, with children sometimes waiting years for a suitable placement. It also highlights the common practice of local authorities and homes working together that has resulted in good experiences for children.

Key messages include that supporting children with complex needs requires consistent, integrated input from various services and often for a long time. For this to work well, investment is needed to tackle the lack of staff in workforces across social care, health services, mental health, education and wider services. More staff, and a more stable workforce, are needed to provide better experiences for children. The report also calls for greater strategic oversight over the children's residential sector to make sure homes open in the right locations and meet children's needs.

Environment Improvement Plan – annual progress report

The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) has published its report on the government's environmental improvement plan.

Dame Glenys Stacey, chair of OEP, has said in the report that if action is not taken England will fail to meet its goal of halting nature's decline by 2030, as well as a host of other vital nature targets.

The report showed that only four of 40 targets for England are likely to be achieved by 2030, with 11 partly on track and 10 largely off track. These targets are legally binding and make up part of the 2021 Environment Act, passed to replace EU law.

Tom FitzPatrick **County Councillor for Fakenham Division**

(Comprising of Dunton, Fakenham, Helhoughton, Hempton with Pudding Norton & Testerton, Raynham and Tattersett)

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