

Annual Report 2024

At Norfolk Council I am on the Infrastructure and Development committee and Chairman of a members working group.

This winter has been the wettest on record for South Norfolk and all of the villages and Harleston that I represent have been badly affected by flooding. Flooding is very worrying for residents, can be dangerous and can happen very quickly so it's vital you know who to contact if you or your community is affected. To report flooding call the Flooding Hotline for Norfolk on 0334 800 8013 or report online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding or if you are in immediate danger call 999.

During the winter months our team of gritting vehicles are on standby, this year we have 27 brand new vehicles so with 14 introduced last year we have 41 gritters equipped with all the latest auto-salting and satellite navigation technologies. This means we can operate more efficiently and economically and contribute to our Net Zero target. Each full gritting run covers 2,200 miles and can be done in 3 hours.

Update on NCCs three major infrastructure projects. The Herring bridge (third river crossing) at Great Yarmouth has recently opened and made an instant impact for access into Gt Yarmouth especially for the port area which is seeing big expansion in the offshore wind energy sector. Work has started on the Long Stratton bypass and is expected to take about 18 months to construct, so improving the A140 and improving the quality of life in around the Long Stratton area. The Norwich Western Link which joins the Broadland Northway (NDR) to the A47 has been awarded government funding for the construction and is now going through the planning approval stage.

Local infrastructure is being supported through our popular Parish Partnership scheme. Just over £1m is due to be spent on 118 highway schemes, including vehicle-activated speed signs, bus shelters and new footpaths. First launched in 2011, the scheme invites communities to bid for cash to make much-needed improvements. This year NCC will put in £470,000 and the Safety Camera Partnership £44,000. Town and parish councils match fund that money to pay the remaining cost of all the schemes – a contribution of about £485,000.

NCC has signed up to a county deal with central government. This means that Norfolk will get devolved powers and will be able to have more influence over funding allocations to the county. It also means that there will be an election in May 2025 for a directly elected leader for Norfolk.

NCCs Bus service improvement plan has so far increased the number of bus passenger journeys in Norfolk by 16% on last year. The £49.5m grant from central government has so far been used to launch 12 new bus routes and increase services on 32 others. With the £2 bus fare cap in place till later this year it's a good time to use the bus. We have also secured funding, working with First Bus to secure funding for 70 New Electric buses with all of the needed charging infrastructure, which are being rolled out across the city of Norwich

My local members budget this year has supported a drainage scheme in Pulham Market and two road safety schemes in Harleston.

Looking forward to all of the events planned in 2024 and better weather.

Best Wishes

Martin