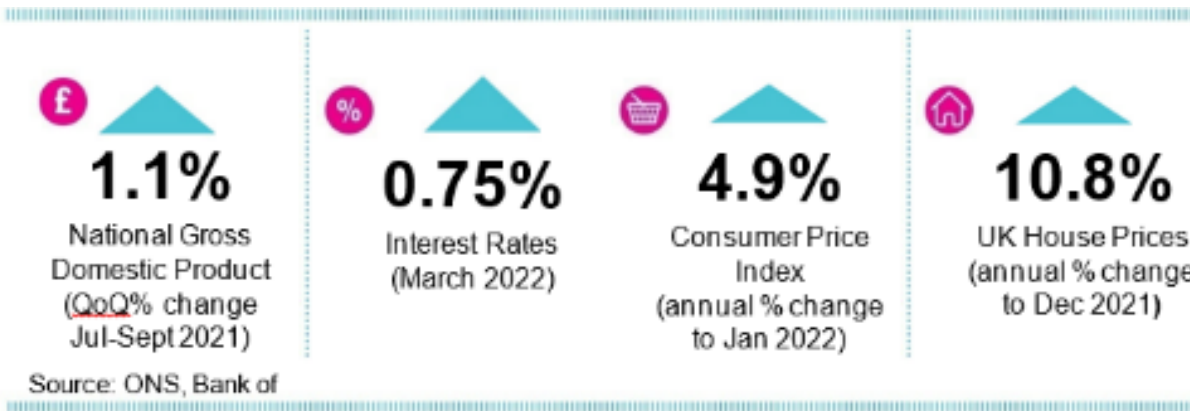




Norfolk Economic Intelligence Report

This January to March 2022 report brings together key business, economic and labour market intelligence to provide a regular insight into the current state of the Norfolk economy. Data is correct to 31 March 2022.

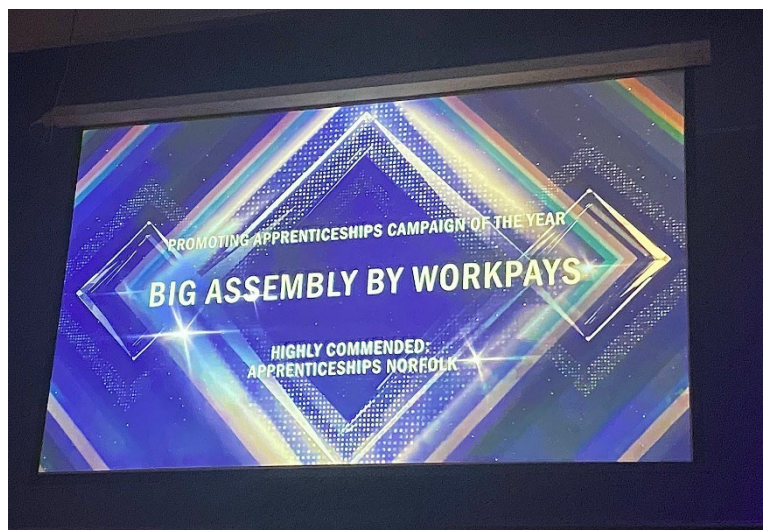


Apprenticeships Norfolk celebrate reaching the final stages of National Awards!

Apprenticeships Norfolk launched their first-ever TV advert campaign, #MadeInNorfolk in June 2021. The TV advert, which features three Norfolk business owners, articulates the benefits apprenticeships can bring a business, challenges any notions that businesses may have that apprentices are hard work or not worth the effort and inspires the audience of business owners or decision-makers to consider developing an apprenticeship scheme.

The film, which was advertised through SKY TV, YouTube and social media channels, targeted small and medium-sized businesses in Norfolk to encourage them to consider recruiting an apprentice. Apprenticeships Norfolk had a staggering 48% increase in business enquiries in the six months after the campaign. [Watch the #MadeInNorfolk TV advert campaign.](#)

The campaign was submitted into the category for ‘Promoting Apprenticeships Campaign of the Year’ in the Further Education (FE) Week and Associate of Employment and Learning Providers Annual Apprenticeship Conference Awards (AELP ACC) and in February the team were thrilled to hear that the campaign had been shortlisted as a National Finalist. The team attended a celebratory reception at the Houses of Parliament, hosted by Robert Halfon MP. The reception recognised and celebrated the contribution of all nominees to have reached this final stage of the awards. Following the conference was the Gala Dinner Evening for the Annual Apprenticeship Awards. We were up against a national campaign ‘The Big Assembly’ and while we didn’t walk away as the overall winner, we were announced as Highly Commended, which we felt very proud of.

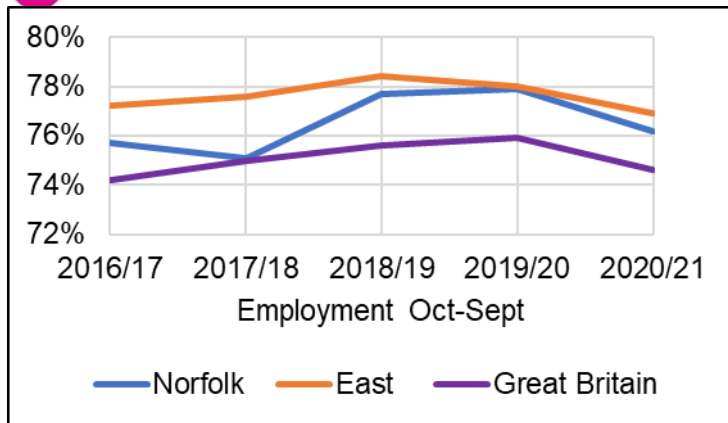




Norfolk Economic Snapshot



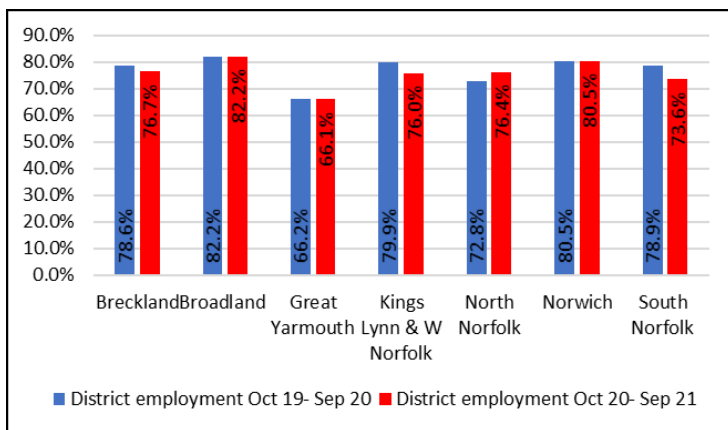
Employment



The employment level in Norfolk has decreased by 1.3% from the same time last year.

At 76.4%, the County's performance is above the national level (74.6%), and below the regional level (77.1%).

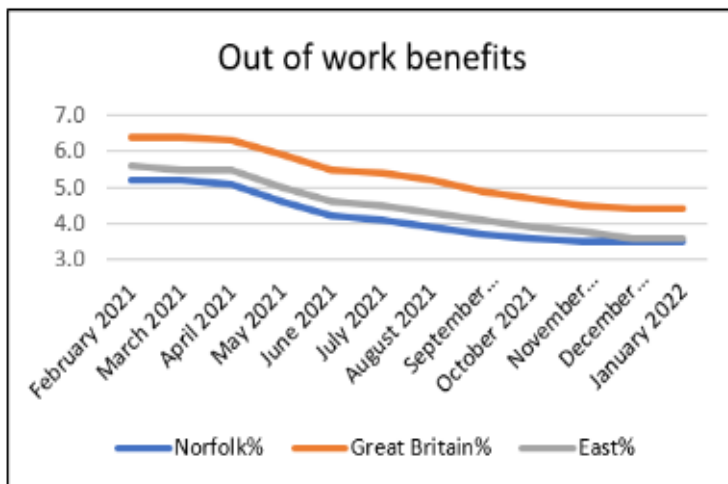
Year on year comparison shows a more mixed picture for Districts. There are a small percentage of increase and decrease amongst them.



At 4.6%, Norfolk's unemployment level has performed well when compared to the national average (4.8%), but worse than the regional level (4.1%).

Source: NOMIS.

Out of Work Claimant Rate



This data represents the percentage of the working-age population who are claiming universal credit principally for the reason of being unemployed.

This can be used as a proxy to the level of unemployment in the local area.

From February 2021, the claimant rate in Norfolk has decreased from 5.2% to 3.5% in January 2022. Norfolk generally enjoys a lower than National and Eastern level of claimant rate.

Source: NOMIS.



Business

Business Development Team: leads and supports inward investment, business growth and business support in Norfolk. **Business team email:** econdev@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Screen Study Launch



Over 60 sector small and medium-sized enterprises and individuals attended the launch of a Norfolk Screen Sector research study delivered by Olsberg.SPI on behalf of Norfolk's local authorities. The launch opened by Councillor Proctor, and with closing remarks by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Chris Starkie. The event featured a British Film Institute overview of on-screen growth opportunities; a summary of key findings - plus four key recommendations from Olsberg.SPI themselves:

- Full business case into an integrated Norfolk wide film office
- Minimum of 6 months screen production tracking
- Range of interventions developed to support job-based training/sector growth
- Develop specifications for Norfolk's unique selling points (content investment fund; production facility/training hub/ etc)

This was followed by an informative, wide-ranging panel discussion including Norfolk screen sector specialists: Professor Larra Anderson, Norwich University of the Arts; Charlie Gauvain, Eye Films; Steve Murphy, October Studios; Jonathan Thursby, Epic Studios; plus Peter Waters, Visit Norfolk; and Councillor Graham Plant, Norfolk County Council.

Watch this space as we hope to report soon on some immediate next steps.

Innovation Grant Mentoring Project:

The next innovation webinar in the series was held in March, Writing a Winning Bid. Two of the project Mentors, Liz Flint and Colm Watling gave expert advice to local businesses on innovation funding and the complex process of writing a bid. The event was popular, with 64 businesses registering and excellent feedback has been received on how useful the session was.

These events increase awareness of Innovation Funding to businesses in the region and promote the projects fully funded innovation mentoring and bid writing coaching support, for those applying for innovation funding competitions. If your organisation is interested in exploring innovation funding for future research and development projects, please email econdev@norfolk.gov.uk to find out how the Innovation Grant Mentoring Project could assist.

Go Digital update:



The project continues to expand its support to Norfolk's small and medium-sized businesses community. Over 770 businesses are now benefiting from Go Digital, supporting SMEs to undertake digital transformation, with 9 hours of free consultancy support, tailored audit and action plans and £500 towards implementation of recommendations. Go Digital is funded by Norfolk's district councils and EU Interreg FCE programme C-Care. Spaces are remaining but booking up fast!



Infrastructure

Infrastructure Development and Greater Norwich Teams support growth and help remove infrastructure constraints in key areas such as transport, housing and planning.

Infrastructure team email: infrastructure@norfolk.gov.uk

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) – Update March 2022

The County Council is currently involved with over 15 NSIPs in or immediately adjacent to Norfolk at various stages in the planning process. These are major infrastructure projects which through their size will ultimately be determined by the Secretary of State. Among the key projects, include:

Fens Reservoir (Anglian Water (AW))

- Site selection is underway in the West of the County and across the border in Cambridgeshire.
- A preferred site is expected to be announced in April 2022 followed by a non-statutory public consultation exercise in Spring/Summer 2022.

Norwich to Bramford 400 Kilovolt Power Line (National Grid Project)

A public engagement exercise (non-statutory) on the preferred route corridor is expected to be undertaken in April/June 2022 (running between 6-8 weeks). Officers are working with Suffolk and Essex County Councils on cross-boundary matters.

A47 projects (National Highways)

- Blofield - Decision expected mid-2022.
- North Tuddenham – Decision expected August 2022.
- Thickthorn – Decision expected in September 2022.

Offshore Projects

- Norfolk Boreas Decision made in December 2021 to allow the Development Consent Order (DCO) i.e., approval.
- Norfolk Vanguard re-determination of DCO by the Secretary of State 11 February 2022. A Planning Performance Agreement is being finalised between the applicant; the relevant LPAs; and NCC.
- Hornsea 3 (consented December 2020) beginning to discharge requirements ahead of onshore works – survey works now commencing e.g., archaeology and ecology.

Norfolk County Council Officers are working closely with all the developers to ensure the County Council's interests and those of the wider community are maximised

Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan

Norfolk County Council's consultation on its Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan has recently closed. Stakeholders were invited to give their views on a set of actions designed to implement the policies in the agreed strategy, which was adopted by the council in November 2021. The plan's overall aims are for a low carbon and well-connected transport network in Norfolk. The comprehensive plan pulls together a wide range of forward-looking schemes that can be delivered by the County Council. These actions put reducing carbon reduction at its centre, with the plan including a target to reduce carbon emissions from transport.

When the Implementation Plan is adopted it, together with the strategy, will form the new local transport plan for the county and replace the previous version. A final draft version of the plan will be considered by members of the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee in May before it is presented to Cabinet in June and – dependent on Cabinet decision – Full Council will be asked to adopt it in July.



Skills

Employment and Skills Team comprises the LIFT, CHANCES, Apprenticeships Teams and the Skills Development Partnership. The focus is on raising skills levels within Norfolk for the benefit of both the individual and the economy. **Employment and Skills team email:** skills@norfolk.gov.uk

BRINGING
EMPLOYMENT &
SKILLS
TOGETHER

Inspiring the Next Generation

The Skills and Careers Festival was held at the Norfolk Showground on Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th March. Young people from various schools and colleges across Norfolk and Suffolk attended providing them with a unique opportunity to engage with businesses and learn about all the different types of roles, industries, and sectors in East Anglia. The Youth Pledge for Employers team were proud to be part of the event, hosting guest speakers from employers that have committed their support to Youth Pledge on their stand throughout the two days. On Day One, they had Robin Tacchi Plants, JBS Dog Photography and Round House Fabrication. On Day Two, they had Cottages and Gardens, Norwich Arts Centre and Red Cat Partnership joining them; in total interacting with over 400 young people by giving inspirational industry talks and fielding many questions about their jobs and industries! The team would like to extend their thanks to all the Youth Pledge employers for sharing their time, knowledge, and enthusiasm with all who came to our stand.



Agri-food Project 2021

A project researching employer skills and training needs across the Agri-food sector has concluded. Commissioned by Norfolk County Council and delivered by City College Norwich, the project has engaged widely with employers to both identify skills and training gaps and explore the wider challenges impacting the sector. The project has produced a suite of reports covering such themes as student progression routes and tutor shortages. The final, detailed project report outlines key recommendations to be taken forward, drawing together information and understanding from across the scope of the project work, to distil ideas into actionable plans. The project recommendations have a sector-wide reach and have been presented to the Agri-food Industry Council and endorsed by the Agri-food Sector Skills group. A collaborative approach has been key to the project's success and has resulted in strong connections that are already benefiting student experience in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership region. [Read the full project report.](#)



Access to Apprenticeships: Removing barriers and increasing social mobility

Norfolk County Council and Apprenticeships Norfolk have recently launched the Access to Apprenticeships (A2A) scheme improving the opportunity for those aged 16-24 in Norfolk to be able to start an apprenticeship with small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). The A2A grants reduce the financial barriers a SME or a young person may face when looking at Apprenticeships. The grant, of up to £500, helps apprentices access funding towards the cost of travel expenses or to buy the equipment they need to start work in a specific trade. A2A can also help provide access to digital equipment or internet connectivity, supporting the apprentice to be able to effectively engage in their online learning. The A2A grant funding is provided by Interreg France Channel England project C-CARE (Covid Channel Area Response Exchange) which aims at supporting individuals at risk of exclusion from the labour market as well as businesses that have been hit the hardest following the pandemic.



Funding

External Funding Team- provides support to the Council and other partners to access external funding, with the aim of increasing funds spent in Norfolk.

External Funding Team email: funding@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Investment Framework and Shared Prosperity Fund

On 13 April the Government finally published the allocations for Norfolk districts for the Shared Prosperity Fund, with range from **£1.24m** to **£1.84m** per district, for projects aiming to improve communities and place, people and skills and support local business. The funding covers the period from now to 31 March 2025, and district councils need to submit to government their investment plans for how they will spend this funding by 1 August.

This funding is in addition to the sum of **£4.67m**, over the same time period, for **Multiply**, an adult numeracy programme, that will be managed by the County Council. Meetings are being arranged with district council colleagues to explore how we could collaborate on the development of projects for their Investment Plans, as well as the roll-out of Multiply in local areas. In parallel the County Council is developing an **Investment Framework for Norfolk**, that articulates the key economic challenges for the county and a set of investment priorities to address them over the next five years, ready for projects to be developed for any funding that becomes available. The Framework has been developed in consultation with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders, and the proposals are being reviewed by the County Council's Infrastructure and Development Committee on 25 May, with a view to endorsing them at the Council's 6 June Cabinet meeting.

NCC Bid Writing Workshops.

The External Funding Team are nearing the end of the winter/spring series of bid writing workshops. Over the last three months, 45 people from the Norfolk County Council and from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors have attended one of the winter workshops. We have received wonderful feedback across the board including "The sessions were thorough, interactive and very interesting". Following on from the External Funding Team's extensive work with Flagship Housing to deliver a successful £1.8m bid into the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the External Funding Team also provided Flagship Staff a bespoke workshop on bid writing and innovative funding. Our standard one session a week for five weeks course includes information and advice on Evidence and data gathering; Outcome and output metrics; Need and Demand; Budgets; Language use and how to think about funding. The schedule for the Spring/Summer Sessions is currently being developed, if you or a member of your organisation would like to be sent schedule details for the series or for the innovative funding workshop, please email funding@norfolk.gov.uk

Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Projects Update

The UK CRF has reached the interim reporting stage, meaning all 14 of Norfolk's projects have had to provide Norfolk County Council with updates on their projects and should have been at least at their mid-point. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has offered all Lead Authorities an extension to the end date of their projects, as it was clear that nationally the programme could not be delivered in the original restrictive timeframes. All 14 of Norfolk's projects have requested an extension, allowing extra time to fully deliver each project. Norfolk County Council's pooled evaluation of the CRF programme is also underway, and the evaluation partner ATQ consultants have agreed to the plans with all projects, however, considering the extension opportunity, ATQ will continue to liaise with projects to amend these plans to meet the new
