

**Title: Liberal Democrats launch bold plan to fix Norfolk’s foundations ahead of 2026 elections**

**Date: 26/03/2025**

**Embargoed until 9am 27/03/2025**

The Norfolk Liberal Democrats have today launched their 2026 manifesto; a comprehensive plan to “fix Norfolk’s foundations” and provide the strong, competent leadership the county urgently needs after years of drift, division and missed opportunities.

The manifesto sets out a practical programme for the next two years, ahead of major local government changes expected in 2028. It focuses on stabilising essential services, restoring trust, and putting local people at the centre of decision-making.

Liberal Democrat Group Leader Cllr Brian Watkins said:

“Norfolk has been held back for too long by leadership that lacks vision and fails to stand up for our county when it counts. Our manifesto is calm, competent and ambitious and built around the belief that Norfolk deserves better than short-term fixes and constant uncertainty.”



## **Six to Fix: clear priorities to turn Norfolk around**

At the centre of the manifesto sits a clear, no-nonsense programme with six practical steps to get Norfolk moving again:

- **Power back to Norfolk:** ensuring we have a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk who delivers for local needs by unlocking long-term investment, with decisions made *here*, not in Whitehall.
- **Cheaper travel for young people and families:** offering a half-price youth bus pass and a Norfolk–Suffolk family railcard which will open up opportunity, ease the pressures from the cost of living and keep our communities connected.
- **Growing our own NHS workforce:** backing a new School of Dentistry at UEA and expanding local training for dentists and social workers so Norfolk is never left short again.
- **Fixing our roads properly:** using smarter tech to spot and sort potholes before they end up costing families money ensuring to make our roads safer, and our communities better connected.
- **Community hubs in every major town:** creating shared local spaces where people can access key services close to home, such as advice, transport links and health, helping residents stay connected and making everyday life easier.
- **Protecting our coast and countryside:** developing a united plan on coastal erosion, flooding and sewage pollution to safeguard Norfolk’s environment and put our county back on the national agenda.

## **A plan for services that are built for those across Norfolk:**

We know that bills are rising, that politics feels more divisive as ever, and that there are too many paths with not enough options or solutions to support you and your loved ones. We understand and hear you that you want simple serious, practical change, and not grand gestures, nor politicians arguing while services crumble. This manifesto is built for exactly that moment.

In **Adult Social Care**, we are committed to fixing what’s broken and giving people their dignity back, with a system that works without families fighting for help.

So, our plan focuses on competence, care, and common sense.

We will:

- Cut the long waits that leave families struggling alone.

## Manifesto press release

- Expand reablement services so people can leave hospital sooner and recover properly, rather than being trapped in beds that should be freeing up.
- Reverse cuts to the Minimum Income Guarantee, so vulnerable residents aren't pushed into poverty by the very system meant to support them.
- Use practical technology to speed up assessments and cut red tape, freeing staff to spend time with people, not forms.
- Support unpaid carers with higher allowance and proper recognition.

In **Children's Services & SEND** we know parents are combatting complicated distant bureaucracy, which is miles away from them, but it doesn't need to be this way. We know that the Council needs to rebuild trust with families. This needs to be built slowly but surely together, so if elected, we would:

- Introduce a Parents' Covenant to ensure there are clear standards that families can actually hold the council to.
- Reduce churn in EHCP and social care teams, giving families a stable point of contact.
- Create a single front door for SEND transitions so parents tell their story once.
- Provide early, practical help to keep families together, rather than letting problems escalate.
- Build more local specialist places, ending exhausting daily journeys for children.

Norfolk needs real, practical change, and that's what the Liberal Democrats offer. From fairer business taxes, and stronger walk-in health support in a hub in your community, to guaranteeing mental-health staff in every school, and protecting our clean chalk streams. Our manifesto is full of ideas and pledges that you, your loved ones, and your community will all genuinely feel the positive impact from. We are committed to protecting and sustaining politics that respects people's voices, protects what's special, and never takes Norfolk for granted. A vote for the Liberal Democrats is a vote for exactly that.

Cllr Watkins added: "People across Norfolk want a council that is steady, open and on their side. They want real leadership, leadership that gets things done. This manifesto shows how the Liberal Democrats will deliver it."

The full manifesto is available now and will guide the Liberal Democrat campaign ahead of the May 2026 County Council elections. **ENDS**