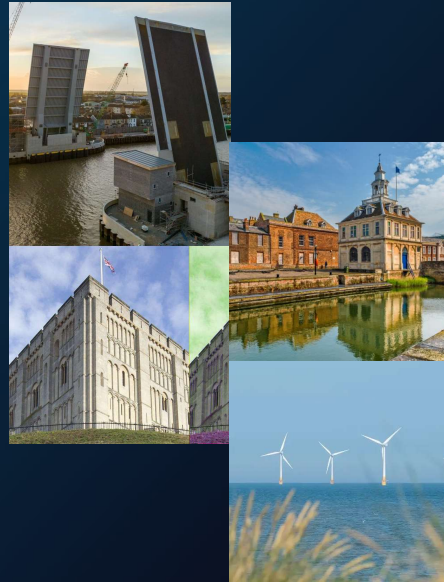


Local Government Reorganisation

One Norfolk. One council.

Summer 2025



Purpose of the session

Today we will aim to:

- provide you with an update on the current status of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk
- explore how a new single council for Norfolk could work in partnership with town and parish councils

We would like to focus the discussion on opportunities for local engagement, collaboration, and a framework or approach for taking on local assets.

Local Government Reorganisation

What is happening?

We have an exciting opportunity to change the way local government works in Norfolk.

Norfolk currently has a two-tier local government system –

- One **county council** manages county-wide services like highways and transport, adult social care, and children's services, spending around £1.6bn annually.
- Seven **district councils (city, borough & district)** handle services such as bin collection, planning and housing, with a combined spend of £284m a year.

The Government wants to **replace existing county and district councils in England with fewer, unitary councils** - which deliver all services in their area. It has asked councils to submit proposals.

Key Dates:

- Deadline for Interim Plan submission
– **21 March 2025**
- Deadline for final proposal submission –
26 September 2025
- Government decision
– **'as soon as possible'**

Local Government Reorganisation

What Norfolk communities told us

Key Themes:

- Efficiency and simplicity
- Protecting Norfolk's natural environment
- Concern about rural areas being overlooked
- Desire to protect local identity



Young people wanted simpler structures, better funding, improved transport, youth services, and education — plus fairness and strong safeguarding.



Town & parish councils stressed the importance of local identity and strong representation, and influence over planning and assets — with worries about funding, council tax, and service disruption.

Top public priorities

- 1 Ensuring council taxpayers get **value for money through efficient services** (67.25%)
- 2 Improving local services (53.31%)
- 3 Avoiding unnecessary fragmentation of services (42.67%)

*968 responses

KEY Themes from residents:

- **Efficiency** – importance of working efficiently, effectively & stopping duplication.
- **Local matters** – importance of local representation. Concern about potential for local needs and identities to be lost, or resources distributed unfairly.
- **Geography** – concerns about rural communities being absorbed into a large urban area and loss of identity.
- **Number of unitary councils** – the most commonly mentioned preference (100) was for a single unitary, compared to three (18) or two (16) councils. Those who mentioned single unitary said it would increase efficiency, remove duplication and not split up services unnecessarily. Others (59) were concerned about a single unitary – weaker local representation and less engagement with decision makers.
- **Environment** – 561 mentioned their love of Norfolk's natural environment, with farming and the local lifestyle also being important. This was a standout theme for respondents.

Town and parish:

- Importance of **local representation and decision making** to ensure that local communities' views and needs are heard and acted upon.
- Concerns about **funding and council tax levels**, and how LGR could affect these.
- **Planning** – importance of town and parish councils being able to represent local views and needs. Also concern about influence of a Mayor in planning decisions and importance of decisions being made locally.
- **Services** – concerns about impact of any change on services. Importance of good co-ordination between departments, and having local highway officers
- **Localism** – want to maintain strong local connections and local representation not to be lost. Smaller towns and villages need to retain their identity.
- Some councils keen to explore opportunities to take on local functions, car parks and toilets most often mentioned.

Our Approach

How we assessed the options

- To identify the best future structure, Norfolk County Council carried out a detailed appraisal of potential unitary models.
- We looked at **5 options** – a single unitary council, three geographical variations of a two unitary council model and a three unitary council model.
- These were assessed against:
 - The government criteria
 - The financial and economic case
 - Impact on services, and
 - The ability to support strong local democracy and engagement
- We are committed to transparency and all the evidence that has supported our thinking is publicly available on our website.



Local Government Reorganisation

What are the options on the table?

All 8 Norfolk Council Leaders	Norfolk County Council	South Norfolk Council	All six remaining district councils
A joint letter highlighting a shared commitment to Government's vision to create alternative structures and ensuring ongoing dialogue.	NCC published draft options appraisal in June 2025, identifying a preferred model: A single unitary council for the whole of Norfolk	South Norfolk Council released an Interim Plan in March– with a two unitary structure proposed: 1. Norwich and East Norfolk – Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Norwich and South Norfolk district areas 2. West Norfolk – Breckland, King's Lynn & WN and North Norfolk district areas)	Joint submission from all six remaining districts, along with an additional document focussing on Norwich, with three unitary option proposed: 1. Greater Norwich on extended boundaries (still being developed) 2. Breckland, King's Lynn & WN, part of North Norfolk 3. Great Yarmouth, remaining areas of Broadland, South Norfolk and North Norfolk

One Norfolk. One council.

Why a single unitary council is right for Norfolk.

One Norfolk. One council

The right choice for our future.

- ✓ **Unlocks £36 million** in annual savings—far beyond the £9 million two councils save or the £12 million extra cost of three—money that can help improve services and build stronger financial resilience.
- ✓ **A single income base ensures fair, efficient, county-wide services**, removing duplication, addressing challenges of uneven demand and postcode lotteries.
- ✓ **One front door and clear accountability creates a simple, seamless experience** for residents accessing all local government services.
- ✓ **Eliminates the risk of breaking up complex, vital services**—ensuring essential support like Adult Social Care and Children's Services, including care for our most vulnerable residents, stays high-quality, sustainable, and protected under any new arrangements.
- ✓ **Aligns local government with key partners—health, police, and more—to strengthen collaboration** and the opportunities to deliver truly joined-up, seamless public services.
- ✓ **One Norfolk. One Council. One Stronger Future.**

What next?

- In advance of the formal submission of the Council's final proposal to Government on 26 September 2025, work will focus on developing this preferred option into a **comprehensive proposal**.
- This will include a plan for ensuring the new council promotes **stronger community engagement** and delivers **genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment**.

This is where you come in.

Town and Parish Councils

- We wrote to all Town and Parish councils in May, inviting them to talk to us about the needs and priorities of parish and town councils and what matters most to people that live in the area.
- Held seven face to face drop in sessions across the county
- Held one online sessions
- Representatives from over 60 parish and town councils attended the events

You told us...

Local engagement & councillor contact is key

- There is a clear desire to maintain strong local connections, relationships with councillors and for local representation to not be lost
- Parish and Town councils need to be able to access advice and assistance to help them to support local residents

Local knowledge and identity should be maintained

- Town and parish councils have a crucial role in representing local views and needs in areas such as planning
- You told us it is important there is a straightforward way to navigate the planning system and processes

You are interested in collaboration opportunities

- Some town and parish representatives told us they were interested in ways councils can come together in hubs or clusters to share, collaborate and develop

You would like to explore greater control over local assets

- We know town and parish councils are all shapes and sizes – but for those who are interested in taking on more local assets or services – where this works for your area – we are keen to support.

Let's talk about local possibilities...

Some councils have told us they're ready to do more locally. Others are cautious, and rightly so. This isn't about shifting responsibilities without support—it's about co-designing a framework that works for you, if and when you want to take on more.

So today, we want to open up a conversation about:

- What kinds of **local assets and services** you might be interested in managing.
- What **support and governance** would need to be in place.
- How we can build a **flexible framework** that respects local identity, capacity, and ambition.

What could be included?

Assets:

- Community centres
- Allotments
- Public toilets
- Local parks and open spaces (green and hard spaces)
- Sports grounds and swimming pools
- Play areas
- Off- and on-street car parking
- Memorials
- Roadside verges and small open spaces
- Leisure and arts centres
- Community libraries and premises

Services:

- Minor road and footpath repairs, lining, signage
- Grass cutting, drainage
- Fly tipping, street cleaning, abandoned vehicles
- Recycling management
- Health & wellbeing (e.g. isolation, befriending)
- Community transport
- Community safety and neighbourhood watch
- Footpath lighting
- Community grants
- Local tourism and economic development
- Local climate initiatives (e.g. green transport schemes)
- Environmental health monitoring and enforcement

