

## District Cllrs Report November 2024

From NNDC

### 'Leisure

NNDC has received confirmation of the funding to allow the Fakenham swimming pool and improved outdoors sports facilities to go ahead.

### Planning

We are making progress in releasing capacity to build new houses through our actions on nutrient neutrality. Currently, this is through upgrading householder's septic tanks to new ones which release less nutrients.

The revisions to the new Local Plan are out for public consultation until Dec 18th. Please visit [www.north-Norfolk.gov.uk/localplanconsultation.This](http://www.north-Norfolk.gov.uk/localplanconsultation.This) will be your last chance to comment so do take part! Further public hearings will take place February 2025.

The local validation list for planning applications ( the documents required for your application to be accepted) is out for public consultation. Search for 'local validation' on the NNDC website.

The October Government budget confirmed funding for an additional 300 local authority planners.

### Benefits

We are still very keen to identify residents eligible for pension credit. To check your eligibility for pension credit go to [gov.uk/pension-credit](http://gov.uk/pension-credit), call 0800991234, or contact the Financial Inclusion team ( [financial.inclusion@ north-Norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:financial.inclusion@north-Norfolk.gov.uk) or 01263516221).

The financial Inclusion team are absolutely the best place to start for any money worries, problems paying bills etc. They also might be able to put you in touch with help to fill your oil tank oil and can help you obtain other benefits and allowances eg disability living allowance. They have claimed over £1.23 mill so far this year for residents.

Households will be contacted by the Benefits Team if they are eligible for payments under the Household Support Fund.

Discretionary housing payments are available for rent arrears, rent deposit and moving costs and on going rent shortfall.

### Housing

As of 31st October 2024, there were 2334 households on the council waiting list, with 489 having the most urgent housing needs. In comparison, only 180 houses were let from 1st April to 31st October. As of 31st August, there were 233 open cases of households at risk of homelessness and 53 households in temporary accommodation (down 23% from last year). NNDC now owns 25 units for temporary accommodation which is far preferable to nightly paid accommodation.

Two rural housing schemes were opened this summer and four more are in build, and new affordable homes are coming on stream in Holt. Planning applications for two large affordable housing sites and with a high percentage of affordable homes have also recently been approved.

The housing adaptation scheme has funding so do please come forward if you need modifications to stay in your own home. Not all grants are means tested so you may be eligible! Urgent home repairs (eg emergency boiler replacement) are also covered. Contact me if you have any questions.

### Environment

Environmental Health are required to inspect 450 food businesses by April 2025 to achieve the targets set by the Food Agency.

Roof mounted solar panels are being fitted to some of our waste collection vehicles to reduce emissions.

#### Net zero

Certain energy suppliers - EDF, E.ON and Octopus for example - are obligated to help households on benefits with energy efficiency upgrades. Check out the 'energy savings tips' page on NNDC's website for more details of this and other schemes.

#### Finance

The forecast for 2024/25 is for a £995k deficit. This is largely made up of additional borrowing costs and the cost of temporary accommodation.

NNDC is still in discussion with NCC as to how a proportion of the additional council tax on second homes can be put towards social housing.

#### Customer service

The average wait time to contact Customer Services at NNDC has been 8 mins 31 secs over the last three months. Luckily this is coming down.'

#### Blakeney Surgery

We should hear soon what the outcome is of the planning application for a 24hr medicines vending machine at Blakeney Village Hall. Although the Surgery was due to close on 7th November 2024, it will remain temporarily open for medicines ordering and collection whilst the final decision on planning is made.

#### Boiler Upgrade Scheme

Through the Government sponsored Boiler Upgrade Scheme you can get a grant of £7.5k towards replacing a fossil fuel heating system with a heat pump, or £5k towards replacing with a biomass boiler. This grant is not means tested. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme/print> for more information.

#### Mobile phone coverage

Regarding mobile not spots, my belief is these are more prevalent than the mobile networks believe. To prove this, it would be good if we could validate the data in Ofcom's mobile coverage checker. You input a postcode and will be shown Ofcom's results for your chosen address. These may not tally with your experience, in which case you can complete a quick survey and let Ofcom know, or email me.

This is the Ofcom coverage checker: <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/mobile-coverage#>.

#### Tech Skills for Life

Norfolk County Council's Tech Skills for Life team can help you with using a phone, tablet or laptop, or even provide you with one to borrow or keep. They can also help you get cheaper broadband and data. Call 01485536420, pop into your local library or email [techskillsforlife@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:techskillsforlife@norfolk.gov.uk).

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