Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council Budget Factsheet (2025–29)

Making sense of where your money goes — and why it matters

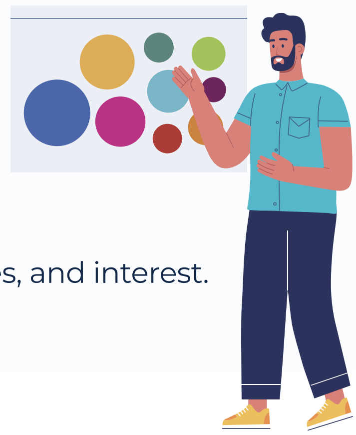
1. What even is the council budget?

Think of it like a giant household budget — but instead of paying for groceries and Netflix, we're funding schools, social care, roads, libraries, and fire services. For 2025–26, Norfolk County Council is managing nearly £2.167 billion (revenue) — that's a lot of spreadsheets.

2. Where does the money come from?

Here's the breakdown:

- Council Tax: **£572 million** — that's your contribution.
- Business Rates: **£208 million** — paid by local businesses.
- Government Grants: **£346 million** — from Westminster.
- Other Income: **£534 million** — includes things like fees, charges, and interest.
- Schools Grants: **£507 million**



3. Where does the money go?

We spend it on services that matter:

- Adult Social Care: 33% — supporting older people and adults with disabilities.

> Our Adult Social Care Budget supports people with physical or mental health illness, disabilities, and older adults to live independently. Services include personal care, domestic support, and community engagement, provided at home or in specialised accommodations. We support 12,000 residents at any time and 20,000 annually.

- Children's Services: 17% — including child protection and fostering.
- Schools: 22% — passed directly to schools.
- Highways, Waste, Fire, Libraries: 17% — keeping Norfolk moving, safe, and connected.
- Everything Else: 11% — from IT to HR to democratic services.

4. Why is council tax going up?

Because costs are rising — fast. Inflation*, energy prices, and demand for care services are all climbing. In 2025–26, Council Tax has gone up by 4.99% (that's about £1.60 a week for a Band D household).

*What is inflation? Inflation is the sustained general increase in the prices of goods and services over time, which leads to a decrease in the purchasing power of money.

Rising costs

Inflation and increased demand for services are forecast to increase costs to the council by £31m and £15m respectively in 2025-26. Demand for adult social care services is increasing in Norfolk due to an ageing population, 1 in 4 of us are over 65 years old, compared to 1 in 5 nationally and our over 85 population is set to double in size by 2041, leading to more people with complex, long-term health conditions. Advances in healthcare mean people are living longer, but these extended years can be spent in poorer health, further increasing pressure on health and social care services.

Changes to UK legislation, such as National Insurance Contributions and increases in the National Living Wage (NLW), are forecast to cost the council £35m in 2025-26. The nature of adult social care means that 60-70% of its cost when purchased is associated with the wages of the people providing it. With many of the care workforce on salaries just above the government National Living Wage, an annual increase in the NLW of just 1p can increase our budget requirement by approximately £300,000. For context, the NLW has increased by £2.72 over the last 5 years.

5. What are the big challenges?

- More people need help: especially in adult social care and children's services.
- Costs are rising: fuel, wages, and care placements are more expensive.
- Government funding is uncertain: we don't always know what we'll get next year.
- We need to save money: £45 million in savings are planned this year alone.

Government funding is uncertain

With the outcome of the Government's local government funding reform still unknown, there remains uncertainty around funding levels for 2026-27 onwards. This unpredictability is compounded by significant, rising costs in social care and increased costs from inflation. Unforeseen events, such as the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, also create unexpected financial burdens, making it difficult for local authorities to plan and deliver services effectively.

6. What's the plan?

We're focusing on:

- **Prevention**: helping people earlier to avoid crisis.
- **Innovation**: using technology and smarter ways of working.
- **Partnerships**: working with health, schools, and communities.
- **Investing in the future**: £1.1 billion in capital projects like roads and schools.

7. What's in it for me?

This budget affects your daily life — from the road you drive on, to the care your nan receives, to the school your child attends. It's about making Norfolk a place where people can live well, safely, and independently.