

George Boyd: County Councillor's Report

Waveney Valley Division

July 2026



PCC Election

Following the resignation of Sarah Taylor as Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) there was an election to fill the role on 16th July 2026. All registered voters in Norfolk were able to vote. The Government has announced that it will scrap PCCs when their terms come to an end in 2028, with the role moving to elected mayors or council leaders. However, for the time being this remains an important elected position with big implications for policing in the county. According to the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners the key roles of the PCC are:

- **Community needs and relationships** – ensuring community needs are met effectively, improving local relationships by building confidence and restoring trust
- **Partnerships** – collaborating with agencies at local and national levels to ensure a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime
- **Police and Crime Plans** – setting police and crime objectives for their area
- **Budget setting** – setting the force budget and determining its regulation
- **Contributing to national and international policing capabilities** – as set out by the Home Secretary
- **Community safety and criminal justice** – coordinating with community safety and criminal justice partners to align local priorities
- **Appointing the chief constable** – holding them to account for running the force, and if necessary, dismissing them

For more information: <https://www.apccs.police.uk/role-of-pcc/>

It is important to note that they do not run day-to-day policing themselves.

The winning candidate was Colin Sutton of Reform UK. Sutton was a Detective Chief Inspector in the Metropolitan Police, before retiring to Norfolk. During his career he led more than 30 successful murder investigations, including some of the UK's most notorious cases. Upon the result being announced he said "I'm overjoyed. Policing has been my life and it is the best job. I believe I can make a difference and make things better."

The full results were as follows:

Full Results:

Colin Sutton, Reform UK: 32,647 (Elected)

Matthew Taylor, Conservative: 18,343

Martin Schmierer, Green Party: 16,907

Marcus Pearcey, Independent: 16,402

Beth Jones, Labour Party: 14,192

Mark Buckton, Restore Britain: 13,319

Christopher Brown, Liberal Democrat: 10,499

There were also by-elections on the same day in Old Catton (Norfolk County Council) and Dereham Toftwood (Breckland District Council).

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

Local Government Reorganisation remains one of the most significant issues facing Norfolk, as I outlined in my June report. In March 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed, announced the Government's decision to replace the existing two-tier system (Norfolk County Council plus seven district, city, and borough councils) with three new unitary authorities: Greater Norwich Council, East Norfolk Council, and West Norfolk Council. This is subject to Parliamentary approval via a Structural Changes Order, with implementation targeted for April 2028.

The decision followed a consultation process and proposals from various councils. Norfolk County Council had advocated for a single county-wide unitary authority, while most district councils supported three unitaries (South Norfolk advocated for two). Concerns have been raised about the Minister's decision reportedly going against civil service advice regarding financial resilience, service delivery, and geography.

Judicial Review Developments

On 25 June 2026, Norfolk County Council (under its new Reform UK administration) formally submitted a judicial review application to the High Court challenging the Government's decision-making process. This follows a pre-action protocol letter sent earlier in June. The Council has also instructed officers to pause non-essential work on implementing LGR pending the outcome.

South Norfolk Council has also pursued or signalled legal action, citing concerns over the process and the suitability of the three-unitary model. Similar challenges are being considered or pursued by councils in Suffolk and Essex.

The judicial review is at an early stage. The Court will first decide whether to grant permission for the case to proceed to a full hearing, where the lawfulness of the Government's decision-making (including consultation and criteria application) will be examined. Judicial reviews focus on process and legality rather than the policy merits of the decision itself.

The new Reform UK-led administration at County Hall has made clear it is strongly opposed to the reorganisation, describing it as unnecessary and costly, and is prioritising efforts to preserve the current two-tier structure where possible.

Next Steps and Implications

- The outcome of the judicial review could impact timelines significantly, potentially delaying or altering the reorganisation.

- Regardless of the legal process, I will continue to monitor developments closely and represent local residents' views.
- Residents should be aware that any changes would affect local services, planning, highways, and council tax over the coming years.

As more information emerges - particularly regarding the court's decision on permission - I will provide further updates in subsequent reports.

Changes to Funding Schemes

The Highways Local Member Fund (LMF)

The Highways Local Member Fund will not continue for new proposals this financial year. Instead, the funding is being reallocated to highways maintenance, to address the existing highways maintenance backlog and to increase preventative maintenance work, reducing the number of potholes forming in future. The Leader's stated rationale: backlog and prevention are priority issues for all of Norfolk's residents and businesses, and this is a more efficient way of delivering highways spend than many small, separately commissioned local schemes.

Schemes already being developed and delivered from the 2025/26 allocation are unaffected and will still be delivered.

Norfolk Community Fund

In the same announcement, the Leader confirmed that the Norfolk Community Fund (due to launch this month) will not proceed in 2026/27. The funding is instead being transferred to Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, whose activity has increased by 73% over the last five years, partly due to extreme weather events and lithium-ion battery fires, leaving the service unable to manage within its agreed budget. I can understand that some will be disappointed by this announcement. However, there are alternative funding options available, as outlined below.

NCC will shortly launch a £3.25m grant funding scheme for the VCSE sector, funded by the Crisis and Resilience Fund. I would encourage the council to flag this to any local groups who may have been expecting to apply to the Community Fund, once further detail is published.

Alternative Funding Available

Residents and members have asked about alternative funding routes for specific parish projects. The position, as I understand it, is as follows:

- Section 106 (S106) contributions are negotiated against individual planning permissions and are held by whichever authority secured them for the relevant purpose (typically the district council for items such as open space or affordable housing, and NCC for items such as education or highways mitigation).
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is collected by the district council. Waveney Valley sits within the area now administered jointly as South Norfolk and Broadland. Of CIL raised from development in the parish, 15% (rising to 25% where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan) is paid directly to the Parish council. The parish decides locally how this is spent.

The Adnams Community Trust

Another potential source of funding, identified independently of NCC, is the Adnams Community Trust, which operates separately from Adnams plc. The Trust is funded through a variety of sources, including 1% of Adnams' profits, mandated dividends, public donations (including contributions from customers in Adnams' stores and online), a 50p levy on portions of fish and chips sold in Adnams' managed properties, as well as legacies and other fundraising activities.

All of the Trust's running costs are covered by Adnams, ensuring that funds raised are directed towards community support. The Trust awards modest grants four times a year to support good causes located within a 25-mile radius of Southwold.

Further information is available here: <https://adnams.co.uk/pages/adnams-community-trust>

Electrical and Electronic Waste (WEEE) Recycling

Following a major fire at a local electrical waste processing facility in Thetford during 2026, Norfolk has experienced temporary restrictions on the acceptance of some electrical items at recycling centres, such as fridges, freezers and small electrical items. However, from 13th July this service has now been fully restored.

Resignation of Chief Executive

Tom McCabe has resigned as Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council and is no longer in post. As the council's most senior non-elected officer, he was responsible for its day-to-day operations and overall management. Mr McCabe had been with the authority for around 13 years, becoming Head of Paid Service in 2018 and formally appointed as Chief Executive in 2023. I would like to wish him all the best for the future and thank him for his many years of dedicated public service.

On 7th July it was announced that Kat Hulatt, Norfolk County Council's director of legal services and monitoring officer has been appointed as the authority's interim chief executive. Council leader Councillor David Bick said: "We have appointed Kat Hulatt as our interim chief executive. I have every confidence that Kat will help us to deliver our agenda in the next few months, until we have recruited to the permanent position." Kat has worked for Norfolk County Council for 5 ½ years and previously worked for Milton Keynes Council as head of legal services.

The permanent post is currently being advertised. You can find out more at:

https://careers.norfolk.gov.uk/#en/sites/CX_1/job/10867/?utm_medium=jobshare&utm_source=External+Job+Share

Contact Me

As always, I encourage residents to contact me with any local concerns or initiatives they would like me to assist with:

Email: george.boyd.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Phone: 01603 224263

In most cases, the best way to contact me is via email. Please include as much detail as possible so that I can effectively assist you with your enquiry.

I will also be regularly attending Parish Council meetings. However, with there being so many in the Waveney Valley, as would be expected of a large rural division, there are often multiple meetings on the same day. In these situations, I will alternate between them each month.