

# Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall - District Councillors Report 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025

## Member Ward Grants

Member Ward Grants for 2025/26 are still available. Requests for support with small projects (typically up to £1,000 per project) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors.

## Devolution & Local Government Reform

The transition from our current District and County council system to the new system of Unitary Authorities continues. Proposals from all local authorities have now been submitted to Westminster.

A "Structural Change Order" is due to be submitted in the Spring of 2026 as part of the process of shifting powers and funding to the new local government structure.

The timetable for elections to the new positions is as follows:

May 2026: Mayoral elections for Mayor of Norfolk & Suffolk. County Council elections postponed from 2025 for one year should take place but are still not confirmed.

May 2027: Shadow unitary authority elections.

May 2027: Proposed District Council elections scheduled but possibly postponed, pending dissolution of district council in 2028. This too is to be confirmed

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils are starting to work together to form the new County Combined Authority (CCA). The new authority will be known as a Mayoral County Combined Authority following the 2026 Mayoral election. Elections for the Mayor are expected to be on a first past the post basis.

## South Norfolk and Broadland Business Award

Nominations can be made under 12 different categories until 12<sup>th</sup> December.

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/business/broadland-and-south-norfolk-business-awards>

## South Norfolk Biodiversity Strategy

South Norfolk Council's Biodiversity Strategy, a five-year plan for 2025-2030, was approved at the last council meeting. One priority is improving biodiversity on Council managed land, which includes the commons at Dunston, Flordon, Mulbarton and Swardesdon. Improvement plans are planned for 10 SNC sites, each to increase biodiversity by 10% over the next 5 years. The strategy can be found here:

<https://southnorfolkandbroadland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s12998/South%20Norfolk%20Biodiversity%20Strategy.pdf>

## Christmas Toy Donation Appeal

SNC are appealing for donations of new toys to be distributed to needy families across the district. The nearest donation centre is Wymondham Leisure Centre. Full details – and ideas – can be found here:

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/community-safety/help-hub/support-community-groups/christmas-toy-donation-appeal>

## South Norfolk Planning Consultations

Two new supplementary planning documents (SPDs) are open for consultation. The GNLP Green Infrastructure SPD and the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code SPD can be found here:

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/supplementary-planning-documents/joint-supplementary-planning-documents-for-broadland-and-south-norfolk-councils>

A draft of the Design Code was open for public consultation earlier this year.

## **Greater Norwich Local Plan**

Work is starting on the next iteration of the GNLP. The new plan will need to find sites for 60,000 extra new homes over 30 years to meet the Government's revised housing targets. The call for sites is expected to launch in early 2026.

The Government is seeking to accelerate the timetable for the production of local plans, but this is dependent on legislation currently going through parliament. It is therefore too early to indicate how many years it will be before the plan is complete.

## **Norfolk Warm Homes**

Local councils are working together to deliver government funded grants for clean energy and improved insulation. Homeowners who meet the scheme's eligibility criteria (receiving benefits and with low income) can receive free solar panels, air source heat pumps and home insulation. Tenants meeting the criteria can benefit from the scheme with landlord agreement (landlords pay 50% of costs after the first property). <https://norfolkwarmhomes.org.uk/>

## **East Pye Solar Farm**

A targeted consultation has been launched with a number of changes from the proposals in the statutory consultation. The changes include a firming up on the site of the Great Moulton substation and an increase in its size from 132kV to 400 kV – the height will increase from 7m to 13m. There are changes and additional information regarding the proposed routeing of HGVs and Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

## **Tasway Solar Farm**

The Tasway Phase One Consultation is open until December 5. This will be a large 700 MW solar farm of approximately 3,600 acres, with BESS on land running from Ashwellthorpe to Wacton. The information includes the fields under consideration and possible cable route corridors. The Tasway team are not sure if the solar farm would connect to the grid at Norwich Main or at the East Pye substation near Great Moulton. The preliminary timetable suggests construction could start in 2030. Further information can be found on: <https://taswayenergypark.co.uk/>

## **'Norwich to Tilbury' Update**

The National Grid's Development Consent Order has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate. All supporting documentation can now be inspected on the Planning Inspectorate website. Individuals and organisations interested in participating in this process can register with the Planning Inspectorate by November 27, 2025, to have their say. <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>

PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals and are fundraising. For further information visit: <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions>.

## **Bob McClenning, Ian Spratt & Jim Webber**

### **Councillor Contact Details**

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