Norfolk County Council connects rural communities with ultrafast broadband

Norfolk County Council is committed to improving digital connectivity across the county, ensuring that residents and businesses, regardless of location, have access to essential digital services.

Many rural communities in Norfolk have long struggled with poor broadband coverage, limiting opportunities for education, business growth and social engagement.

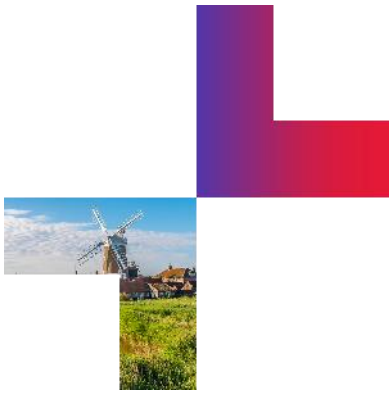
Bridging the divide in rural Norfolk

A significant number of town and village halls in remote areas were unable to access high-speed broadband, with fibre rollouts not expected to reach these locations until 2026 or later. This digital divide meant that local communities lacked the connectivity needed for essential services such as virtual meetings, digital payments and event streaming. Norfolk County Council (NCC) required a cost-effective, high-speed solution that could be rapidly deployed.

Innovative high-speed connectivity

CGI partnered with NCC to deliver an innovative, hybrid broadband solution, combining Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technology with terrestrial networks. Working with specialist suppliers **Ingen** and **Onwave**, we deployed ultrafast, secure and reliable broadband to 10 village halls across Norfolk. This solution was designed to provide:

- A robust and secure hybrid network – using Starlink LEO satellites
- A free-to-use public wireless service – enabling local communities to benefit directly
- High-speed connectivity – where fibre was not available
- Immediate broadband access – rather than waiting for long-term fibre deployment
- A scalable and portable solution – capable of rapid deployment in other remote areas



Benefits

The key benefits include:

- **Enabling digital services** – village halls can now take electronic payments, hold virtual meetings and stream music for dance classes
- **Enhancing community engagement** – reliable broadband allows rural communities to organise and host more events
- **Supporting local industries** – improved connectivity benefits agriculture, utilities and manufacturing in remote locations
- **Bridging the digital divide** – connectivity ensures rural residents and businesses can access the same opportunities as urban areas

Further results

Through this collaboration, rural communities in Norfolk now have access to digital services that were previously out of reach.

Traditional rural broadband can take years to implement, but this solution was deployed in weeks.

The project demonstrated award-winning innovation by winning the 'Access Innovation Award' at the 2023 Connected Britain Awards and was shortlisted for the ‘Fixed Network Evolution Award’ at the GloTel Awards in 2024.

The partnership between Norfolk County Council and CGI has delivered a fast, cost-effective and scalable broadband solution that can be deployed in other rural areas facing similar connectivity challenges – We are in the process of rolling out an almost identical project with a county council in the Southeast of England in 2025.

To learn more about how CGI can help improve digital connectivity in your region, contact us today.

“Digital connectivity is central to the prosperity of Norfolk as we look forward to the future, but also to the quality of life of most of our residents. CGI has partnered with us to develop a well-thought-out, innovative approach to ensuring improved connectivity across the county, particularly in those communities that have previously proved hard to reach.”

Councillor Jane James, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation, Norfolk County Council

About CGI

Insights you can act on

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. We are insights-driven and outcomes-focused to help accelerate returns on your investments. Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

For more information

Visit cgi.com/uk
Email us at enquiry.uk@cgi.com

© 2025 CGI Inc.