

County Councillor Report: September 2024

DIY Waste charges

I was asked recently about DIY Waste charges as last year the Government made a fuss about banning such charges. In fact it wasn't really a full ban on the charges just a requirement on councils to allow small amounts of DIY Waste to be disposed of free of charge.

The full details of Norfolk County Council's waste disposal charging policy is available to view online here: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/diywaste>

Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance

I received an update from the NSFA recently and I thought you might be interested in their listed up-coming events in case you want to engage with them and the reference to local community flood plans. I engaged with NALC on community plans months ago and back then there seemed to be a difference of view about how advanced the plans were. Hopefully this means Parish Councils will hear more about work to prepare local plans soon:

September 2024 – NALC Event

The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance have a speaking slot at the Norfolk SLCC Branch and CALC event scheduled for the 12th of September at Carrow Road, Norwich. This will give the NSFA team the opportunity to connect with Local council representatives.

Friday 31st January 2025 Flood & Drought Summit, Council Chamber, County Hall

Bringing together a wide range of agencies and stakeholders which have various responsibilities relating to water management. The focus of the summit will be on action, and how we can achieve this through collaborating better with each other. There will be a variety of speakers, including Norfolk County Council as well as representatives from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.

There will be opportunities for networking and to share best practice, with the aim of working to improve outcomes for the residents, businesses and other communities we collectively serve. We expect the summit to be well attended by Norfolk MPs.

Norfolk Resilience Forum/ Communities Prepared

The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance is working with the team at the Norfolk Resilience Forum to ensure lines of communication are open across the alliance of partners and the County of Norfolk is as prepared as it can be for flooding events.

A key part of the resilience planning is ensuring that communities have emergency plans in place. The Norfolk Resilience Forum is working with [Communities Prepared](#) to

help support district councils and communities to put in place appropriate and relevant emergency planning.

SEND funding

Norfolk County Council is being forced to increase spending on support for children with disabilities and additional needs, as a flagship programme feels the strain.

The Council's 'cabinet' (senior Conservative councillors who make the key decisions) will discuss plans to increase spending on the Local First Inclusion programme by £5 million on 2nd September. Local First Inclusion is the county's new plan to reduce demand for 'SEND' support. It gives Norfolk access to the government's Safety Valve funding and the aim is to reduce the cost of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) support in the long-run. In a nutshell, the programme has not delivered the reductions in demand and associated cost-savings that it was supposed to. If you are interested, there is more detail here: <https://edmaxfield.org.uk/2024/08/24/norfolk-send-support-feels-the-strain/>

Youth Justice and Neurodivergence

At the August meeting of the County Council's Scrutiny Committee, we examined the Norfolk Youth Justice Strategy.

This is an important area of work and I suggested much more could be done to make information accessible and more widely seen. I also asked what the Council is doing to focus on those caught in the criminal justice system who have ADHD or similar conditions.

From the few details we know, there appears to be a very high proportion of young people in the criminal justice system who live with conditions like ADHD. There is a need to collect more data. There is also a need to increase understanding of neurodiversity within the system itself. The real, pressing need though, is for there to be a wholesale change in the way society and institutions like schools view neurodiversity so that young people are not marginalised and placed at risk of exploitation because of a condition they live with.

You can read more here: <https://edmaxfield.org.uk/2024/08/25/youth-justice-and-neurodivergence/>

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