

## Update from County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Details of the national Coronavirus situation and the what is being done by Norfolk County Council follow. As ever, it is important that people rely on up-to-date information from official sources which they can rely upon.

### Covid-19 Trusted sources of information

The most recent **verified data on cases in the UK and Norfolk** is available from [Public Health England](#) and [Norfolk Insights](#).

Everyone has a key role in promoting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) and [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) as trusted sources of information to the public. It is important to ensure people go to the right sources of information and keep up to date with how to look after themselves.

**Keep up to date:** We have [a dedicated webpage for coronavirus updates](#) in Norfolk and impact on Norfolk County Council services. This is updated regularly so please do re-visit this page.

**Service updates:** The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#). The council will continue to monitor its services and, if regulations and circumstances change, it will review its current plans.

### Other Covid-19 Advice

The Government [announced its five pillars strategy for handling COVID-19 over the winter](#).

- a) Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions: vaccines, antivirals and disease modifying therapeutics.
- b) Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission: Test, Trace and Isolate.
- c) Supporting the NHS and social care: managing pressures and recovering services.
- d) Advising people on how to protect themselves and others: clear guidance and communications.
- e) Pursuing an international approach: helping to vaccinate the world and managing risks at the border.

### NCC's Advice:

The County Council continues with its campaign IChoose, which encourages people to follow measures designed to keep us safe.

The council's advice is:

- Continue familiar prevention behaviours such as hand washing and wearing a face covering in public indoor spaces
- Continue to meet outdoors where possible and ensure indoor places are well ventilated
- Carry out symptom-free testing two times per week, including for secondary school aged children. Free test kits are available from libraries and pharmacies.

## COVID-19 vaccination

### **Five million adults in the UK still without a first dose**

Exactly how many people are yet to receive a COVID jab is unknown; a [BBC article](#) says the government estimates it to be around five million people aged 16 and over in England – 11% of the population. A small number of these are people who are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons but there are likely to be many who are uncertain due to safety concerns or a distrust in institutions, who could still be swayed with the right information and approach.

## Broadband and Digital

I continue to be the County lead councillor regarding improved Broadband and mobile phones. We are now at 95% coverage for Superfast Broadband and work with the mobile operators to push for better coverage and suggest areas which would benefit from alternative solutions. Full details and how to check what is available in any area is on the county website at

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/digital-connectivity>

Our Digital Inclusion Strategy is aimed at Giving Norfolk residents the ability to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits of accessing online services and harnessing internet technology

### **Norfolk County Council wins Internet of Things Award at Connected Britain Awards Ceremony**

The roll-out of Norfolk County Council's new technology that allows the county's roads to flag up when they need gritting and its bins that they need emptying has been recognised at the Connected Britain Awards at the Design Centre in London. The council won the Internet of Things (IoT) Award for its Long-Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) for sending and receiving low power signals from digital devices and objects.

This technology allows roads to flag up when they need gritting, rubbish bins to say when they need to be emptied, rivers to say when the water level is getting close to flooding, and parking spaces to say whether they are empty or occupied. Sensors in the home can help people to keep living independently in their own homes for longer, and much more. All this extra information can allow cities, towns and rural communities to run smoothly, making them better places to live and work and help the more remote areas of our county to become better connected. It also creates an opportunity for businesses in Norfolk to innovate, develop expertise in this emerging sector and grow

Norfolk County Council also won the Connected Britain award for [Digital Council of the Year](#) in 2020.

In just over two years, Norfolk has gone from having nothing in place to developing the biggest free-to-use IoT LoRaWAN network in the UK. Norfolk County Council was up against a very strong field, other shortlisted organisations included IoT Solutions Group, O2 Smart Metering, Pangea Connected and Vodafone.

## Latest national announcements

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been renamed following the Cabinet reshuffle and is now:

[The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will become the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#) (LUHC), to reflect the Government's mission to level up every part of the UK.

Former Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane has been appointed as the new Head of the Levelling Up taskforce. He will join as a permanent secretary in the Cabinet Office on secondment from the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) for 6 months.

The Levelling Up Taskforce will report jointly to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Danny Kruger will also be joining as parliamentary private secretary.

I hope that this will allow the work underway in areas such as devolution, addressing adult social care and so on to continue to a conclusion.

## **Tom FitzPatrick**

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