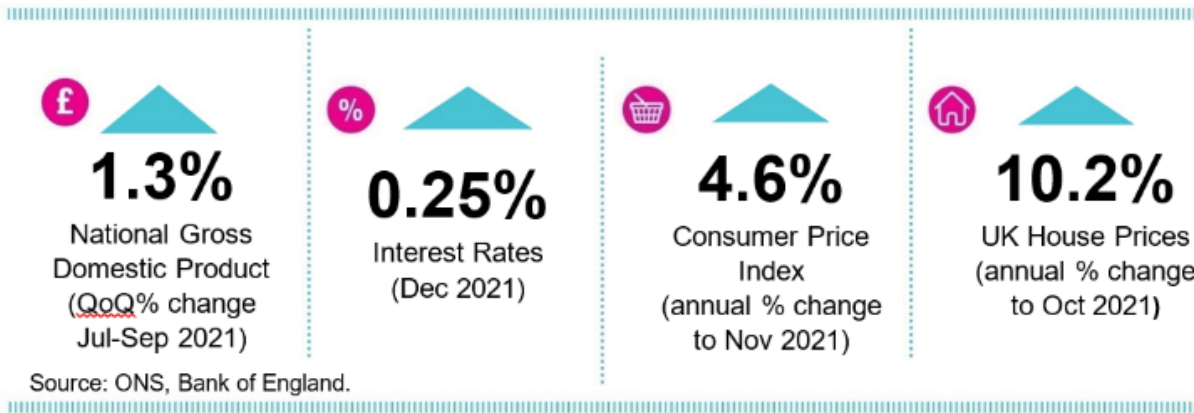




Norfolk Economic Intelligence Report

This October to December 2021 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 December 2021.



Norfolk Local Energy Asset Representation (LEAR)

The strategic planning team have completed an exciting project with the [Energy Systems Catapult](#) to produce the Norfolk LEAR. The LEAR has given us the data foundation for developing the most appropriate pathway to net zero, providing the robust evidence base that will guide the County Council and partners towards which clean energy opportunities are the most effective for our area.

The LEAR provides a review of building stock, energy demands, energy networks, embedded generation, domestic and public electric vehicle (EV) charging and social data. This has already highlighted potential opportunities across the county:

- Decarbonising dwelling off the gas network in Great Yarmouth
- The off-street EV potential across Norwich and aligning charging solutions in Great Yarmouth
- Concentration of dwellings suitable for solar photovoltaic system (PV) in South Norfolk with an example of 464 dwellings that could generate 1,705KW of energy.

The data outputs cover all of Norfolk and have been shared with all Local Authorities as well as partners such as the New Anglia LEP, Greater South East Energy Hub and Eastern New Energy (ENE).

The Norfolk LEAR is the first step towards developing a net zero pathway and can be taken forward in several ways. Now completed, we are working with the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) and ENE to identify and deliver practical decarbonisation projects but, there is an opportunity to take the LEAR data foundation and develop a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP).

The LAEP provides a clear actionable pathway of what the transition to achieve net zero carbon emissions is likely to require in terms of infrastructure and investment in a particular locality over time. We are working with the NCCP, New Anglia LEP and Suffolk County Council to explore how this can be progressed collectively.



Waste to Heat Opportunity?

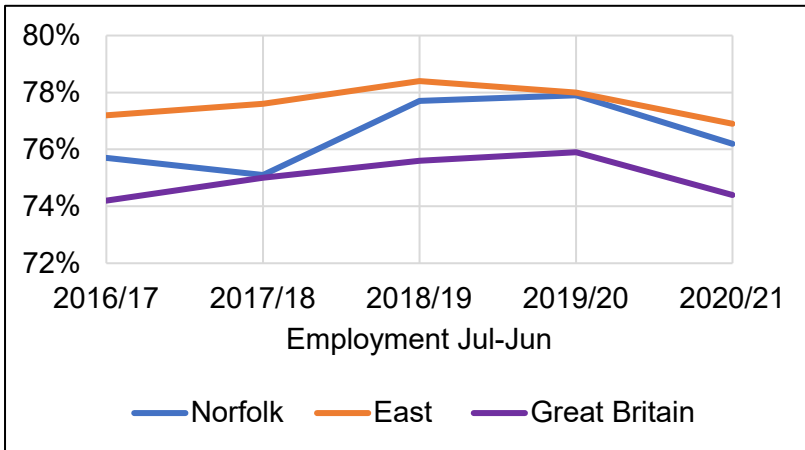




Norfolk Economic Snapshot



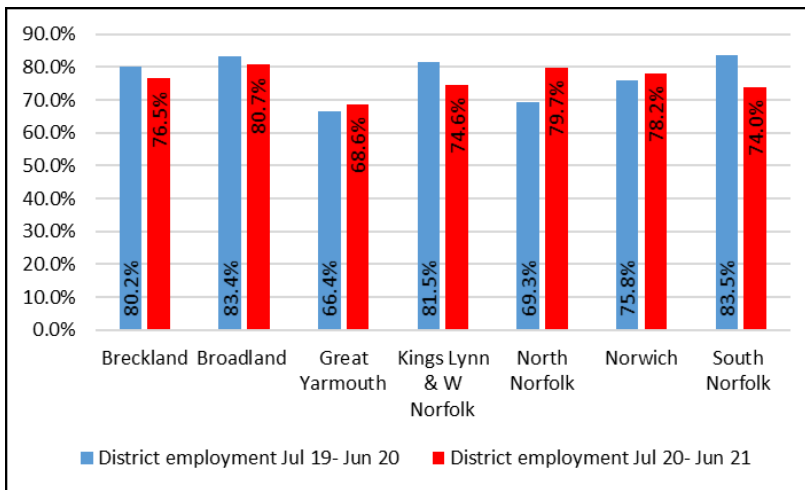
Employment



The employment level in Norfolk has decreased by 1.7% from the same time last year.

At 76.2%, the County's performance is above the national level (74.4%), and below the regional level (76.9%).

Year on year comparison shows a more mixed picture for Districts, with North Norfolk experiencing the biggest increase.

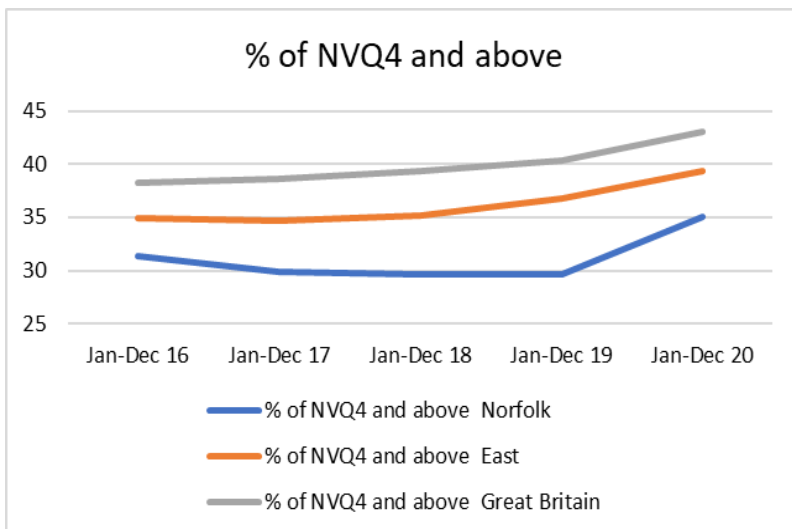


At 4.8%, Norfolk's unemployment level has performed well when compared to the national average (5.0%), but worse than the regional level (4.3%).

However, it is important to note these are annual figures with delayed reporting and have not included the impact of the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as furloughed staff are still classified as employed.

Source: NOMIS.

Qualifications



National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 represents Higher National Diploma, degree and higher degree-level qualifications or equivalent.

At 35%, Norfolk generally has a lower proportion of its working age population obtaining higher-level qualifications than the Eastern Region (39.3%) and Great Britain (43.1%).

A lower-level skilled workforce contributes to the lower than national average earning level economy in the County.

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 Farming Conference

[Tickets are now on sale for the 30 November 2022 Norfolk Farming Conference.](#)

The event will be held at the Royal Norfolk Showground Arena building to enable Covid safe seating and lunch arrangements. Delegates will be treated to discussions on Trade: Farming Carbon, Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs), and the Environment: Flood mitigation, and water resource use. Exhibitor stands are also available.

Norfolk County Council is a primary sponsor of the event, and our partnership project, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), will be presented to the conference as part of the Farming Carbon, ELMs and Environment section.

LFFN Evaluation Praise for Norfolk County Council

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) reviewed Norfolk County Council's year one evaluation report on our £12m Local Full Fibre Network project - and instantly asked if the report could be shared with other larger local authorities as an exemplar document. The Intelligence and Business Development teams are proud to be supporting the Information Management and Technology's Steve Cunningham, project manager, with the evaluation process.

Innovation Grant Mentoring Project - Webinars

Throughout 2021 a successful series of innovation webinars has been run for businesses in the region, to increase the awareness around Innovation Funding and signpost the free one-to-one innovation mentor and bid writing support available. Webinars have included sessions on: 'What is Innovation Funding' and 'Preparing a Winning Bid'. Expert advice has been given by Innovation Mentors and Bid Writing Coaches during these sessions, which is an invaluable source of information for businesses considering innovation funding.

The series continues in 2022, with webinars on: Research & Development Tax Credits, Which Projects to seek Innovation Funding for? and Grant Writing; Writing Winning Bids. For further information on the project please visit [Innovation grant mentoring project - Norfolk County Council](#).

Go Digital

After the successful Go Digital pilot, which supported 43 small businesses with increasing digitisation, the programme grew significantly, with 191 additional businesses joining the programme, thanks to district council funding support.

The programme also received funding for 600 additional businesses from the Interreg EU-funded Covid Channel Area Response Exchange (C-Care) project, which is a cross-border France Channel England project, aiming to support people and businesses to recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic.

This phase of the programme successfully launched alongside the Norfolk Digital Strategy on 22nd September 2021, and runs until March 2023. There are currently 168 businesses being supported on the C-Care phase of the project, and progressing well through the digital advice stage, with several businesses already applying for their grant.



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

Transport Strategies

Good connections are important for the success of Norfolk. They allow people to get to essential facilities and services and ensure that businesses can thrive. The County Council is the local transport authority for Norfolk being responsible for, amongst other things, managing and maintaining all roads (excluding the A47 and A11 trunk roads) and a range of other assets including public rights of way. Although the County Council doesn't run the rail or bus networks, it works with the operators to seek services that meet people's needs. Transport, though, is the largest emitter of carbon emissions, and can also affect people's health - physical and mental health can be improved if people choose to travel in active ways.

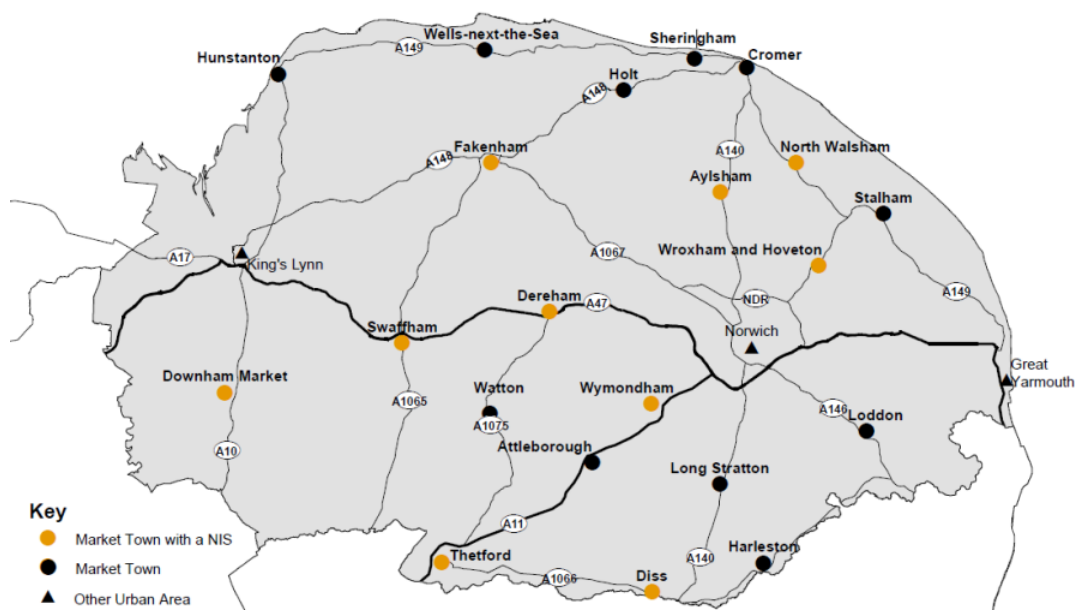
For all these reasons and more, the County Council must have the right strategies in place to achieve the outcomes set out in overarching plans like [Better Together, for Norfolk](#), the Council's five-year business plan. The Council continues important work on its [Local Transport Plan](#) which sets out the approach to transport across the county. A new Transport for Norwich strategy has also been adopted, covering Norwich and the strategic growth areas surrounding it.

Carbon reduction is at the heart of strategy development in setting out the County Council's approach to reducing emissions, whilst also meeting a range of other ambitions including improving the economy, reducing casualties, and improving people's quality of life.

Norfolk Market Town Report

The [Norfolk Market town Report 2021](#) highlights the retail unit types and vacancy rates in 21 Market Towns in Norfolk. The report found that since 2019 the vacancy rate in Norfolk Market Towns increased by 0.7% to 6.6% but, is below Great Britain's average of 13.8%. Watton has the highest vacancy rate, at 13%, and Loddon has the lowest, at 0%.

It also reports that comparison retailers (including department stores, clothing, and charity shops) and leisure services (including cafes and restaurants) are the most dominant unit types across Norfolk Market Towns, at an average of 27.5% and 19.5% respectively.



Location of Norfolk Market Towns Surveyed



Skills

Employment and Skills Team comprises the LIFT, CHANCES and 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

Insight Apprentice

The Insight Apprentice project aims to support Norfolk’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to realise the full benefits of apprenticeships. It is part-funded by the European Social Fund and runs until October 2023. Participating SMEs are offered a Business Development Officer to provide a package of support to help recruit the right people, onto the right apprenticeships, at the right time.



European Union
European
Social Fund

It’s a collaborative venture, with key training and business-facing partners, and focuses on Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing, Agri-tech, Clean Energy, Digital & ICT, the Voluntary & Social economy; and any business diversifying, growing or needing to retrain/recruit staff due to Covid-19.

Insight Apprentice supports SMEs who haven’t recruited apprentices before; are re-engaging with apprenticeships or have had a previous experience with apprenticeships that didn’t work out. To find out more, please email: insightapprentice@norfolk.gov.uk or call 0344 800 8024.

Apprenticeships Norfolk - NEW Grants & Support available!

Apprenticeships Norfolk is proud to have secured £1.9m of external funding since August 2020, to provide local businesses and apprentices [with incentives, grants and wraparound support](#) to stimulate an increase in the uptake of apprenticeships in Norfolk.



This includes:

- Recruit, Retain, Reward - £1000 incentive payments for non-levy (SME) businesses to recruit a new apprentice or take on an apprentice made redundant due to Covid19
- Access to Apprenticeships £500 bursary grants for apprentices in Norfolk to access support towards costs of travel, tools/equipment and digital kit/connectivity.
- Progression to Apprenticeships (part-funded by UK Community Renewal Fund) – Pilot project offers 40 businesses an enhanced package of support (incentive, wage contribution and tailored training) to incentivise and support progression from Kickstart onto an apprenticeship
- Insight Apprentice, part-funded by European Social Fund (ESF) – A project aimed at supporting SME employers in growth sectors across Norfolk (e.g., Clean Energy, Digital & ICT) who need more intensive support to start an apprenticeship scheme in their business. The project also aims to pilot new ways to engage/deliver apprenticeships to SMEs.

Chances

Launched in April 2021, [Chances](#) has already supported nearly 400 participants on their journey to find employment. The project aims to help them get back into employment through new opportunities for support. Sam Whatling, a 34-year-old mum of two young children, lives in Thetford and has been supported by Lyn, one of our Chances advocates: “I’d been out of the game for eleven years, so Lyn helped me put a CV together and supported me to look for courses. She helped me with my job application to Center Parcs. That was really helpful. After my application, it all happened quickly, and I got a job at Center Parcs. I was really pleased to go back to work. Lyn was brilliant, I probably couldn’t have done it without her.” The project is part funded by the European Social Fund.

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

Community Renewal Fund in Norfolk

In March 2021, the Government launched the Community Renewal Fund (CRF). The CRF will provide £220m of funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). Both the CRF and SPF are vitally important funding streams that are intended to replace major EU funding programmes in the UK in the medium to long term.

The CRF included a list of priority places for funding projects. High-quality projects applications in these priority areas were more likely to be funded than projects of similar quality in non-priority areas. Norfolk covers four priority places (Norwich, North Norfolk, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk and Great Yarmouth).

Following a rigorous application and appraisal process, in June 2021, Norfolk County Council submitted bids to the CRF on behalf of 26 projects from across the county. We are pleased to announce that we achieved more than half of our ask of government, with Norfolk being the most successful English local authority in terms of projects approved (14) and being awarded the 4th largest amount of funding for any Lead Authority (over £6 million).

The successful projects will be delivered by Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and a range of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations. They will have a wide-reaching impact across the county on skills, employment, communities and place, business, and net zero ambitions.

This was a fantastic effort on the part of all involved in both the facilitation, application and appraisal processes, and the results speak for themselves. The projects funded will have real impacts on the county and will mean we are well-prepared to leverage upcoming opportunities with the SPF.

Norfolk Wonder 2021

Norfolk Wonder is a programme of activity delivered by the Norfolk & Norwich Festival which aimed to encourage people to explore Norfolk's wonders during the autumn of 2021. The trio of activities organised within Norfolk Wonder took place in artist studios all over Norfolk, but also via specific initiatives in King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Cromer, and Sheringham.

Norfolk Wonder is part of the EXPERIENCE project funded by the EU's Interreg France (Channel) England programme which helps develop off-season tourism.



Thanks to the support from EXPERIENCE, Norfolk Open Studios took place for the first time in the autumn season. This year, the Open Studios programme gave visitors a fantastic opportunity to get hands-on with artists and craftspeople through art trails, demonstrations and workshops.

Rider Spoke - a critically acclaimed performance mixing art, theatre and location-based technologies - offered the audience an immersive cycling experience. The Norfolk Wonder Walk Packs, created by artists, enabled visitors to explore Cromer, Great Yarmouth & King's Lynn in new ways thanks to audio recordings and other materials.

Norfolk Wonder quickly found its audience. Despite the fuel crisis and COVID-19, Norfolk Open Studios attracted 20,000 visitors in 2021, with 260 studios and schools taking part.