

Councillors Update Sept 13th 2026

Norfolk County Council Updates

I think we're all pleased that the Government will not press ahead for the moment with splitting Norfolk into three unitary councils.

Record-breaking month for fire and rescue incidents in Norfolk

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service attended 1,295 incidents in August 2026, making it the busiest month in the history of the service. The increase was largely driven by hot, dry weather, with this summer declared the hottest on record and five heatwaves affecting Norfolk. The figure for 2026 was nearly 400 more incidents than the service attended last year in August (1,027), an increase of 26%, and close to double five years ago in August 2021 (705).

The unprecedented number of callouts for fire crews in the county was largely down to the hot and dry conditions across Norfolk in August and the preceding months. Conditions led to summer 2026 being declared as the UK's hottest on record, including the declaration of five heatwaves for Norfolk.

During one of those heatwaves, on Thursday 13th August, NFRS declared a major incident for the county, due to the number of large incidents happening across Norfolk at the same time which were putting a strain on emergency resources.

Significant incidents included fires at Mousehold Heath, Kenninghall, Bryant's Heath, Kelling Heath, Plumstead Road East and Thomas Bullock CE Primary Academy.

National Updates

England's mayors to be given power to introduce tourist tax

Government plans to give elected mayors in England the power to introduce an overnight visitor levy, known as a tourist tax, on accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs and holiday lets.

Mayors would be required to set out by March 2028 how any revenue raised would be spent.

Growing pressures in SEND

Schools and councils are reporting a significant surge in applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), as families seek to secure support before planned government reforms to the SEND system take effect.

Projections suggest that demand could rise to almost one in ten children by 2029. Currently, one in 20 school-age children in England has an EHCP. School leaders are already reporting an extraordinary increase in assessment requests.

Proposed reforms aim to provide earlier intervention and greater support within mainstream schools, while reserving EHCPs for children with the most complex needs from 2030 onwards.

The sharp rise in EHCP applications nationally reflects the challenges Norfolk is seeking to address through its SEND Inclusion Plans, which aim to strengthen support in mainstream settings and improve inclusive provision.

Chancellor 'Growth Speech'

The Chancellor, John Healey, set out the government's plans ahead of next month's Budget in his 'Growth Speech' this week.

Notably, The Chancellor reaffirmed the commitment to existing fiscal rules and to balancing day-to-day spending with revenue. Also stressed was the need to control government spending and reduce the burden of debt interest payments. It was suggested that economic growth would be key to achieving stronger public finances.

The Chancellor also announced that a roadmap for fiscal devolution would be published at the Budget. Also proposed were greater business rates retention and a share of local income for mayoral authorities from 2028, arguing that local leaders are best placed to unlock regional growth opportunities.