



Norfolk County Council

County Councillor Report June 2026

Cllr Kabeer Kher, Yare & Necton

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

Local Government Reorganisation remains one of the most significant issues facing Norfolk. In March 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed, announced the Government's decision to replace the existing two-tier system (Norfolk County Council plus seven district, city, and borough councils) with three new unitary authorities: Greater Norwich Council, East Norfolk Council, and West Norfolk Council. This is subject to Parliamentary approval via a Structural Changes Order, with implementation targeted for April 2028.

The decision followed a consultation process and proposals from various councils. Norfolk County Council had advocated for a single county-wide unitary authority, while most district councils supported three unitaries. Concerns have been raised about the Minister's decision reportedly going against civil service advice regarding financial resilience, service delivery, and geography.

Judicial Review Developments

On 25 June 2026, Norfolk County Council (under its new Reform UK administration) formally submitted a judicial review application to the High Court challenging the Government's decision-making process. This follows a pre-action protocol letter sent earlier in June. The Council has also instructed officers to pause non-essential work on implementing LGR pending the outcome.

South Norfolk Council has also pursued or signalled legal action, citing concerns over the process and the suitability of the three-unitary model. Similar challenges are being considered or pursued by councils in Suffolk and Essex.

The judicial review is at an early stage. The Court will first decide whether to grant permission for the case to proceed to a full hearing, where the lawfulness of the Government's decision-making (including consultation and criteria application) will be examined. Judicial reviews focus on process and legality rather than the policy merits of the decision itself.

The new Reform UK-led administration at County Hall has made clear its strong opposition to the reorganisation, describing it as unnecessary and costly, and is prioritising efforts to preserve the current two-tier structure where possible.

Next Steps and Implications

- The outcome of the judicial review could impact timelines significantly, potentially delaying or altering the reorganisation.
- Regardless of the legal process, I will continue to monitor developments closely and represent local residents' views.
- Residents should be aware that any changes would affect local services, planning, highways, and council tax over the coming years.

As more information emerges - particularly regarding the court's decision on permission - I will provide further updates.

The Royal Norfolk Show



On 24th and 25th June, I attended the Royal Norfolk Show, where I was invited by the [Country Land and Business Association \(CLA\)](#) to speak on their latest report examining critical challenges within the agricultural sector. The report highlighted severe risks surrounding water management, specifically the planning and regulatory barriers farmers face when developing essential infrastructure like reservoirs. Furthermore, it underscored the vital role of agricultural innovation in maintaining the sustainable, productive, and affordable output of high-quality food.

Feedback from the farming community during the session was definitive. Producers are currently navigating a highly volatile operational environment, compounded by political uncertainty, fluctuating fertiliser and energy costs, increased pressures from National Insurance and inheritance tax, retail pricing constraints, and climate volatility.

Local Issues

Speed Limit Changes

I have had a face-to-face meeting with Matt Lines from Highways, Tom Dickerson Cabinet member for Highways and the leader of the council David Bick regarding speed limit changes around the County. The consensus view of the cabinet is that Norfolk roads are now in such a bad state of repair that highway maintenance must now be the priority for spending limited funds improving highways. Speed limit changes will, however, continue to be considered where there is an urgent safety requirement and the request meets the council's criteria for a change.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Community Fund

The Leader has taken the decision that the fund (which was due to launch this month) will not progress for 2026/27 and the funding is being transferred to the Fire and Rescue Service. This is because the Fire and Rescue Service is under pressure, with activity increasing by 73% over the last 5 years, including as a result of extreme weather events and lithium-ion batteries. This has left the service unable to manage within their agreed budget, and facing an unsustainable position. Taking this decision means that we can remove some of this risk and uncertainty and increase our confidence that the service is able to focus on keeping us safe and saving lives.

However, that does not mean that the value of community activities the VCSE sector is not recognised, and the Council will shortly be launching a £3.25m grant funding scheme for the VCSE sector, funded by the Crisis and Resilience Fund. In addition, Parish councils can continue to apply to District Councils for Section 106 funds or their share of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Members Fund

The Leader has taken the decision that the Highways Local Member Fund for the current 2026/27 financial year will not continue for new proposals. Instead, the funding will be reallocated to highways maintenance which will deal with the priority issues of tackling the existing Highways Maintenance backlog and undertaking more preventative highways maintenance work to reduce the numbers of potholes forming in the future.

These are key issues for all of Norfolk's residents and businesses and is a more efficient way of delivery. I appreciate there will be some disappointment as the many small local highway improvement schemes may not be delivered as quickly as before or even not at all, but the importance of more investment in highway maintenance is essential. This will also affect new speed limit requests, which may have been funded from this fund in the past. However, those schemes still being developed and delivered from the 2025/26 allocation will remain unaffected and will still be delivered.

Innovation and Tech Conference

Over the last month I have visited some of the innovation centres in Norfolk including Norwich Research Park and Hethel Innovation. This has strengthened my resolve that Norwich needs an annual Tech and Innovation Conference to showcase the dynamism we have in our local economy and foster networks to help them grow, creating well paid jobs for the local community. I am now actively working to ensure the conference is launched in the autumn of 2027. All local innovation and technology companies are invited to apply to be part of the conference.



Norfolk County Council Apprenticeship Fair

On June 16th I attended the Apprenticeship Fair in Norwich, organised by my department, and the largest apprenticeship fair in Norfolk. There were 2,500 young people in attendance interested in apprenticeships. This compares with 900 last year. Youth unemployment is rising fast due to increasing pressures on businesses and I believe we can make a difference by capturing the unused apprenticeship levies from large corporations and transferring them to small businesses to help them train and grow a workforce fit for today's industries. If you know anyone interested in becoming an apprentice or recruiting apprentices then ask them to visit the website below.

[Apprenticeships at Norfolk County Council - Norfolk County Council](#)



The Norfolk Business Board & Norfolk Ambassadors

On 11th and 15th June, I met with the Norfolk Ambassadors and the [Norfolk Business Board](#) to discuss strategic collaboration aimed at driving regional economic growth. As a key stakeholder in both organisations, Norfolk County Council plays a pivotal role in shaping the resulting initiatives. Over the coming months, I will closely monitor these developments to guarantee they deliver strict value for money for taxpayers and achieve clearly defined, tangible goals.



Electrical and Electronic Waste (WEEE) Recycling – Update

You will be aware that Norfolk's recycling centres have, since earlier this year, been unable to accept fridges, freezers and small electrical items following a fire at the treatment facility in Thetford previously used under contract. These waste streams are costly to process and treatment capacity is limited nationally, which has constrained the options available to the council. Following a national allocation process, NCC has appointed Recycling Lives as the new Producer Compliance Scheme contractor for WEEE collection and treatment. A service resumption date of 1st July 2026 has been targeted, and officers are pressing for this to be delivered as a priority. There is a backlog of material at sites, and a risk that service could be disrupted again if downstream treatment markets are not secured, so I would encourage the parish to keep this under review. In the interim, I would ask the council to help advise residents on safe storage of electrical items and batteries, given the associated fire risk, and to direct residents to NCC's recycling centre booking system for up-to-date guidance.