

Update from County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Hempton Parish Council

28th January 2021

Planned Roundabout

The timetable for the delivery of this project has unfortunately slipped, due to a number of reasons. Covid 19 has meant that the County and WSP staff are now working from home which has caused some delays. Also, the engineer in charge of the project was promoted and is now working within another design team and has passed the scheme over to WSP to continue and complete and this has had to be factored in with other projects.

The Planning Application is now programmed to be submitted around now and this will be subject to a turnaround of about 16 weeks, which will run into Purdah for the County elections scheduled for May. Allied to this is the Common Land application which typically can take anything from 3 months to 12 months and for project planning purposes, 12 months is scheduled at the outset.

The current schedule is for the contractors to be on site in the late spring to early summer of 2022, which is a delay of one year delay from what was originally proposed. Work on the scheme is still progressing and the team are still liaising with the land owner. I am in contact with the team to ensure that it continues to meet the new delivery date and am ensuring that the proposed speed reductions are included. Also, I understand that the project manager has been in touch with the Parish Clerk and has produced a short item for the newsletter.

Flooding at gas facility opposite the Garden Centre

I advised the highways team about the latest flooding across the pathway and onto the A1065 reported to me last week and asked to have this inspected so that necessary remediation could be put in place to address this recurring problem. Highways arranged a visit by a technician at the end of last week to report on the problem. I am still awaiting feedback on this, but will advise the Clerk once I hear.

Covid update

We are continuing to be in a very fast-moving situation and the focus at the County Council continues to be on delaying the spread of coronavirus and ensuring our services are responding well. This is clearly hugely important and requires full commitment. However, I am pleased to say that other work continues and this includes areas such as improving broadband and mobile phone coverage. Work is continuing on both the SEND school and the supported living project in Fakenham, as well as wider work in supporting residents.

Key messages for residents

- **National lockdown: Stay at home** - Go to [GOV.UK for a full list of restrictions](https://www.gov.uk) and when you can leave your home.

You should always stay local if leaving home - unless it's necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you have any of the [coronavirus symptoms](#) you must self-isolate straightway and [get a test](#). You must continue to isolate if you test positive or are told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

- You can be fined up to £10,000 if you do not isolate. [Get support to self-isolate](#).
- **Slow fall in Covid cases means there is no room for complacency** - Covid cases are starting to fall across Norfolk – but the rate of reduction is slow and we can't ease restrictions yet. That is the message from Norfolk's director of public health, Dr Louise Smith, who is urging people to continue to follow the Government's guidelines and get vaccinated, when an appointment is offered.
- Norfolk's Covid rate has dipped below 400 for the first time in weeks, to 377 per 100,000.

- The vaccination programme is led and delivered by NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- **A COVID-19 vaccination myth buster** is available [here](#)

Government announcements

- **Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus** – On 26 January, the Prime Minister gave a [statement](#) on coronavirus.
 - **New strategy to protect children from sexual abuse** - On 22 January, the Government published a new [national strategy to protect children from all forms of child sexual abuse](#). The Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy sets out how the Government will use new legislation and enhanced technology to stop offenders. The Government will also support local areas to improve their response to exploitation with funding for The Children's Society's Prevention Programme initiative.

Latest vaccination information for Norfolk, from NHS Norfolk and Waveney CCG

- ✓ All 21 PCN sites are now live across Norfolk and Waveney.
- ✓ Last week the Government announced that people aged 70 and over and the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) will begin to be vaccinated, and some local people in these groups are now being invited to have their vaccination; to be clear, we are continuing to prioritise those in priority groups 1 and 2, which is those people aged over 80, health and social care staff and older adult care home staff and residents.
- ✓ By Sunday, 24 January we had offered the vaccine to all care home residents and staff living and working in homes for the over 65s. The only exceptions will be care homes that have or have recently had an outbreak of COVID-19 which has prevented this. New guidance published this week says that vaccinations can continue in homes with outbreaks if a risk assessment is undertaken, which we are doing.
- ✓ By the end of January, we will have offered the vaccine to all over 80s. The vast majority will be done this week, particularly those able to travel to a site or who live in a care home. It may take us a little longer to get to all those who are housebound across Norfolk and Waveney as this is more complicated, but they should still all be offered a vaccine by the end of January
- ✓ If patients have any difficulties in getting to their appointment, or require further assistance or support, they should discuss this with their GP practice or hospital when they are contacted.
- ✓ All GP practices have information about their local community transport schemes who can help patients to get to their vaccination appointments.
- ✓ Norfolk County Council has some information here: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus/vaccinations>
- ✓ Transport Plus is the last resort service in Norfolk, more details can be found here: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-transport/transport-plus>
- ✓ Caring Together is offering support to carers in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk, to enable them to access the COVID-19 vaccine. More information is available here: <https://www.caringtogether.org/coronavirus-covid-19/support-for-carers-to-attend-covid-19-vaccinations>

- ✓ Please do not contact your GP practice or hospital to request a COVID-19 vaccine. You will be contacted when it's your turn to be vaccinated.
- ✓ You can find out more information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme on the NHS Norfolk and Waveney CCG website: www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination-programme.

Social care and health

- **Social prescribing** - In 2019, Norfolk County Council funded a two-year pilot to test the idea of social prescribing in Norfolk. The one-off funding came jointly from public health and from adult social services. Jointly we then were able to fund a one-year extension to the pilot. During that time, social prescribing has delivered some excellent work and helped circa 18,000 people across Norfolk. The NHS has recognised the value of social prescribing and nationally, £0.740m has been made available to all Primary Care Networks (PCNs) for social prescribing. NCC funding will end in March 2021, although we are still working with all partners on the development of a strong Norfolk social prescribing offer. Particularly making sure we make good links with our funding for people who are lonely and isolated. We are pleased that some PCNs in Norfolk have taken up the NHS funding and will be taking on the existing workforce; others have chosen to use the funding in a different way and so will not be able to take on the existing social prescribing workforce. Alongside this, we are continuing to fund our successful social isolation and loneliness service, when the original three-year contract ends on March 21. This service is delivered by Community Action Norfolk, Voluntary Norfolk's Better Together and Lily. We will be working with them to develop the service going forward. If you need any further information about this, then please do get in touch with Chris Scott (chris.scott@norfolk.gov.uk)
- **Brain in Hand Pilot** – With funding from Norfolk and Waveney Health and Care Partnership ([the STP](#)), we will be running a 12-month technology pilot which will help people stay independent and in control of their lives. The Brain in Hand smart phone 'app' will be trialled in Learning Disability services and in our Preparing for Adult Life service. The app has already been used elsewhere by local authorities supporting individuals with autism or Mental Health needs.
- **Carers Matter** – To improve carers access to information and support, there is a dedicated central resource on our Norfolk Community Directory - [Support for Carers | Norfolk Community Directory](#). With a full-time Carers Lead now in post, we are working closely with carer organisations to understand the support they are providing carers with during lockdown, and ensuring this information is shared with our front-line staff to promote with carers.

Support includes:

- ✓ Continuing with and increasing the number of virtual cuppas that are available so that carers can meet online and chat
- ✓ Using the Health and Wellbeing fund to finance activities for these groups
- ✓ Working with NCC on data sharing to try and get the Caring Together wellbeing packs out to carers
- ✓ Working with volunteers to complete welfare checks over the phone with carers on the caseload
- ✓ A digital inclusion programme run by volunteers which identifies carers that need support accessing things virtually and gives them training on using tablets.
- ✓
- **Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)** – Norfolk County Council has co-produced a document, Norfolk Positive Lives, outlining expectations for learning disability supported living and residential providers to use PBS. Recognised as a best practice framework for behaviours of concern, PBS is person centred and can provide long-term support to people with a learning disability and/or autism who have (or may

be at risk of developing) behaviours that challenge. We are also working with The British Institute of Learning Disabilities to offer free Positive Behaviour Support training to interested providers.

Education, schools and settings

- **Schools' attendance information** is being received regularly from almost all schools. There has been a slight increase in the number of school unable to complete the survey on a daily basis which is indicative of the pressure schools are under with reduced capacity. We are following up where schools do not complete the survey. Last week the response rate from Norfolk schools was between 86%-88%. Almost all schools are fully open to vulnerable children. Attendance overall last week was 20% in primary schools, 5% in secondary schools and 29% in special schools. Attendance of children of critical workers is 65% (64% in primary, 65% in secondary). Attendance of children with a social worker is 41% (50% in primary, 27% in secondary) and of children with an EHCP is 30% (42% in primary, 21% in secondary). All schools report that they are meeting the DfE expectations for remote learning in full.
 - Across Norfolk, 9 schools closed due to Covid related reasons for at least one day last week.
- **Free School Meals** - Norfolk County Council has extended its free school meal voucher scheme to make sure no child goes hungry this February half term. A child from a family that receives benefits is eligible for a £15 voucher for the week. The last time the voucher scheme ran over the Christmas period, Norfolk County Council issued more than 27,000 vouchers and we are estimating the uptake will be similar this half term. Schools can order the supermarket gift cards for pupils using an online service and families can receive the codes by email to redeem themselves or as a gift card provided by post, collection or delivery to families without internet access. Some schools may also be offering food parcels, parents and carers should contact their school office to see what they are providing.

Children are eligible for the vouchers if their family receives one of the benefits listed below:

- Universal Credit - with an annual earned income of no more than £7,400 after tax
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual gross income of no more than £16,190

Children in years reception to two that receive Universal infant Free School Meals are not eligible as part of the scheme; they have to be eligible for means-tested Free School Meals. For more information and to apply for free school meals, people should visit the Norfolk County Council [website](#).

- **Digital devices for online learning** - Our **Every Child Online** campaign for digital devices for children and families, launched on Friday 22 January via EDP. Since the launch, £170k has been raised and donations continue to be received. After the campaign launched last week, Hethel-based Lotus made a huge donation of 625 brand new Chromebooks which will bring families up to speed with home learning. It is estimated that Norfolk's 430 schools and academies need around 6,000 devices and at least 1,000 households with school-age children are unable to connect to the internet. The campaign gives two ways to step up and help.
 - ❖ Businesses and organisations can give pre-used corporate devices to the county council for refurbishment and distribution to schools. To donate email devices@norfolk.gov.uk
 - ❖ Individuals and businesses can give funding to the NCF to be spent on new laptops and tablets and internet connections. To donate visit <https://www.norfolkfoundation.com/every-child-online/>
- **Post 16's** - Young people Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET) has risen slightly in the last week and is now at 4.45% (766 young people). Our Unknowns have further reduced to 1.2% and we continue to track young people who have dropped out of education to confirm their current status. A

meeting is being arranged to explore developing a bid for NEET provision with East Coast College. LA and colleges are aligning lists of the vulnerable students in FE to ensure continuing attendance.

- **Early Years** - Currently there are 650 open settings with 8,521 children attending, which includes 3390 children of critical workers, of which 435 are vulnerable. Of those 142 are children with a social worker and 68 children with an EHCP. There are no sufficiency issues.
- **Adult Learning bucks national trend as participation and achievement rise in 2020** - Norfolk has seen an increase in adults taking on new qualifications in 2020, despite a decline across the rest of the country. Norfolk County Council's Adult Learning service saw participation in qualification courses increase by 12%, compared to a fall of 19% in the rest of the country. Their students also improved their scores by 3% which reversed the national trend where the rate of achievement has dropped by 24%.

In Norfolk, 31% of adult learners progressed into Further or Higher Education while 28% are in employment. Meanwhile, 100% of the service's apprentices who completed their apprenticeship have remained in valuable long-term employment. Anyone who wants to make the next step in their education, further their career options or just learn a new skill can check out the latest course on the [Adult Learning Website](#). [Read the full story here](#).

Business and economy

- **Norfolk Knowledge Hub** - Norfolk County Council has worked together with the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce over the last few months to develop the new Norfolk Knowledge Hub. It is designed to deliver virtual business support via its free to access digital platform. Any business or individual can log on to the hub which is completely free to use, so there are no membership fees, and it contains no sales adverts, just the latest advice and support to help Norfolk businesses, employees and individuals at this challenging time. Information is available as videos and podcasts, as well as traditional written articles.

This one-stop-shop will be the place to find up to date and relevant information in easy to understand, bitesize chunks. Our aim is to cut through the myriad of information that is out there, making it more straightforward for businesses, employees and individuals to access impartial, genuine, trustworthy, practical, useful support and information, which has been pre-moderated, and is gathered together all in one place. The hub which is easily accessible via the website or by downloading a smartphone app, is a place where people can learn, exchange and share knowledge, experiences and ideas and create new business connections.

The Norfolk Knowledge Hub can be found at www.norfolkknowledgehub.co.uk or on the App store. You can also join in the conversation on social media using #KnowledgeHour

Thanks to Norfolk County Council's support, the Chamber of Commerce secured a grant of £113,000 from the Norfolk Strategic Fund to develop this exciting new platform.

- **Kick Start Scheme** - The Government has [announced](#) that, from 3 February 2021, it is to make it simpler for employers of all sizes to benefit from joining the scheme by removing the limit requiring they create a minimum of 30 vacancies to apply directly. The scheme, which has been underway since September, aims to help to put young people who have been some of the hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic on the first rung of their career ladder.
 - **Webinars, videos and tools for businesses** - The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published a series of short, on-demand videos to support businesses following the end of the transition period. Topics covered include importing and exporting, rules of origin, audit and accounting, and registration is needed to access the video content. Register: <https://www.workcast.com/register?cpak=1070296099921910>
- The Business Partnerships Team has also produced a [toolkit](#) to help businesses to take action and to encourage others in their sectors and supply chains to do so by sharing messages on social media and other internal channels.
- **Funding to get more young people into work** – The Government has [announced](#) that employers can now [apply for a £1000 cash boost](#) to help them take on new trainees. The new scheme will support young people to gain the skills and experience they need from the very start, helping them to get a job,

an apprenticeship, or pursue further study. The cash boost – which is available until 31 July 2021 - will help businesses with the cost of providing a high-quality work placement for a trainee.

County Budget proposals

➤ **Budget proposals unveiled** - Despite Covid and “extremely challenging” pressures, the county council has developed budget proposals to lead Norfolk’s recovery next year. That’s the message from a report to Norfolk County Council’s cabinet, which outlines tax, spending and investment proposals for the year from April. The meeting will consider two reports:

- The proposed £439 million revenue budget – spending on services and running costs, funded by Council Tax, Business Rates and Government funding. By law, this budget must always be balanced
- The proposed £537 million capital budget – spending on infrastructure – funded by Government grants, land sales and borrowing.

The revenue budget report says that the council has seen its Government funding reduce by £92.8 million since 2015, while cost pressures on children’s services and adults’ services rose by £40.1 million, last year alone. The council is proposing to:

- Raise general Council Tax by the Government’s guideline figure – 1.99 per cent – and raise the adult social care precept by two per cent in 2021/22 and one per cent the following year. This would raise the county council’s overall share of Council Tax by 3.99 per cent, increasing the share of band D bills by £56.43 to £1,472.94 for 2021-22.
- Invest £45.7 million to meet cost and other pressures in services, including £28.2 million in adult social care, £7 million in children’s services and £10.5 million in community and environmental services
- Make provision of £18.8 million, set aside for Covid 19 costs in 2021-22
- Make savings of £41.2 million, including a net £20.4 million of new proposals
- Invest £102 million in the capital programme, taking the total infrastructure programme to £537.66 million. New items include £11.5 million for supported housing for young adults, £4 million for children’s residential homes and investment in the Long Stratton bypass, new libraries and green trails. Existing schemes include 500 new special school places, extra care housing for adults, better broadband links and the Great Yarmouth third river crossing.

Cabinet will discuss the revenue and capital reports when it meets at 10am on Tuesday, 1 February. [Read the reports and view the meeting live, or a recording afterwards](#). Once cabinet has met, the budget proposals will be considered by the council’s scrutiny committee on Wednesday 17 February, before the full council takes a final decision on Monday 22 February. [Read the full story here](#).

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28th January 2021