



## **Cllr BILL BORRETT**

### **Parish Report for the Elmham and Mattishall Division**

**January 2025**

#### **Resignation from Cabinet**

You may have seen, in the EDP or heard on Radio Norfolk, that I have stepped down from my position as Cabinet Member for Public Health at Norfolk County Council. I had to do this because I could not support the Leader's position that the Council ask the Government to postpone the Elections due this May. I believe that the will of the residents is paramount and that there was no basis (such as Covid etc.) to justify this request. The elections should go ahead and the chips fall where they may.

The reason given for the delay is "Devolution," the Government is proposing a new single Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, who will take over some of the powers from the Councils and be able to raise their own tax which will be added to your Council Tax.

Phase 2 is the abolition of the County Council and the District Councils and the imposition of new Unitary Councils (probably 2 or 3 for Norfolk). This will mean the end of Norfolk as an entity for the first time in 1000 years.

Here in Breckland it will also mean an increase in your Council Tax in order to equal the amount of tax across the new Unitary Councils. This is because at the moment Breckland's is the cheapest not only in Norfolk but the whole of England.

The Government is proposing that the Elections for the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor could then take place in May 2026.

I will do my best to keep you informed, I am very disappointed that there hasn't been any proper consultation of Residents, and I will continue to push on your behalf for this not to be railed through and for there to be a proper debate.

For more information please see the [English Devolution White Paper](#).

### **In other news: Norfolk County Council uses bin lorries to map mobile coverage in Norfolk.**

Norfolk County Council has launched a new online tool that will help residents to check mobile signal in their area, using data collected from Norfolk's bin lorries.

Last year the council partnered with mobile analysts Streetwave to install monitoring devices on waste collection vehicles across all seven districts in Norfolk.

You can check mobile coverage in your area using the service. [Enter your post code into the online checker](#), or [browse the coverage map](#), which you can filter by network.

These devices measure the quality of mobile networks across the county, collecting data on signal strength and download speeds.

The data covers the four main Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) who are the companies that own and operate the physical infrastructure required for mobile communication services. In the UK they are EE, O2, Three, and Vodafone. Other providers will use one of the MNO networks, for example giffgaff use O2's network, while iD Mobile is based on Three's network. [Check which network your provider uses](#).

The survey devices checked outdoor coverage, with the data from waste collection vehicles supplemented by one fire service vehicle and a backpack-based device used for ad-hoc surveys.

Real-world indoor coverage can be affected by a range of factors, including the construction of a property.

While the data covers many areas of Norfolk it isn't definitive and should be used as an additional tool alongside other sources of information. This information will continue to be updated over time to help everyone make the right choices with the best possible information available.

The results from this coverage checker are taken using mobile handsets that have been physically performing speed and signal strength tests. This differs from the coverage checkers provided by Ofcom or the mobile network operators which are often estimates with limited real-world measurements.

### **Norfolk set to receive highest highways maintenance allocation in the region**

Norfolk is set to receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance this year.

Funding for every local authority across England today can be used throughout 2025/6 on the roads are in most need of repair, and to deliver immediate fixes for communities across Norfolk.

This comes just a few weeks after Norfolk took the top spot for the second year in a row in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey on roads and transport. People from across the county gave Norfolk the highest (above average) score in satisfaction with the condition of the highways.

More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed across Norfolk since April this year and of those 99% were repaired by our contractors within the agreed response times. If you see a pothole - don't assume someone else has reported it. Let us know by completing our online form: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes)

### **Investment and enhancements lead to increased passenger satisfaction on Norfolk's buses**

A recent independent survey through Transport Focus found that overall bus passenger satisfaction in Norfolk has increased by 6% with 87% of passengers satisfied with their journey. That puts Norfolk above the England average of 83%. Norfolk improved in all areas of satisfaction with the biggest improvements being in punctuality and value for money.

Transport Focus is an independent consumer organisation representing the interests of bus passengers across England outside of London. The surveys measure actual passenger experience and provide robust metrics for measuring bus service targets.

Meanwhile the number of people choosing to use the bus continues to grow with almost 7m passenger journeys for the second quarter of the year (May, June, July). That's a 12% increase compared to the same quarter last year.

The improvements are now set to continue with Norfolk County Council being awarded another £15.9m from Government last month to spend in 2025/26. The funding is a mix

of capital and revenue and the council is now working with the Enhanced Partnership and stakeholders to decide where the money should be spent.

### **10 Norfolk schools awarded £5,000 grants to support active travel initiatives**

In early 2024 10 schools across Norfolk received a £5,000 grant to pilot Norfolk County Council's Active Travel Survey. The scheme which has been funded using money received from Active Travel England aims to support schools by introducing new active travel and road safety initiatives for pupils.

The initiative which was open to all schools across the county received 74 applications. Following a review by the Active Travel Team and Road Safety Team 10 applications were chosen at random to receive the funding.

With the funds having needed to have been spent by December 2024, the aim was to have helped more staff, pupils, and families adopt active travel options like walking, cycling, or scooting for school journeys. It also is hoped that they will encourage schools to review their policies and safety plans to foster a lasting culture of active travel and road safety.

The successful schools are:

- St. Nicholas Priory Primary School - Great Yarmouth
- John Grant School - Caister
- East Norfolk Sixth Form College - Gorleston
- Aylsham High School - Aylsham
- Norwich High School for Girls - Norwich
- Ormiston Victory Academy - Norwich
- Springwood High School - King's Lynn
- Bignold Primary School and Nursery - Norwich
- Greyfriars Academy - King's Lynn
- Norwich Road Academy - Thetford

Having been awarded the money in July 2024 we've already seen some amazing uses which are having a positive impact on pupils within the schools.

For more information on active travel and road safety education in Norfolk, please visit [www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/schools](http://www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/schools)

## **Rollout of new fleet of fire and rescue vehicles to continue into 2025**

Four additional tactical response vehicles have rolled into Norfolk as the latest additions as part of a multi-million pound investment by Norfolk County Council to modernise the fire and rescue fleet.

The four Toyota Hilux 4x4s enable firefighters to quickly attend isolated locations and deal with emergencies in spate weather conditions.

At a cost of £175,000, the new fully equipped TRV vehicles, complete with misting units, will be located at Reepham, Acle, Downham Market and North Walsham early in the New Year. They will join the fleet of TRVs already in service at Cromer, Sandringham, Wymondham, Diss and Gorleston, plus a Land Rover at Thetford.

The investment in TRVS is the latest move to provide specialist equipment for Norfolk and comes in addition to the recent £7 million investment of 22 new fire appliances for Norfolk, which replace an ageing fleet that had come of the end of its working life.

Hitting the road over the last 18 months, the new type B Angloco vehicles are now on fire stations at Carrow, Earlham, Sprowston, Dereham, Kings Lynn, Thetford, Great Yarmouth, Hethersett, Attleborough, Wymondham, Diss, Stalham, Aylsham, North Walsham, Holt, Cromer, Fakenham, Downham Market, Watton and Long Stratton. Two others are also in service assisting with training and duty cover. This month, the completion of the project means the final ones have now gone to their home stations.

New wildfire personal protective equipment was recently introduced to enable firefighters the right protection but in a more lightweight form when dealing with intense fires in the hot summer.

Further investment in fleet and equipment, to ensure crews have the best possible resources for all the types of emergencies they face, will be coming into service within the next two years. This includes plans for updated vans for the service's nine hydrant and area technicians, to enable them to have reliable vehicles which contain all they need when out on site.

**If you have any queries, about these or any other topics please don't hesitate to email me on: [bill.borrett@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:bill.borrett@norfolk.gov.uk)**