

Norfolk Parish Councillor town hall – Ask us anything, 3 September

Thank you to everyone who joined our webinar. Below is a summary of the main topics discussed. We are following up separately on a number of location-specific questions that required further investigation.

Water resources, drought and future supplies

What we heard

- Concerns about drought, hosepipe restrictions and future water availability.
- Questions about reservoirs, desalination and whether growth will outstrip available water resources.

What we said

- The Temporary Use Ban was introduced to protect river levels and maintain water supplies during an exceptionally dry year.
- We are investing in long-term water resilience through two proposed reservoirs, desalination schemes and our strategic water pipeline.
- We continue to reduce leakage, install smart meters and promote water efficiency.
- Restrictions will remain under review and will only be lifted when water resources and river levels have sufficiently recovered.

Growth and infrastructure

What we heard

- Concerns that housing growth is happening faster than water and wastewater infrastructure can be upgraded.

What we said

- We support sustainable growth but are not a statutory consultee on most planning applications.
- We use local authority growth forecasts to plan future investment through our Water Resources Management Plan and Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan.
- Significant investment is underway across Norfolk to support growth, improve resilience and enhance environmental performance.

Storm overflows, river health and the environment

What we heard

- Questions about storm overflows, river quality and what is being done to improve the environment.

What we said

- We are investing £1 billion by 2030 to reduce storm overflow spills, including £106 million at 34 locations in Norfolk.
- River health is influenced by multiple factors, including physical river modifications, agricultural runoff and wastewater discharges.
- We are working with partners such as Norfolk Rivers Trust on river restoration and catchment improvement projects.

Flooding and surface water

What we heard

- Concerns about flash flooding, rainwater entering sewers and local drainage issues.

What we said

- We are investing in increased storage, network resilience and sustainable drainage solutions.
- Keeping rainwater out of foul sewers is essential to reducing flood risk and storm overflow spills.
- We encourage communities to support sustainable drainage and reduce surface water entering the sewer network.

Leakage and water efficiency

What we heard

- Concerns about visible leaks and the need to use water more efficiently.

What we said

- Extremely dry weather has led to a significant increase in burst mains and leaks.
- We prioritise repairs based on customer impact, safety, environmental risk and water loss.
- We support water-efficient homes, rainwater harvesting and policy changes that would allow greater reuse of water in future developments.

Sewer misuse

What we heard

- Concerns about fatbergs, wipes and blockages affecting local communities.

What we said

- Sewer misuse remains one of the biggest causes of blockages.
- We continue to invest in customer education, monitoring technology and targeted interventions.
- Everyone can help by only flushing the 3Ps: pee, poo and paper, and keeping fats, oils and grease out of drains.

Further information

A number of parish-specific and operational questions required detailed investigation and are being followed up directly with the individuals concerned.

Please also complete our short feedback survey to help shape future engagement with Norfolk parish councils.