

Council



Please contact: Emma Denny

Please email: Emma.Denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Please Direct Dial on: 01263 516010

19 March 2024

A meeting of the **Council** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices on **Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. It will not always be possible to accommodate requests after that time. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel:01263 516010, Email:Emma.Denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so should inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed. Please note that this meeting is livestreamed: [NNDC eDemocracy - YouTube](#)

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Cllr T Adams, Cllr P Bailey, Cllr M Batey, Cllr K Bayes, Cllr D Birch, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr J Boyle, Cllr A Brown, Cllr G Bull, Cllr S Bütikofer, Cllr C Cushing, Cllr N Dixon, Cllr P Fisher, Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Cllr T FitzPatrick, Cllr A Fletcher, Cllr W Fredericks, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr C Heinink, Cllr P Heinrich, Cllr V Holliday, Cllr N Housden, Cllr R Macdonald, Cllr G Mancini-Boyle, Cllr P Neatherway, Cllr L Paterson, Cllr S Penfold, Cllr P Porter, Cllr J Punchard, Cllr C Ringer, Cllr L Shires, Cllr R Sims, Cllr E Spagnola, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr J Toye, Cllr K Toye, Cllr E Vardy, Cllr A Varley, Cllr L Vickers and Cllr L Withington



If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us

Chief Executive: Steve Blatch
Tel 01263 513811 **Fax** 01263 515042 **Minicom** 01263 516005
Email districtcouncil@north-norfolk.gov.uk **Web site** www.north-norfolk.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

2. **MINUTES**

1 - 26

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st February 2024.

3. **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS**

27 - 32

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (see attached guidance and flowchart)

5. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

To receive the Chairman's communications, if any.

6. **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive announcements from the Leader.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

To consider any questions or statements received from members of the public.

8. **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES & OUTSIDE BODIES**

To receive any updates from the Group Leaders regarding changes to appointments.

9. **PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

33 - 72

To receive reports from Cabinet Members on their portfolios:

Cllr T Adams - Executive Support & Legal Services

Cllr H Blathwayt – Coast

Cllr A Brown – Planning & Enforcement

Cllr W Fredericks – Housing and People Services

Cllr P Heinrich – Sustainable Growth

Cllr C Ringer – IT, Environmental & Waste Services

Cllr L Shires – Finance, Estates & Assets

Cllr A Varley – Climate Change & Net Zero
 Cllr L Withington – Community, Leisure & Outreach (Including Health & Wellbeing)

Members are reminded that they may ask questions of the Cabinet Member on their reports and portfolio areas but should note that it is not a debate.

No member may ask more than one question plus a supplementary question, unless the time taken by members' questions does not exceed 30 minutes in total, in which case, second questions will be taken in the order that they are received (Constitution, Chapter 2, part 2, section 12.2)

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 11 MARCH 2024

73 - 138

Cabinet 11 March – Agenda Item 11: Local Economic Strategy & Action Plan

Resolved to recommend to Council:

To approve the Local Economic Strategy & Action Plan

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 FEBRUARY 2024

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendation to Full Council at the meeting held on 14th February:

'To request that Full Council agrees to write to the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) setting out the evidence associated with the shortfall in allocation and the anticipated annual capital costs that the Council will incur in relation to food waste collection'

*** Please note that the agenda for Full Council was published before the March meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee took place. The Chairman will provide an oral update at the meeting***

12. FAKENHAM LEISURE & SPORTS HUB

139 - 150

Executive Summary	This report provides an update on the progress to date on the delivery of Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project and also sets out the procurement options for delivering the project.
Options considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure delivery of the project through a traditional procurement process – not recommended due to the time taken not delivering the project to required timescales. • Procure delivery of the project through a single stage design and build process – not recommended due to likely impact on interest of suitable regional suppliers with strong local supply

	<p>chains not bidding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure delivery of the project through a two stage design and build procurement process - recommended as meets both timescales and strong supply chain/quality requirements. • Not to continue with the project - this would not meet the aspirations set out on the Corporate Plan objectives and Annual Action Plan.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub Project to date is noted. • Members note the predicted inflationary costs of £450,000 since the bid was submitted and agree to make budgetary provision to meet these additional costs not covered by the Levelling-up Funding. • That Members note that no formal confirmation of funding has been received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. • Members agree to the use of a Two Stage Design and Build procurement process for the delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project via a direct award to Contractor A through a Framework. • Members agree to make additional budgetary provision in respect of the Framework fees to a maximum of £330,000 • Members delegate to the to the Director of Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Finance, to make the award through the framework which it is felt delivers the best cost benefit, considering the cost of access and additional services provided.
Reasons for recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep members apprised of progress to date and to ensure that the project is delivered to meet the required Levelling-up Fund deadlines and meets the councils aspirations on cost certainty and quality.
Background papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Full Council – 27th July 2022 • Report to Full Council – 20th December 2023

Wards affected	Fakenham wards (Lancaster North and South); and wards in the west of the district including Briston, Priory, Stibbard, Stody, The Raynhams, Walsingham; Wells with Holkham.
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Tim Adams, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer	Steve Hems, Director for Communities Email:- steve.hems@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516182

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The 2023-2027 Corporate Plan themes - Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council.

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	NO
Has the public interest test been applied	Yes – there is private or confidential information to be considered by this report
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	See meeting minutes for Full Council on the 21 st December 2023

13. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

To consider any questions received from members.

14. OPPOSITION BUSINESS

None Received.

15. NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

None Received.

16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution – if necessary:

“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.”

Information in this appendix involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A (as

amended) to the Local Government Act 1972.

This paragraph relates to:

Para 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:

The information is commercially sensitive, relating to commercial options being considered by the authority. Releasing this information would be likely to have a prejudicial impact upon third parties as well as the Council in obtaining best value.

17. PRIVATE BUSINESS

151 - 152

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 21 February 2024 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Cllr T Adams	Cllr M Batey
Cllr K Bayes	Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr J Boyle	Cllr A Brown
Cllr G Bull	Cllr S Bütikofer
Cllr C Cushing	Cllr N Dixon
Cllr P Fisher	Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr T FitzPatrick	Cllr M Hankins
Cllr C Heinink	Cllr P Heinrich
Cllr V Holliday	Cllr R Macdonald
Cllr G Mancini-Boyle	Cllr P Neatherway
Cllr S Penfold	Cllr P Porter
Cllr J Punchard	Cllr C Ringer
Cllr L Shires	Cllr R Sims
Cllr E Spagnola	Cllr M Taylor
Cllr J Toye	Cllr K Toye
Cllr E Vardy	Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Vickers	Cllr L Withington

Officers in attendance: The Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Director for Communities, Director for Place & Climate Change, Assistant Director for Planning, Democratic Services & Governance Officer

110 MINUTES SILENCE

The Chairman opened the meeting with the sad news of the death of former councillor, Peter Moore. He had been a Planning Officer at the Council and had worked on the proposals for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). He was also a passionate Union representative. He was an elected member for North Norfolk District Council from 2003 to 2019 and was also a member of the County Council. In addition to serving on Cabinet, Peter was Chairman of the Council for six months, taking over from John Perry-Warnes.

The Chairman asked all members to observe one minutes silence in memory of Peter.

111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Birch, P Bailey, W Fredericks, N Housden, L Paterson and E Spagnola.

112 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Five members abstained.

113 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

114 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

115 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman spoke about recent civic events she had attended:

- 25 January – A Royal Patron visit by HRH The Princess Royal to the National Coastwatch, Cromer
- 26 January – Holocaust Memorial Day Service
- 14 February – the opening of Kings Lynn Mart Fair

116 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, Cllr Adams, began by thanking officers and members for their work in preparing the Budget for 2024/2025.

He then spoke about the new banking hub in Holt, which would be the first in Norfolk and thanked the Council's Data Analyst for the research they had undertaken which had provided the evidence in support of having a hub in Holt. He said that he was hopeful more hubs would come forward in the future.

He spoke about the Coastwise drop-in events which had been a huge success. Moving onto empty homes, the Leader said that £100k of income had been generated by bringing properties back into use, including two long term empty properties.

He reminded members that it was the 50th anniversary of North Norfolk District Council and the sector as a whole was seeing some of the most significant challenges for a generation, including the impact of the housing crisis. It was heartening to see the sector come together to address some of these issues, adding that he hoped that as a general election approached, the local government sector could see a reset of relation with central government.

117 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Chairman invited Susan Parry to speak. Mrs Parry said that she was a resident of Fakenham and owned a rental property in Newman's Court which was behind 9 Norwich Street. On the hoarding which was now in front of the dilapidated building of 9 Norwich Street, it stated 'NNDC working for Fakenham'. She questioned whether this was the case. In September 2019, the already crumbling property developed a serious crack across its frontage. In October 2021, NNDC served an urgent works notice. In May 2022, full height scaffolding was erected and in early 2023, a wrap was put around the building with pictures of historic Fakenham on the front. Then, in the autumn of 2023, NNDC said that a decision would be reached on the way forward by the end of the year. She said that the carbuncle remained in the centre of the town and although it was not of the Council's making, its solution lay entirely in NNDC's hands. She said that from where she stood, NNDC was not currently working for Fakenham. She thanked Cllr Vickers for her support.

The Chairman then invited Ms V Strangways-Booth to speak. She began by saying that she owned Venetia's Yarn Shop which was directly opposite the derelict site of 9 Norwich Street, Fakenham. She urged the Council to try and resolve the situation as soon as possible. The scaffolding filled the view from her shop and it looked

terrible. In addition, it was dangerous as people had to step into the road to walk past it. She said that behind the hoarding there was a huge amount of rubbish which attracted rats and pigeons. Ms Strangways-Booth went on to say that the centre of Fakenham was slowly dying shop by shop and no business would come to a dying town centre. It no longer looked economically viable. She also thanked Cllr Vickers for her support.

Cllr A Brown said that he wanted to speak as someone who was most affected by the structural damage that occurred in 2019. Personally, he said that he would also wish to see a resolution but agreed that it was a complex situation.

Cllr T FitzPatrick sought clarification on Cllr Brown's interest and whether it was pecuniary. He said if it was, then he would be disqualified from speaking. The Leader, Cllr Adams, said that Cllr Brown had an interest as he was a leaseholder for 9 Norwich Street and had been impacted by the situation. Cllr Brown declared that he had a pecuniary interest.

Cllr Adams said that it was not a budgetary consideration yet. The Council had very limited powers to secure the re-use or sale of a property and consent needed to be sought to any work undertaken to the site. He confirmed that the Council was intending to do more work on the front of the site to clean it up, with the freeholder's consent. He felt a solution was closer, adding that the building had been made structurally safe and there were ongoing discussions with the freeholder to seek sale of the site. In conclusion, he said that this site remained a priority for NNDC and said that he was happy to meet with the public speakers and any other residents to discuss their concerns.

118 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024 - 2025

The Leader, Cllr Adams, introduced this item. He explained that it was a statutory document and set out extensive details of the pay arrangements for senior officers. It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

To adopt the attached Pay Policy Statement and to publish the statement for 2024/2025 on the Council's website.

119 NON-DOMESTIC (BUSINESS) RATES POLICY 2024-25

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced this item. She drew members' attention to page 43 of the agenda which referenced the Discretionary Non Domestic Rates Relief Panel and said that it would be meeting on 18 March.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Revenues Manager continues to have delegated authority to make decisions up to the NNDC cost value of £4k as indicated in Appendix A.**
 - 2. That the Revenues Manager has delegated authority to make Hardship Relief decisions up to the NNDC cost value of £4k as indicated in Appendix C.**
 - 3. That the Rate Relief Policy is revised as indicated in Appendix A, B and C.**
- Rates Relief Panel and said that it would be meeting on 18 March.**

120 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 08 JANUARY 2024 AND 05 FEBRUARY 2024

Recommendations from Cabinet 08 January 2024

Fees & Charges 2024 – 2025

Cllr L Shires introduced this item. She thanked Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their input and said that there would be a review of car parking charges in the next few months.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED to approve

- **The fees and charges from 1st April 2024 as included in Appendix A.**
- **That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Directors/Assistant Director to agree the fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required (outlined within the report).**

Recommendations from Cabinet 05 February 2024

Treasury Management Strategy 2024 – 2025

Cllr L Shires introduced this item. She said that it had been to Overview & Scrutiny Committee twice as they requested training to ensure that members understood the strategy fully.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle asked about the Council's investments and whether consideration was given to the human rights record of some of the regimes invested in – such as Hong Kong or Abu Dhabi, adding that he was aware of other councils that had taken this approach. Cllr Shires replied that her understanding was that the Government had instructed 'no boycotting' and that a Bill was currently progressing through Parliament to enshrine this in law.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr P Heinrich and

RESOLVED

That the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 is approved.

Two members voted against.

121 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 FEBRUARY 2024

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr N Dixon, said that the committee had considered the Budget 2024 – 2025 and he would speak about the recommendations when that item was debated.

122 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2024 - 2025

The Chairman outlined the process to Members, explaining that there would be a number of recorded votes. She then invited the Chief Financial Officer to explain the

robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the reserves, as required to do by statute.

The Chief Financial Officer (Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer) began by referring members to pages 147, section 3 of the agenda, which provided details of the process which had been carried out in preparing the Budget for presentation to Full Council. She explained that in formulating her opinion, she had considered the 2022/2023 Outturn position, the current forecast outturn position for 2023/2024 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and funding available and the budgets required for future years. She had also looked at the cashflow which had been monitored throughout the year. The details in Appendix G listed all the considerations and the assessments taken into account to maintain the optimum level of reserves. In conclusion, she said that she was satisfied that the proposed Budget for 2024/2025 was robust and that the level of reserves were adequate.

The Chairman then invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Assets, Cllr L Shires to introduce the Budget for 2024/2025. Cllr Shires began by saying that the main priority when setting the budget had been to maintain key services to residents and she was pleased to present a balanced budget for working families. She then drew members' attention to the investments that the Council had made for its residents, including £12.7m in the Reef Leisure Centre, £2m on public conveniences, £4.9m on new refuse collection vehicles, £2.5m on providing temporary accommodation and £560k on a solar car port. Cllr Shires said that there had been many external factors which had a significant impact on the Council's finances in the last year such as the ongoing legacy of the Covid pandemic, labour shortages, rising inflation and a surge in demand for council services which had caused a £600K shortfall in the temporary accommodation budget.

Cllr Shires spoke about the new Corporate Plan and said that all members had been invited to attend workshops to ensure that there was cross-party engagement and input. She then thanked the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their work in shaping the budget. There had been a £1.8m gap when the budget was first presented to the committee in December 2023. The delay in the progress of the Levelling Up Bill through Parliament had added to this as it meant that the 100% premium on second homes council tax could not be introduced until April 2025, instead of the expected date of April 2024, effectively increasing the deficit by £550k for the forthcoming year.

Cllr Shires thanked officers for their support in rising to the challenges presented to them in achieving considerable savings to ensure that the Council could present a balanced budget. Many of the income generating proposals that had been proposed were now being brought forward, together with savings suggestions which together totalled £975k. She said that there was £250k of savings yet to be identified but that the S151 Officer was confident that these could be achieved.

Further funding had been announced by the Government, following significant lobbying by local authorities. This meant that the amount that would need to be taken from reserves was lower than initially anticipated. The Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) indicated that District Councils were expected to increase council tax by the highest amount. The budget included an increase of £4.95 for a Band D property. She explained that for each £1 collected, only 8 pence went to the district. Cllr Shires said that further capital investment of over £3m was being committed. This included £1.75m to 'our greener future', with projects at Holt Country Park and Victory Leisure centre benefitting from considerable investment. She outlined other key projects that would benefit from significant funding and

reiterated the Administration's commitment to supporting local communities. She then highlighted the recent funding awarded by the Levelling Up programme which was in addition to the agreed capital programme and said it would bring much needed leisure facilities to Fakenham.

In conclusion, Cllr Shires said that the Council faced considerable financial uncertainty in the coming years and the base budget for 2024/2025 and the following year showed a considerable deficit. Action was already underway through a series of service reviews in the coming financial year to achieve further savings. She assured everyone that these would be navigated very carefully. She thanked the S151 Officer and the Finance Team for their hard work and support.

The Budget 2024/2025 was proposed by Cllr L Shires. Cllr T Adams seconded the proposal.

The Chairman then invited the Leader of the main Opposition Group, Cllr C Cushing to respond. He began by thanking the S151 Officer and her team for their hard work in preparing the budget and for meeting with his Group to answer questions. He then congratulated Cllr Shires on her budget presentation.

Cllr Cushing said that the Administration had been complacent about the Council's financial situation. It had been forecast in 2020 that there would be a deficit and when he had asked at the time about plans to address the shortfall and was told not to worry as there had always been predicted shortfalls and they had not materialised. Cllr Cushing had suggested then and at every budget setting meeting since that a wise administration would prepare for the best and plan for the worst. He added that what was particularly striking about this Budget was that there was still no strategy to address future deficits.

Cllr Cushing said that everyone agreed that a long-term solution was needed for local government funding to provide certainty in the years ahead. It was widely acknowledged that demands on council resources had increased considerably due to the global pandemic and international financial pressures and it was likely that this squeeze would continue for the foreseeable future. He accepted that the Council had to deal with the challenges presented by demands for temporary accommodation but said that first tier authorities had huge additional pressures to respond to.

Cllr Cushing then referred to the £250k of savings that were yet to be confirmed. He said that this was the first time the Council had been asked to approve unquantifiable savings and this caused considerable concern as all savings proposals should be fully costed and considered by members.

Referring to council tax, he said that his group would once again oppose any increase. He accepted it was a necessity for the County Council to seek an increase but did not believe that taxpayers should be asked to pay any more at district level. Cllr Cushing then spoke about the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and said that a good one would aim to pull together in one place all of the factors affecting the financial position of the council in the medium term. It should be a living document that goes into some depth, however, it just covered one page within the Budget report. He said that it was not the responsibility of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to set out everything that should be included in the MTFS, the Cabinet should be able to prepare a comprehensive document, as had been done in the past. He went on to say that a deficit of £1.8m was forecast for 2025/26 and £3m for 2026/2027. Such estimates should be faced with dread and he was astonished that

financial sustainability was not a core theme within the Corporate Plan and it was an abdication of responsibility.

Cllr Cushing said that the Opposition had put forward several suggestions in the past to improve the budget, including working with the other districts across the County on shared ventures. To date, only the waste contract operated on this basis. He referred to the savings made by Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils when they joined forces. Cllr Cushing said that sharing of IT support and services could bring huge benefits and he believed there must be many more examples.

Moving onto the capital programme, he said that there were now 84 items listed and this was too large. Some had been carried over year after year with no real challenge. He said that the new addition of Holt Country Park stood out, with almost £0.5m due to be spent and he questioned how this was justifiable. He said that the Council should be prioritising mandatory services not those that were discretionary and 'nice to have'. He added that once again, there was a heavy focus on Cromer and Sheringham and said that the approach should be more equitable, with Stalham in particular, needing more investment as did rural communities across the district.

In conclusion, Cllr Cushing said that this was an administration that had become complacent about budget setting and the poorly developed MTFs showed that there were no plans to address the huge challenges ahead.

The Chairman invited Cllr Fitch-Tillett, leader of the Independent Group to respond to the Budget. She said that she had been ill in recent weeks and had not had the opportunity to study it in detail and therefore had no comment to make at this time but that she was impressed by Cllr Cushing's response.

The Chairman then invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires to respond to the Opposition Leaders' comments. Cllr Shires began by saying that when the Budget for 2018 – 2019 had been presented there had also been forecast deficits and that was during a Conservative Administration. Regarding the MTFs, she said it was not clear what members wanted. She had always offered to work with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and welcomed their input. Cllr Shires said that just 6 years ago, opposition members had been in exactly the same position, facing a deficit and having to consider an increase in council tax. The Government strongly encouraged local taxation and it was one of the limited options available to raise income when there was so little support from central government.

The Chairman invited Cllr Cushing to reply. He said that the last Conservative administration had increased the Council's reserves considerably as they had the foresight to see the financial challenges ahead and the current administration was now benefitting from this. Referring to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, he said that 95% of the analysis and work undertaken was done by the Opposition members, adding that Cabinet should have ideas about what should be included in an MTFs.

Cllr Fitch-Tillett said that she did not wish to make a further response.

The Chairman advised members that an amendment to the Budget had been submitted. The S151 Officer confirmed that she had reviewed it and it was valid. The Chairman invited Cllr Dr V Holliday, proposer of the amendment to introduce it.

Amendment - Sustainable Communities Fund

This amendment proposes that the Sustainable Communities Fund is retained with

an annual funding of £130,000. The funding for this will need to be found either from future revenue or the Reserves.

The Sustainable Communities Fund, which was previously known as the Big Society Fund, has existed for several years. The aim of this fund is to help build strong and sustainable communities and ensure the long term future and wellbeing of our communities here in North Norfolk.

Sustainable Communities is defined as places in which people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a good and sustainable quality of life.

The fund helps communities to develop new and innovative projects which will improve their environment as well as their health and social wellbeing. The fund assists communities in meeting their needs, with funding available for both capital and revenue projects that meet the fund's criteria.

The grants are administered by a Grants Panel made up of seven elected members, that meet four times a year to award grants of between £1,000 and £15,000.

The fund particularly benefits smaller communities which find it hard to raise funds for projects. Small parishes make a large proportion of our district, and unlike the market towns, tend not to benefit from capital spending projects.

It is understood that there is significant pressure on council finances this year. However, this is a relatively small sum in the context of the whole budget, yet it delivers a disproportionately large benefit to our residents. Over the last few years, dozens of payments have been made which have totalled hundreds of thousands of pounds which have done an enormous amount of good for many people. In addition, it is harder to resurrect the fund once it is closed'.

Cllr Holliday said that in the previous financial year, grants totalling £115k had been awarded to a diverse range of organisations. She urged members to support the amendment.

Cllr T FitzPatrick seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires to respond. She said that she had sympathy with Cllr FitzPatrick's desire to keep the Fund going and she really would have liked to continue the Fund and she thanked Cllr Holliday for highlighting the worthiness of the grants that had been awarded. Unfortunately, as the amendment was not fully funded and a specific reserve had not been identified, she could not support it, adding that she would very much like to see it reinstated in the future.

Cllr S Penfold, Chairman of the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund Grants Panel. He thanked Cllr Holliday for the amendment which outlined the great work of the Fund. He thanked all members who had served on the Panel and its predecessor, the Big Society Fund. He thanked the officers who had supported the Fund from the beginning for their hard work. Cllr Penfold said that the problem with the amendment was that it was not fully funded and therefore it was difficult to support. He added that the Big Society Fund had initially been funded by second homes council tax money that was returned to NNDC by the County Council (NCC).

This was later withdrawn by NCC and he suggested that one way forward would be for the Group Leaders to jointly sign a letter to Norfolk County Council requesting the retention of this money.

Cllr J Punchard said that he remembered the establishment of the original Big Society Fund (BSF) and that he had been concerned to see the removal of the Local Area Partnership (LAPs). However, he was pleased to say that he was wrong and that the Administration at the time had delivered on its promise to residents to provide funding directly to local projects via the BSF. He was therefore concerned to see the loss of the NNSCF Grants Fund.

Cllr P Heinrich said that funding for the NNSCF had been taken from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the last year. Regrettably there were other areas that had to be covered by the UKSPF to ensure the funding criteria were met. However, the Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF) provided specific capital funding for community group infrastructure projects and heritage groups. The range was between £10 – 15k and it was administered via the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). In addition, there was funding for communities affected by cable laying for the wind farms which was provided by the wind farm operators such as Vattenfall. He concluded by saying that there was funding available for small communities but agreed that he was supportive of the NNSCF being brought back at a future date.

Cllr N Dixon said that the NNSCF helped to fill an equality gap. It was a modest but highly effective scheme and if there was any way it could be continued then the Council should do so.

Cllr L Withington said that no one wanted to see the NNSCF go. She reiterated that it had been funded by second homes council tax initially and that there had been a push for a sliding scale of reduction. She added that the UKSPF provided larger sums of funding and said that she too was hopeful of the NNSCF returning in the future.

Cllr E Vardy said that it was time the Administration had a vision and made a commitment to the smaller communities in the district.

Cllr J Toye spoke said that the NNSCF had already been maintained for a considerable number of years, despite the drop in funding from NCC. He said that he agreed that the amendment was uncoded and therefore he could not support it.

Cllr T Adams said that as soon as a source for the funding of the NNSCF could be identified it would be reintroduced. In the meantime, the Council would promote other sources of grant funding available. He agreed with Cllr Penfold that the Council needed to retain a share of the second homes council tax and he was willing to work cross-party to achieve this.

Cllr C Cushing said that he had been trying to obtain information on how UKSPF and the RPF funds were allocated but it was not clear what the criteria were. In addition, the NNSCF awarded small sums of money which achieved a large amount of good. The national funds focussed on awarding larger amounts.

Cllr T FitzPatrick seconded the amendment. He said that the S151 Officer had advised that there were adequate reserves in place to continue to fund the NNSCF. Like Cllr Punchard, when former member, Trevor Ivory, proposed establishing the Big Society Fund, he had been sceptical and had been proven wrong. He reiterated Cllr Cushing's comment that there was money available elsewhere but it was aimed

at larger projects not smaller, community based schemes. The NNSCF gave benefit across the whole of the district, it was not just about the money, it also provided community cohesion.

Cllr FitzPatrick went onto say that the share of second homes council tax funding from NCC had been £1m in 2013/14 confirmed until 2017/18. Unfortunately, pressure from parish councils to have a share of this money resulted in it being taken away from the districts. He urged all members who represented smaller communities across the district to support the amendment.

Cllr L Shires said that the cessation of funding was temporary and it was hoped that it could get up and running again at some point. She reiterated that she could not support the amendment as it had no clear indication of where the funding would come from.

A recorded vote was taken for the amendment. Fourteen members voted in favour and twenty against. The amendment was therefore not supported.

The Chairman then opened the debate on the Budget 2024/2025:

Cllr J Toye said that this was a tough budget, however, no alternatives had been put forward and members now needed to work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for residents.

Cllr M Taylor said that he wanted to focus on Stalham. Yet again it had been overlooked and residents were tired of it not being valued or invested in. In the capital programme, Stalham was allocated £20k which indicated the disregard in which it was held. He said that recently, following closure of the high street for resurfacing works, he had asked the Administration to provide free parking during the duration of the closure, which had been refused. He said that if they weren't willing to pay just £700 to do this, then they clearly didn't care.

Cllr N Dixon said that the budget for 2024/2025 was a product of long-term complacency which was based on a past reliance of central government funding to close any forecast gaps. He commented on the huge list of capital bids, specifically the significant amount allocated to Holt Country Park and said that there was still much to be defined and refined.

Cllr K Bayes said that he fully endorsed Cllr Taylor's earlier comments regarding Stalham being overlooked.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that the proposal to help small rural communities had been knocked out and the capital bids, including the one for Holt Country Park, were all for larger communities. It wasn't good enough and should be reviewed.

Cllr L Withington said that the level of financial commitment to Holt Country Park was a result of the lack of investment made by previous administrations. She added that it was important to provide safe, clean facilities for staff to use.

Cllr E Vardy said that as the Local Member for Holt, he was a frequent visitor to the country park and regularly spoke to residents. He said that none of them had ever mentioned the need to upgrade the facilities there and he was not supportive of spending such a huge amount of money.

The Chairman, Cllr S Butikofer, said that in 2019 an equal share of funding for the

seven market towns was delivered via the Market Towns Initiative (MTI) to be used as seed-funding for larger projects, however, not all of the towns used the money to its full potential. She then said that there had been a £2.4m deficit when there was a change of Administration in 2019, so it was not a new situation to deal with. In conclusion, she added that sharing services with neighbouring local authorities had been explored before and it had not gone well.

Cllr Cushing said that the Chairman should remain impartial throughout the debate and not make political comments.

Before moving to the vote, the Chairman invited the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to speak about the committee's assessment of the Budget. Cllr Dixon began by explaining that the Budget had come to the committee for pre-scrutiny on 24th January. At that time the committee made reference to the need for a public consultation on the proposals, the importance of contingency funding and the need to start the budget planning process much earlier in the year.

Then, on 14th February, the Budget was presented to the committee again. This time there was reference to £250k of savings that were yet to be agreed and the meeting had to go into closed session to consider them. The following recommendations were made:

(A) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the list of proposed savings, the use of reserves and the setting of a savings target and made no additional recommendations to full Council on the combination to include in the Budget for 2024/25 for full Council to consider when it meets on 21 February 2024 to set a balanced budget for 2024/25, subject to noting that due to an additional £305,000 being received from the Government in its final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, the additional use of reserves to balance the budget for 2024/25 would now be £111,000 and not £416,000,

(B) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the proposed Capital Programme and new capital bids and made no changes to the list set out in the report

The Chairman then asked the seconder of the Budget, Cllr T Adams to speak.

Cllr Adams began by saying that he was keen to develop projects in Stalham but the Council could not be expected to cover the cost of the impact of NCC works. He said that he did not accept the comments regarding Holt Country Park. The diesel generator was reaching the end of its life and an energy efficient replacement would help towards achieving Net Zero. He went on to say that there had been no amendments to the capital programme which did not reflect the concerns being raised about it tonight. He said that the proposed Budget had been to Overview & Scrutiny Committee three times now, with no major recommendations coming forward.

Cllr Adams said that the £600k of additional temporary accommodation costs, together with rising inflation had presented a challenge in financial terms but the Council remained free from external debts and this was to be applauded. Regarding reserves, he said that the Government had been clear that councils should be drawing on them where that was feasible. In conclusion, Cllr Adams said that the allegation of complacency just wasn't true. If that was the case then every council across the country was also complacent. So many councils were spending huge amounts of money on dealing with homelessness. Consequently nearly every council was raising council tax and he urged the Government to properly fund local

government and recognise how relevant it is to the provision of local services.

The Chairman then asked Cllr Shires to conclude the debate. She began by thanking members for their contributions and said that she was pleased to propose a balanced budget that had the ultimate goal of providing high quality services whilst maintaining financial responsibility. The Council continued to face stark external challenges but she was confident in its ability to move forwards, whilst remaining fully committed to supporting residents.

The Chairman advised members that there would be a recorded vote. Cllr Cushing requested that the votes were split as follows: recommendations 1,2,3,6,8 and 9 en bloc and then recommendations 4 and 7 together and recommendation 5 separately.

The outcome of the votes was as follows:

- Recommendations 1,2,3,6 ,8 and 9 - 32 members voted in favour and two against. The recommendations were therefore carried.
- Recommendations 4 and 7 - 21 members voted in favour, 2 against and 11 abstained. The recommendations were therefore carried.
- Recommendation 5 – 21 members voted in favour and 13 against. The recommendation was therefore carried.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

That having considered the Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves, the following be approved:

- 1) The 2024/25 revenue budget as outlined at Appendix A;**
- 2) The statement of identified savings as detailed in Appendix B,**
- 3) The statement of and movement in the reserves as detailed at Appendix C;**
- 4) The updated Capital Programme and financing for 2023/24 to 2027/28 as shown in Appendix D;**
- 5) The new capital bids recommended for approval as detailed at Appendix E;**
- 6) That Members note the current financial projections for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 that form the Medium Term Financial Strategy and as detailed in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.14 and Appendix A.**
- 7) That Members note and consider the results of the Budget Consultation exercise which are contained in the paper circulated to Members and which will be included as an Appendix to the meeting's minutes when published.**
- 8) The Policy Framework for the Earmarked Reserves and the Optimum Level of the General Fund Reserve of £2.1m for 2024/25 to 2026/27 as detailed in paragraphs 3.35 to 3.72 and in Appendix G;**
- 9) The Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2024/25 as set out in**

paragraphs 3.16 to 3.23;

The Chairman invited the Section 151 Officer to outline the different elements of the Council tax recommendations. She explained that Appendix F to the report set out the statutory calculations for the council tax bases.

The Chairman advised members that, at the request of Cllr Cushing, two recorded votes would be taken – for recommendations 10 and 11b en bloc and 11a separately.

A recorded vote was taken for recommendation 10 and 11b, with members unanimously voting in favour.

A recorded vote was then taken on recommendation 11a, with 21 members voting in favour and 13 against. The recommendation was therefore supported.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

- 10) That Members undertake the Council Tax and statutory calculations set out at Appendix F, and set the Council Tax for 2024/25;**
- 11) The demand on the Collection Fund for 2024/25 is as follows:**
 - a. £6,995,942 for District purposes**
 - b. £3,129,194 for Parish/Town Precepts;**

123 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Cllr M Taylor asked Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning, to confirm whether the Council collected fees for giving out pre-application advice. Cllr Brown confirmed that it did.

Cllr J Boyle asked Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Waste Services for an update on the introduction of a food waste collection service. Cllr Ringer said that the Council was still waiting for confirmation of funding from central Government. To date, only about half of the required funding had been offered. No funding had been allocated for communal waste collection bins or for depots required for the vehicles for possible transfer stations. He added that the Council was having ongoing discussions with DEFRA regarding the provision of evidence that more funding was required. He said that he hoped that progress could be made soon as the Council would like to proceed with food waste collection as soon as possible.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle asked Cllr A Varley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Net Zero, about the level of reserves set aside to achieve Net Zero by 2030. He said that the Reserves Statement for 2024/25 showed that £500k had been allocated to Net Zero initiatives but given that it had cost £92k to upgrade the lights in the Council Offices, he queried whether this would be enough and also asked if there were business cases for these projects. Cllr Varley replied that the Council remained fully committed to its Net Zero target and confirmed that there would be business cases going forward. Cllr Varley said that although he welcomed the progress already made, substantial projects would be needed to ensure that the ambitious target of achieving Net Zero by 2030 was reached. Projects such as the solar panels at the swimming pool in North Walsham were a good example of this. He added that there

was the possibility of leveraging external funding too. Cllr Mancini-Boyle replied that he felt the Administration's approach was unrealistic and not achievable. He said it was not possible that £500k a year would cover the cost of de-carbonising the district.

Cllr L Vickers asked Cllr T Adams, Leader, for an update on 9 Norwich Street, Fakenham. She asked when the Administration would stop procrastinating and if they would commit to taking a decision regarding the site by the end of the financial year. Cllr Adams replied that a position had been taken but that the Council did not own the property and it needed to work with the freeholder to secure the site. He added that it was intended that work would be carried out to the front of the building shortly. However, for the reasons just set out, he could not commit to a timescale, adding that it was a very complex case with additional obligations due to its listed status.

Cllr M Batey asked Cllr T Adams, the Leader, for an update on the Banking Hub in Holt. Cllr Adams replied that he was delighted that Holt had been successful in its bid to have a banking hub and he was convinced that it would be busy. The next stage would be to secure a location for the hub in Holt and he added that the Council would continue to explore similar options for the other towns in the district.

Cllr K Bayes asked Cllr A Brown about a recent Freedom of Information request submitted by a resident of Stalham which indicated that a developer of two major sites in the town had received formal written advice from the Council's Planning Team but had not been charged for it. He asked Cllr Brown to respond to these allegations and whether he would agree to meet with the two ward members to discuss them further. Cllr Brown said that he would provide a written response and if Cllr Bayes and Cllr Taylor were not satisfied with the reply he would meet with them.

Cllr J Toye asked Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, about the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub and whether there was an update. Cllr Withington replied that there had been several design meetings with architects and stakeholder groups. Officers had also visited a leisure facility in Leicestershire which was a very similar project, in that it had 'bolted' a wet facility onto an existing dry facility. The learning from this was being fed back to the design team. Cllr Withington said that pre-tender contract engagement workshops were being set up to ensure local engagement and the provision of local economic benefits too.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that his ward adjoined Fakenham and residents used the facilities in the town. He said that if nothing was done to address the issues at 9 Norwich Street, would Cllr Adams agree to find the funds to serve a notice to do the work on the owners or pursue a CPO. Cllr Adams reiterated that everything was being done to progress the situation at 9 Norwich Street. He said that a CPO was not a straightforward process and a lot of preparation had to be done. He added that the Council had already ensured that the building was structurally sound. The Council could not speak for the landowner and that made it particularly challenging. He said that if local members required any additional information then officers would be happy to provide it.

Cllr P Fisher asked Cllr Ringer about the new waste collection rounds that would be coming into effect in the coming months. Cllr Ringer said that the plans were progressing well and that there was a briefing for members on 13th March. Representatives from Serco would be in attendance and each ward member would receive an information pack setting out the changes in their ward. The Communications Team was starting the process for informing residents regarding

the changes. He encouraged all members to attend the briefing and ensure that they were informed as possible.

124 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

125 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 9.09 pm.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE FORM

Agenda Item: 12 Budget 2024/2025 – recommendations 1,2,3,6,8 & 9

Date: 21 February 2024

	For	Against	Abst		For	Against	Abst
Adams, T	X			Holliday, V	X		
Bailey, P				Housden, N			
Batey, M	X			Macdonald, R	X		
Bayes, K	X			Mancini-Boyle, G	X		
Birch, D				Neatherway, P	X		
Blathwayt, H	X			Paterson, L			
Boyle, J	X			Penfold, S	X		
Brown, A	X			Porter, P	X		
Bull, G	X			Punchard, J		X	
Bütikofer, S	X			Ringer, C	X		
Cushing, C	X			Shires, L	X		
Dixon, N	X			Sims, R	X		
Fisher, P	X			Spagnola, E			
Fitch-Tillett, A		X		Taylor, M	X		
FitzPatrick, T	X			Toye, J	X		
Fletcher, A	X			Toye, K	X		
Fredericks, W				Vardy, E	X		
Hankins, M	X			Varley, A	X		
Heinink, C	X			Vickers, L	X		
Heinrich, P	X			Withington, L	X		

recorded votes form

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE FORM

Agenda Item: 12 Budget 2024/2025 – recommendations 4 & 7

Date: 21 February 2024

	For	Against	Abst		For	Against	Abst
Adams, T	X			Holliday, V			X
Bailey, P				Housden, N			
Batey, M	X			Macdonald, R	X		
Bayes, K			X	Mancini-Boyle, G			X
Birch, D				Neatherway, P			X
Blathwayt, H	X			Paterson, L			
Boyle, J	X			Penfold, S	X		
Brown, A	X			Porter, P			X
Bull, G	X			Punchard, J		X	
Bütikofer, S	X			Ringer, C	X		
Cushing, C			X	Shires, L	X		
Dixon, N			X	Sims, R	X		
Fisher, P	X			Spagnola, E			
Fitch-Tillett, A		X		Taylor, M			X
FitzPatrick, T			X	Toye, J	X		
Fletcher, A	X			Toye, K	X		
Fredericks, W				Vardy, E			X
Hankins, M	X			Varley, A	X		
Heinink, C	X			Vickers, L			X
Heinrich, P	X			Withington, L	X		

recorded votes form

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE FORM

Agenda Item: 12 Budget 2024/2025 – Amendment

Date: 21 February 2024

	For	Against	Abst		For	Against	Abst
Adams, T		X		Holliday, V	X		
Bailey, P				Housden, N			
Batey, M		X		Macdonald, R		X	
Bayes, K	x			Mancini-Boyle, G	X		
Birch, D				Neatherway, P	X		
Blathwayt, H		X		Paterson, L			
Boyle, J		X		Penfold, S		X	
Brown, A		X		Porter, P	X		
Bull, G		X		Punchard, J	X		
Bütikofer, S		X		Ringer, C		X	
Cushing, C	X			Shires, L		X	
Dixon, N	X			Sims, R	X		
Fisher, P		X		Spagnola, E	X		
Fitch-Tillett, A	X			Taylor, M	X		
FitzPatrick, T	X			Toye, J		X	
Fletcher, A		X		Toye, K		X	
Fredericks, W				Vardy, E	X		
Hankins, M		X		Varley, A		X	
Heinink, C		X		Vickers, L	X		
Heinrich, P		X		Withington, L		X	
						X	

recorded votes form

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE FORM

Agenda Item: 12 Council Tax 2024 – 2025 10 & 11b

Date: 21 February 2024

	For	Against	Abst		For	Against	Abst
Adams, T	X			Holliday, V	X		
Bailey, P				Housden, N	X		
Batey, M	X			Macdonald, R	X		
Bayes, K	X			Mancini-Boyle, G	X		
Birch, D				Neatherway, P	X		
Blathwayt, H	X			Paterson, L			
Boyle, J	X			Penfold, S	X		
Brown, A	X			Porter, P	X		
Bull, G	X			Punchard, J	X		
Bütikofer, S	X			Ringer, C	X		
Cushing, C	X			Shires, L	X		
Dixon, N	X			Sims, R	X		
Fisher, P	X			Spagnola, E			
Fitch-Tillett, A	X			Taylor, M	X		
FitzPatrick, T	X			Toye, J	X		
Fletcher, A	X			Toye, K	X		
Fredericks, W				Vardy, E	X		
Hankins, M	X			Varley, A	X		
Heinink, C	X			Vickers, L	X		
Heinrich, P	X			Withington, L	X		

recorded votes form

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE FORM

Agenda Item: 12 Council Tax 2024 – 2025 11a

Date: 21 February 2024

	For	Against	Abst		For	Against	Abst
Adams, T	X			Holliday, V		X	
Bailey, P				Housden, N			
Batey, M	X			Macdonald, R	X		
Bayes, K		X		Mancini-Boyle, G		X	
Birch, D				Neatherway, P		X	
Blathwayt, H	X			Paterson, L			
Boyle, J	X			Penfold, S	X		
Brown, A	X			Porter, P		X	
Bull, G	X			Punchard, J		X	
Bütikofer, S	X			Ringer, C	X		
Cushing, C		X		Shires, L	X		
Dixon, N		X		Sims, R	X		
Fisher, P	X			Spagnola, E			
Fitch-Tillett, A		X		Taylor, M		X	
FitzPatrick, T		X		Toye, J	X		
Fletcher, A	X			Toye, K	X		
Fredericks, W				Vardy, E		X	
Hankins, M	X			Varley, A	X		
Heinink, C	X			Vickers, L		X	
Heinrich, P	X			Withington, L	X		

recorded votes form

This page is intentionally left blank

Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

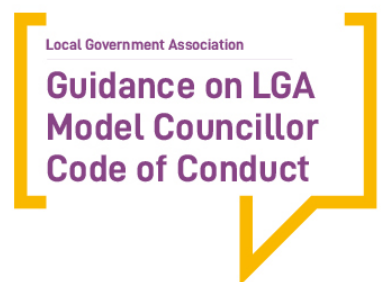
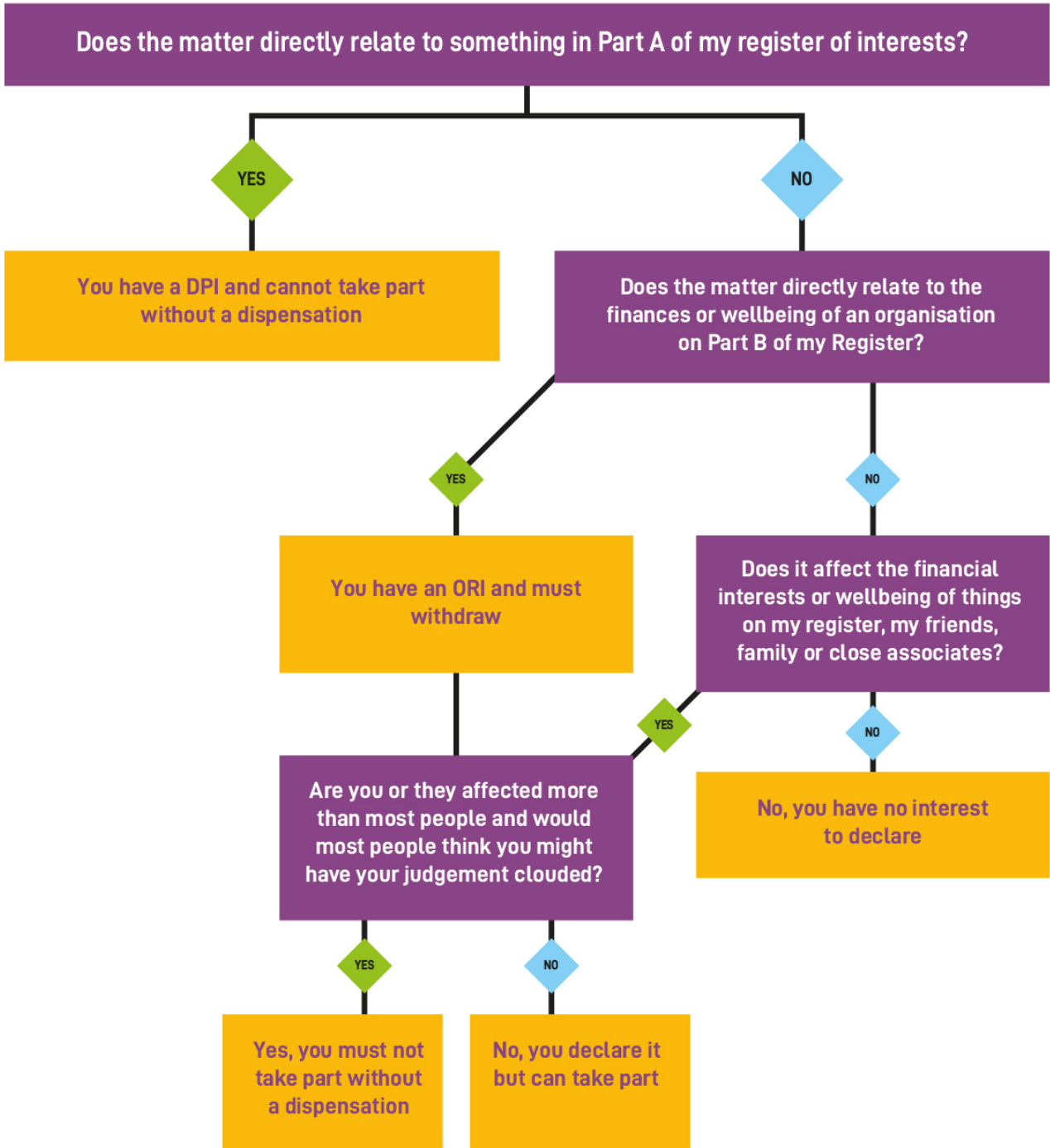
	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
--	---

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

<p>You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority b) any body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
--



CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR ADAMS - CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGY, COUNTYWIDE WORKING AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS, PERFORMANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, HR AND LEGAL SERVICES

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Electoral Services

- Planning is continuing for the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Elections which are being held across the district on Thursday 2nd May 2024 with Polling station bookings now complete.
- We also have had a good response on staff availability and have made job offers to fill roles at each polling station and the Count. A person for each job at each polling station has been allocated, awaiting some replies.
- Request for postal vote opening staff is on our intranet.
- The count venue has been booked, Northrepps Village Hall on Friday 3rd May.
- The Electoral Services Team have now relocated to the Committee Room until after the election.

Human Resources

- The HR Team are currently working to update a number of key policies in line with legislation changes due to come into force this year.
- Training opportunities have included Equality and Diversity training for EH, Motivating to Improve Performance, in addition to a lunch and learn in relation to Neurodiversity in the Workplace and Resilience and Wellbeing Training.

Communications

- Outlook magazine was successfully distributed to 50,000 addresses in North Norfolk during w/c 11 March. We have received some pleasing positive feedback from a few members of the public – and two complaints of duplicate deliveries, which we are raising with distributors Letterbox to ensure these were isolated instances. It is worth noting that from a run of 50,000, two such complaints would represent better than normal/reasonable wastage from multiple complex delivery runs across the district.
- The team attended the successful opening of Black Swan Loke in North Walsham and our video/website/social media coverage was replicated by BBC Online and BBC Norfolk. Positive feedback has been received about

the event from North Walsham HAZ partners Historic England, who attended and were interviewed as part of our coverage.

Legal

- **Information Requests**

- FOI request figures show that the Council's current performance at responding to requests within the statutory 20 working days is at 97%. This performance rate is in line with The Information Commissioner's Office guidance that Councils achieving 95% are good. The legal service continues to provide advice and assistance to the wider Council in order to assist in this area and support the corporate responsibilities.
- In addition to this ongoing advice and assistance, the legal service has provided training sessions on FOI and general information governance to all staff members who have a key role to play such as Information Asset Owners and Assistants. In April, there will be an e-learning module pushed out to all staff to complete learning on managing and keeping information safely and securely.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Nothing further to report.

3 Meetings attended

Attended:

- Funeral of Peter Moore
- Carbon Literacy Training

Meetings:

- East of England LGA White Paper discussion
- Bacton Energy Hub Research Workshop/Discussion
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Public Sector Leaders Board
- Second homes premium discussion with District Leaders
- Numerous other internal officer meetings

To occur:

- DLUHC
- Member Waste Briefing
- North Norfolk MPs
- DCN Conference
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny
- Norfolk Seaweed Ltd.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR HARRY BLATHWAYT - CABINET MEMBER FOR COAST

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Cromer and Mundesley Schemes

- Drop-in Sessions and Local Liaison Meetings took place on the 5th and 6th March in Cromer and Mundesley. These were well attended and constructive.
- MMO licence has been received for the relevant elements of the Mundesley scheme.
- Compound set up at Mundesley is 95% complete and works have commenced to set up the compound in Cromer.
- Successful drawdown of first tranche of the funding from the Environment Agency for Mundesley.

Coastwise

- Coastwise Café drop-in events were successful with 238 attendees, over 5 events. Feedback on usefulness, relevance, and likelihood on attending future events was rated an average of 4.6/5 by attendees.
- Sophie Day (UEA) and Rob Goodliffe (NNDC) won the Innovation & Impact Partnership of the Year Award at UEA for Coastwise.
- Coastwise survey is now open and can be accessed via the Coastwise web page and a QR code in Outlook.
- UEA Environment consultancy module projects with Climate and Environment team are underway, with kick off meetings planned, and project proposals received.

Repairs and Maintenance

- Cromer: access repairs and storm drainage clearance.
- Overstrand: block revetment repairs and material clearance.
- Sheringham: handrail and access repair works and promenade repairs.
- Walcott: concrete repairs and access repairs.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Cromer and Mundesley Schemes

- Groyne surveys in both locations to assess conditions and repairs required.

- Concrete works to western access ramp in Cromer.
- Concrete encasement works to Mundesley sea wall apron.
- Development of information boards and fact sheets to be placed on Mundesley frontage outlining the project and updates.
- Local liaison group meetings to be held every two months throughout the implementation of the project.

Coastwise

- Further sessions and meetings to be arrange with local communities.
- Feedback to be provided from Coastwise Cafes.
- Opportunities around practical actions to be investigated.

Repairs and Maintenance

- Overstrand revetment repairs
- Happisburgh ramp re-cut
- Beeston Bump hole fill
- Cliff-slump clearance Cromer

3 Meetings attended.

11/02/24 Cabinet
 15/02/24 Broads Authority Site visit TPOs
 19/02/24 Carbon Literacy Training
 21/02/24 Routine Coastwise update
 21/02/24 Full Council
 23/02/24 Carbon Literacy Training
 26/02/24 Cabinet Business Planning
 27/02/24 Broads Authority Chairs Meeting
 27/02/24 Norfolk Water Fund Launch Webinar
 29/02/24 Broads Authority Planning Pre-Meeting
 01/03/24 Broads Authority Planning Committee
 01/03/24 Meeting with BA MPs; Aldous, Baker, Lewis, Mayhew, Smith (A)
 04/03/24 Informal Cabinet
 05/03/24 Cromer Phase 2 Coastal Management Scheme drop-in session
 05/03/24 Cromer Phase 2 CMS Local Liaison Group Meeting
 06/03/24 Mundesley Coastal Management Scheme drop-in session
 06/03/24 Mundesley CMS Local Liaison Group Meeting
 07/03/24 Broads Authority Standards Committee
 08/03/24 Broads Authority Heritage Group meeting.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27th March 2024

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

For the period 10th February 2024 to 18th March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

In terms of Planning Policy:

- (i) The **Local Plan Examination** hearing sessions finished on 7th March 2024. I would like to thank everyone that attended and participated in the sessions. We are compiling all the additional information that the Inspector has requested and will send that to him shortly. Thereafter, we effectively wait for him to contact us with his suggestions as to what we need to do next. I remain confident that we will get to adopt our new Local Plan later this year. We keep our website up to date with the latest information – see: [NNDC Local Plan Examination](#).

In terms of Development Management:

- (ii) The **Development Committee** has met twice since the last Council meeting on 7th and 21st March 2024 and considered applications at Catfield, Erpingham and Hoveton.
- (iii) Development Committee considered a **Performance Report** at its' meeting on 7th March – see: [DC Performance 07 March 2024 Final.pdf \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#). This again demonstrated the fact we are doing very well on the performance indicators we report to Government.

Government Led Changes to Planning:

- (iv) Last month, I observed that the **extent of Government changes** to the Planning system is continuous / never ending – and since our last meeting the Government have made a series of new announcements and started consultations on:
 - changes to permitted development rights to support recreational camping, renewable energy and film-making – dated: 11th March 2024;
 - the details of the operational reforms which the government is looking to make to the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) consenting process – dated 6th March 2024; and,

- an accelerated planning service, planning performance measures, extensions of time, expedited appeals and section 73B applications (associated with applications which would enable material variations to existing planning permissions). – dated 6th March 2024.

Further details on all of these are available via: [Policy papers and consultations - DLUHC](#). I imagine another one will be published before the Council meeting.

In terms of Building Control:

- (i) I am pleased to provide an update on the new national **system of accreditation** for individual surveyors – i.e. that on the 6th April it will become a legal requirement to register as a licenced (and validated as competent) officer. This requirement has been given the legally protected term ‘Registered Building Inspector’ (RBI). It will be a criminal offence to impersonate a RBI, and the Local Authority will have a legal obligation to consult with a Registered Building Inspector before carrying out any restricted functions or activities.

Restricted Activities include checking plans and inspecting work and *Restricted Functions* include issuing a decision notice, issuing a completion notice and taking enforcement action.

There has been some negative media coverage recently as a lot of authorities will not be in a position to fulfil the above requirements. Following letters of concern written to the Government from LABC and other professional bodies, the decision has been made by Government to allow the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to delay this requirement until the 6th July – a delay of 13 weeks. There is still a minimum expectation to register with the BSR and follow code of conduct requirements during this interim period.

I am pleased to report that NNDC has been proactive in ensuring that the surveyors we employ have undertaken the necessary validation process, consisting of portfolio submission and examination to assess competency. These have been undertaken under the Building Safety Competence Foundation (BSCF) scheme - one of three schemes approved to assess competence.

The team sat the required exam on different days/times to ensure service continuity, and the first 2 surveyors have been approved as competent and registered accordingly with the Building Safety Regulator. The remaining team members are expecting their results in mid to late March – i.e. in time for the original April deadline. At this stage all surveyors are all registered at Class 1, meaning even if there are delays in the scheme marking, the surveyors can continue to work under the supervision of a Registered Class 2 surveyor - with 2 of those already being in place. With the temporary extension given it is expected that the vast majority – if not all - of the team will be registered at the necessary class.

The Registration process is explained in more detail at [Registered Building Inspectors](#).

Other matters of potential interest:

- (ii) Broadland District Council secured £9.6m from HM Government for a **Nutrient Neutrality** Mitigation Fund. A paper to Broadland's Cabinet on the 19th March has been published that includes details as to the process for bids to that Fund. The report is available at: [Broadland DC Cabinet Paper - Norfolk Nutrient Mitigation Fund](#).
- (iii) The Council's **Planning Policy Manager** is retiring next month after a long period of public service – including 27 years at North Norfolk District Council. I would like to place on record my thanks for his contribution to North Norfolk and this Council and wish him well for the future.
- (iv) A programme of **training for Councillors** on issues relevant to Planning is being developed and I anticipate that it will be published next month. The first session(s) is likely to be on Nutrient Neutrality and Biodiversity Net Gain. I am encouraging the Planning team to organise something for interested Councillors on a once a quarter basis. If you have any ideas for topics do please let me know. I am aware there is also interest in a session on our Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS)

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

The next (and fourth) Town and Parish Council road-show will be held in Cromer on 26th March 2024.

The next Development Committee is due to be held on 21st March 2024.

3 Meetings attended

13 – 15th February - Local Plan Examination
15th February - Portfolio Holder Meeting
19th February - Carbon Literacy Training
19th February - Abuse and Intimidation Training
19th February - Edgefield Parish Council
21st February - Full Council
22nd February - East of England Local Government Association
22nd February - Hunworth Common Conservation
23rd February - Carbon Literacy Training
26th February - Pre-Cabinet and Business Planning
29th February - Norfolk Environmental Credits
29th February - Police Safer Neighbourhood Area Partnership
4th March - Informal Cabinet
11th March - Cabinet and Corporate Plan Review
12th March - Stody Parish Council
13th March - Waste Recycling Member Briefing
13th March - Corpusty and Saxthorpe Parish Council

4 Future Meetings (after 18th March) due to be Attended
20 th March - Overview & Scrutiny Committee 21 st March - Development Committee 21 st March - Portfolio Holder Meeting 27 th March - Full Council 4 th April - Development Committee 15 th April - Cabinet and Business Planning

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

March 2024

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & PEOPLE SERVICES

For the Period up to 29th February 2024.

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Spring Budget Update (6th March 2024)

National Insurance contributions (NICs) rates – The main rate of Class 1 employee NICs will be cut from 10% to 8%. This will take effect from 6 April 2024. The government will also make a further 2p cut to the main rate of self-employed National Insurance on top of the 1p cut announced at Autumn Statement. This means that from 6 April 2024 the main rate of Class 4 self-employed NICs will now be reduced from 9% to 6%.

National Insurance (class 2) - The government will launch a consultation later this year to deliver its commitment to fully abolish Class 2 National Insurance. This follows the announcement at Autumn Statement 2023 that from April 2024 no self-employed person will be required to pay Class 2, whilst those who pay voluntarily will continue to be able to do so to build entitlement to contributory benefits. The government remains committed to reforming this complex part of the tax system while ensuring that low-income self-employed individuals will not pay more.

Exploring options to better target support to households – The government will consult shortly on options to enable better targeting of economic support to households. This will improve the fairness of policies such as the high-income child benefit cap, by allowing it to move to a system based on household income, and the targeting of future economic support including in times of crisis.

Household Support Fund Extension – To help the most vulnerable households with the cost of essentials such as food and utilities, the government is providing an additional £500 million to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England from April to September 2024.

Universal Credit Budgeting Loans - The government is increasing the repayment period on budgeting advance loans taken out by claimants on Universal Credit from 12 months to 24 months. This will apply to new Budgeting Advances taken out from December 2024 and will reduce the monthly repayments on these loans, relieving financial pressure on low-income households on Universal Credit.

Debt Relief Orders - To support households struggling with problem debts, the government is making it easier to access a Debt Relief Order (DRO). DROs are a personal insolvency debt solution for individuals who cannot pay their debts. The government is removing the £90 administration fee from 6 April 2024. The government is also raising the maximum debt value threshold from £30,000 to £50,000 and increasing the maximum value of motor vehicle that an individual can retain from £2,000 to £4,000, from 28 June 2024. These changes mean that more people can access debt relief and get a fresh start with their finances.

Annual uprating of Benefits

We are pleased to confirm we have now completed the annual uprating of all Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims from 1st April 2024. In total 7348 claims have been updated. Notifications for claimants along with their Council Tax bill will be issued on 4th March 2024. A web page providing useful information has been created to allow residents to self-serve www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/benefitsuprating

There will be 53 Mondays in the 2024/25 financial year, from 1 April 2024 until 6 April 2025, with the last Monday on 31 March 2025.

It happens every five or six years because there are 365 days in a year or 366 days in a leap year, which breaks down to 52 weeks in a year plus one day or 52 weeks plus two days in a leap year. These extra days accumulate to add an additional week to the year.

Customers on Housing Benefits and legacy benefits will not be affected by this, as Housing Benefit will cover every week that it is charged. For customers in receipt of Universal Credit, this will mean they will miss out on 1 weeks Housing Costs. The DWP only pays up to 52 weeks of rent per year as they work out the weekly rent for those on Universal Credit by taking the total yearly amount and dividing it by 52 weeks. For example, £10,400 per year ÷ 52 weeks = £200pw rent. We have provided further information on this on our webpage www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/benefitsuprating

Household Support Fund (Round 4)

NNDC was awarded £196k under round 4 of the scheme. In August we issued funding to 1042 households with each household receiving a Post Office PayOut voucher for £80. We have now issued the second and final tranche of payments under the fund where we have provided a voucher for £65 to a further 1008 households. Households have one month to cash their voucher. Where vouchers are not cashed and subsequently expire, we will be working with customers to ensure they still receive the funding.

Under the Household Support Fund, we are also operating an emergency support fund for groceries which will provide a 48hr response.

All funding must be spent by 31st March 2024.

Discretionary Housing Payments

We continue to administer **Discretionary Housing Payments** (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community. Cases are worked on as a panel which includes officers from the Benefits Team and Housing Options.

For 2023/24, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037, and up to 29th February 2024 we have spent 89.4% of our allocation across 105 households. A further total of 200 applications (185 households) have been refused as the circumstances of the household are outside the scope of the scheme. Where we have not been able to provide support through the DHP scheme, the team will consider other funding options and signpost the customer accordingly.

A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 105 households can be seen below.

Single Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	64
Rent Arrears	£4,659.51
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£210.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£52,886.16
Sub Total Expenditure	£57,577.67
Single Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	8
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£3,956.08
Sub Total Expenditure	£3,956.08
Couple Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	4
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£2,367.99
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,367.99
Couple Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	1
Rent Arrears	£700.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£700.00
Family Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	28
Rent Arrears	£800.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£1,694.99
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£24,829.78
Sub Total Expenditure	£27,324.77
Family Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	0
Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£0.00
Total Expenditure	£92,104.51

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 29 February 2024 there were 2490 households on the housing list with 506 (20%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

Housing List by Bedroom Need					Homes Let by Property size. (01 April 2023 to 29 February 2024)			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	203	1005	202	1410	95	9	4	108
2 Bed	116	379	99	594	89	5	5	99
3 Bed	98	109	39	246	18		1	19
4 Bed	83	86	42	211	1			1
5 Bed +	6	13	10	29	0			
Total	506	1592	392	2490	203	14	10	227

Overall, the total number of lettings has decreased by 25% when compared to the same period in 22/23. We continue to see an increase demand for homes suitable for families. Over 32% of the total homes had a minimum age requirement.

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

Our Housing Options Service offers advice to anyone who has a housing problem, and offers support and assistance if someone is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, within the next 56 days.

Approaches to the service remain high and between 01 April 2023 to 29 February 2024 we have opened 1017 new cases. Each case represents a household who has contacted us as they have some sort of housing need, and we are still seeing an increase in homeless households (relief cases).

As at the 29 February 2024 there were 216 open homeless cases. Of which 127 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness (prevention Duty) or were homeless (Relief Duty), of these 72 households included dependent children.

The three most common triggers of homelessness during this period were:

- The loss of a private tenancy (34)
- Households no longer being able to stay with families and friends (14)
- Domestic abuse (11)

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 29 February 2024 there were 54 households in Temporary Accommodation. This is an overall decrease of 22% from the same date (February) 2023. The decrease reflects a reduction in Single households which have decreased by 46% when compared to February 2023, the number of families households have risen just over 5%, and the actual number of children within family households has increased by just over 10%.

- 36 (67%) Family Households have dependent Children
- 15 (28%) Single Adult Households
- 2 (5%) Other Households (includes couples and households with older children)

Rough Sleeping

For the month of February (at various points in time) we recorded 9 people sleeping rough in North Norfolk, this includes 1 person with entrenched experience of rough sleeping, 5 people who have previously been seen sleeping rough in the district and 3 people who were new to rough sleeping in the district.

At the end of February 1 person was still rough sleeping, 2 people are being assisted under Homeless legislation and are in Temporary Accommodation and the remaining 6 people are no longer in the district and are not engaging with officers.

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Housing Fund

In the first round of funding, Government offered the Council up to £1,245,210 to provide eleven additional affordable homes in the District by December 2023 – initially to house Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households. Cabinet (on 6/3/23) agreed to accept the money and work with the Flagship Housing Group to deliver the homes. The Council will own one (purchase now complete and home occupied) and Flagship Housing will own the remaining ten (the first of these have now been advertised on Your Choice Your Home and the remainder will be ready before April 2024).

The Council accepted a further £560,000 of funding to provide four further homes. Three will initially house Afghan refugee households. The fourth will house a homeless household. Offers to purchase have been accepted on four properties, two of which have completed and will be ready for occupation shortly, and the remaining two purchases will complete by March 2024.

In the long-term, all fifteen homes would be available to households on the Council's housing list, either as temporary accommodation for homeless households, or as a long-term affordable home.

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing scheme pipeline, many of which are 'rural exception' housing sites at various points in the development process. There are over twenty developments which will, subject to approvals, yield more than 350 new affordable homes in the next few years.

In common with most of Norfolk, 'Nutrient neutrality' is a delaying factor for many sites within the district. Officers have worked with Broadland Housing Association to get in-principal support from Homes England (the Government's funding agency for affordable housing) to fund a package of five 'exception' sites in North Norfolk to be delivered over the next two to three years.

Seventeen new affordable homes have been built so far, and it is anticipated that thirty-eight affordable homes will be completed in 2023/24.

Grant for Energy Efficiency Improvement Works

North Norfolk District Council is part of the Norfolk Warm Homes Consortium of five Norfolk districts.

The consortium has been successful in a bid for £3,933,000 to improve the energy efficiency of 'off-gas' homes. Eligibility criteria for future grants have been simplified and will include any home within the most deprived areas in the UK (measured by the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation income deciles 1-3) if privately owned or privately rented, provided the Energy Performance Certificate is rated D-G and the households has no more than £100,000 in savings. This will open up the grant to many more eligible households – across Norfolk there are 603 postcode areas covering 2,600 properties believed to meet the criteria and 23% of these are in North Norfolk.

The Council's Energy Officer, working with Norfolk Warm Homes, has been promoting the scheme in the Stalham area. The local community, Town Council, shopkeepers, schools, etc. have been very supportive. The approach of sending targeted mail followed by door knocking has worked very well. As a result, the projected spend in North Norfolk for 2023/24 will be 40% of the total for Norfolk Warm Homes. We plan to replicate this approach in other parts of the district in 2024.

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

IHAT is constantly evolving and striving to improve. We are continually evaluating customer pathways, and how improvements can be made (reducing time scales, increasing availability of literature) and how we can utilise IHAT resources as effectively as possible.

We have identified that a number of our customers are keen to be able to self-serve and self-manage their own adaptations with guidance from IHAT. With this in mind, we have designed a range of literature and resources to support and guide customers through the process and allow them to consider the option available to them. By customers being able to take a proactive role it can reduce wait times significantly and empower customers to make informed decisions on how they would like their needs met.

We aim to monitor this and record outcomes (including number of formal referrals to IHAT) customer journey satisfaction and wait times over the course of 2024-25.

Figures – Disabled Facilities Grant

New contacts	32
YTD total Contacts	510
Total approved grants	19
Total approved grants value	£184,155.72
YTD Approval value	£1,278,435.88
Completed adaptations	2
Total spend for period	£19,895.00
YTD Completed cases	101
YTD Spend	£1,167,503.68

Social Prescribing

For February 2024, the statistical highlights are as follows:

- **60** Referrals into Social Prescribing identifying **152** concerns.

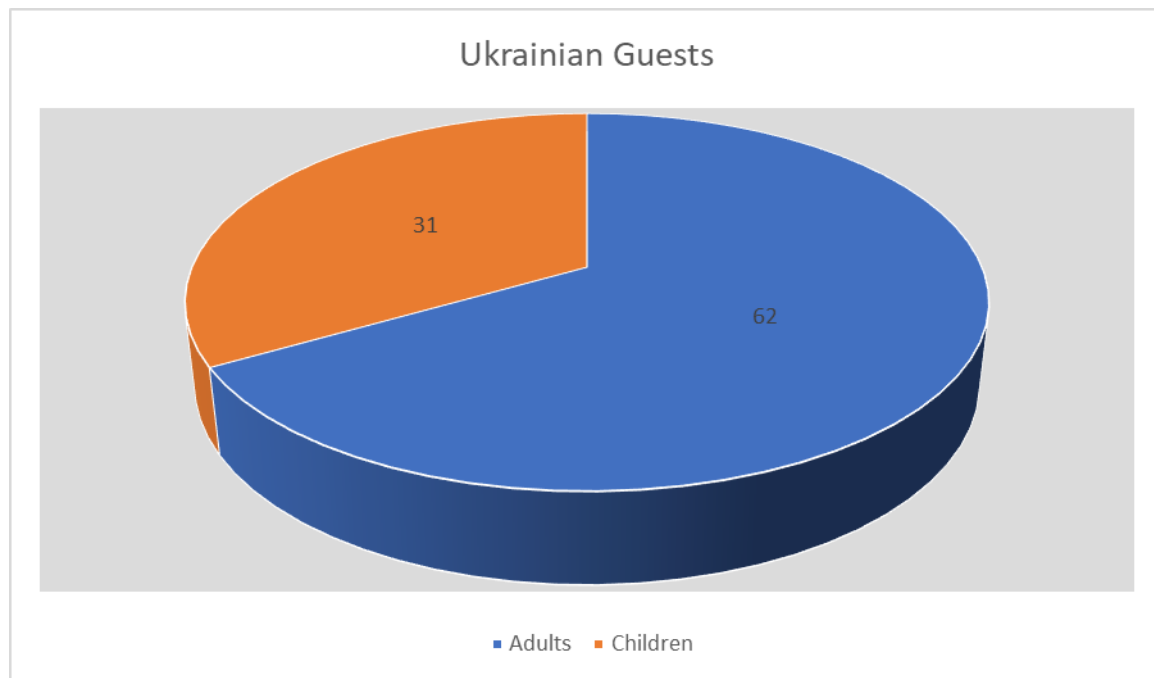
From April 2023 to date, the team have received:

- **589** Referrals since April 2023
- **1440** different concerns raised by residents and supported throughout 2023-2024

The new North Norfolk Community HUB meetings will launch Thursday 4th April and will take place monthly. The meetings will offer an opportunity for statutory and voluntary organisations in North Norfolk to network, share best practice, promote events and update on new and existing services.

Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

There are currently ninety-three Ukrainian guests being supported in the North Norfolk, of which sixty-two are adults and thirty-one are under the age of eighteen.



There are thirty-four hosts, of which three are hosting two separate families/un-related single guests.

Other Business

Defense Employers Recognition Scheme – Gold Accreditation

NNDC’s expression of interest application has been submitted and accepted for 2024. The application for NNDC to gain gold accreditation for 2024 is on schedule, with a target date of submission of the 12th March 2024.

Ageism Action Day (20th March 2024)

NNDC, on behalf of the North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership are hosting an Age positive imagery photography competition, open to the public from March 1st. The aim of the competition is to challenge stereotypes around older people, by encouraging the public to capture images of older people living active lives and making a valuable contribution to their communities.

The images captured will be used within promotional materials produced for Age Friendly North Norfolk, and an exhibition of the entries will be hosted in Sheringham Library from Ageism Action Day, the 20th of March.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

March 2024

COUNCILLOR LIZ WITHINGTON – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND OUTREACH SERVICES

For the Period up to 29th February 2024.

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Community Connectors

In February 2024, the Community Connectors, alongside their regular presence at community groups, warm spaces, and other events, attended the Sheringham Helps event to assist with promoting the development of Age Friendly Communities. They have further assisted with scoping work for Age Friendly Communities by gathering community voices in the pilot area of Sheringham, which will be used to shape the action plan for the community.

In addition, the team have supported with several Coastwise Cafes, increasing the support offer that NNDC can make at these events.

In February, the Community Connectors have received **sixteen** referrals from the Social Prescribing team, to support vulnerable individuals to connect with their communities, through local supports and community groups.

The Community Connectors radio show episodes for February covered the following topics:

- Friend in Deed
- SENsational Families
- Norfolk Rivers Trust

<https://www.poppylandradi.co.uk/shows/community-connectors>

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR RINGER - CABINET MEMBER FOR IT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE SERVICES

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Environmental Protection

NNDC are participating in operation Octane, a police initiative to clamp down on antisocial car-meets. At NNDC we are not adversely affected as badly as other Councils, however car meets are mobile, so where one Council clamps down, they will and do move to other areas. We are looking any a consistent approach with other Councils and there are discussions to introduce a PSPO for the NNDC district.

Public Space Protection Orders regarding dog restrictions are currently out for consultation. These relate to the proms and beaches across the district and the consultation remains open until 11th April 2024.

The Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group met last week, this County group is made up of District Councils, the Environment Agency, Police and County Council work together to try and tackle fly tipping. The group are currently working on a County wide intelligence map which will allow stakeholders to share relevant information in a timely manner.

Public Protection

In terms for food hygiene inspections the team have worked hard and are on track to achieve their inspection target for 2023/24 despite some vacancies and long-term sickness in the team. There is still a large number (approx. 800) of lower risk food businesses which are overdue an inspection. This is a continuing legacy of Covid. Extra resource has been brought in to help catch up this work, however the team continue to see a drop in standards in some premises.

The consultation on the Hackney Carriage fare review has now been concluded and the new fares have come in force.

Civil Contingencies

Coordinated preparation and response re Spring tides, coastal and river flood

alerts

Officers managed the issue with EA flood gate at Cley on 13 Feb and debriefed the incident for future learning.

In February Norfolk had 236% of the long-term average rainfall and it was 3.3 degrees Celsius above the average temperature. The team have continued to respond to flooding incidents where appropriate in areas such as Potter Heigham, the Broads, Weybourne and Happisburgh. Working alongside other key partners such as the environment agency, fire service, county highways and the lead local flood authority.

Environmental and Safety Services

Despite some recent staff departures, the team have continued to work with Serco on the forthcoming round reorganisation which will commence on the 8th of April. Leaflets detailing changes to bin collections have been delivered by Royal Mail to all households across the district, between 4th March-28th March. Additional information has been supplied to properties experiencing more than 18 days between collections and additional 3 bags will be collected.

Trade customers and subscribers to the garden bin service have been written to informing them of the increased charges from 1st of April.

In preparation for the summer season the seasonal litter bins have been deployed to coastal areas and a deep cleanse of proms and toilets has occurred.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Train WIFI
 - o We have put considerable effort into solving the issue of connecting to NNDC IT systems on the trains. We have made progress and believe we have a solution but are awaiting confirmation from our 'test' members.
- Training
 - o The Cyber awareness courses have been continued to be pushed out bi-monthly and have a 61.85% take up. We need all managers to push this message and increase people's awareness. Alternate months we have been sending a simulated phishing email that has fooled 14.67% of staff/members.
 - o We should aim to reduce this as it leaves us very vulnerable in the case of a real phishing attempt.
- Mobile Phones
 - o The project to replace staff's mobiles phone is complete meaning all phones are compliant with the required security patches.

IT Web Team

- Garden Bins
 - o Garden Bin customer Direct Debits updated per agreed prices.

- o Data generated to allow contact of those customer to advise of same
- o Significant work done to internal Garden bin account management software.
- Planning
 - o Continued support of planning and the Local plan examination library
- Environmental Health
 - o Fly tipping process updated in preparation of Assure integration.
 - o Testing of online systems for new Whitespace round data
- Council Tax
 - o Council Tax residents' online consultation
- Website Updates
 - o Invest North Norfolk section.
 - o Empty homes content
 - o Council tax and business rates
 - o FAQ for the Bin round changes.
 - o Triathlon events
 - o Coastwise survey
 - o All intranet content and maintenance

ICT Applications Support Team

- Land Registry
 - o Project now underway to migrate land registry data to national database. Confirmation to proceed received from central government. Approx 9-month project. Substantial activity to support.
- Updates
 - o Upgrade of Exacom section 106 Planning software completed Feb.
 - o Upgrade of Civica Revs/Bens software completed Feb.
 - o Upgrade of Assure Planning software completed Feb.
 - o Upgrade of HR Resourcelink software completed Feb.
 - o Revs/bens year-end updating successfully completed. Included unsocial hours and weekend working.
- Service Desk
 - o In collaboration with ICT Web and Network teams review of service desk outstanding calls undertaken. Resulting numbers far more manageable.
- Pay360
 - o Work ongoing to convert Pay360 payment software to a cloud-based solution due to existing solution being decommissioned. Go-live Apr 24. Some issues encountered, working with supplier to resolve.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The target operating model (bin round rerouting) will occur from April 8th 2024. A separate briefing on this matter was held for members on the 13th of March.

The Great British Spring Clean takes place between 15th of March and 31st of March 2024. NNDC do have litter picking sets for community groups to borrow at any time of year.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Servers
 - o Upgrading our remote desktop servers to the latest operating system.

- Training
 - o Continue to push Cyber awareness and work through the Cyber Treatment Plan as issued by Local Digital Cyber Support (providers of Levelling -Up funding).
 - o Training for the Technical Support Assistants.

- Cyber Incident Plan
 - o Revising the Cyber Incident Plan.

- Elections
 - o Supporting Elections in the run up to the PCC elections firstly by moving them to the committee room.

- Servers
 - o Installation of new hosts at Cromer, these servers will then go to Fakenham as the ones there are now 9 years old.

IT Web Team

- Online Payments Portal
 - o Updating of prices in online payments portal for the start of the new financial year

- Online Forms
 - o Updating of online forms to accommodate Assure changes.

ICT Applications Support Team

- Uniform software
 - o LIVE-TEST snapshot to be enacted in near future. Substantial piece of technical work.

- Revs/Bens
 - o Rollover at end of month, 2nd part of year end process. Again, will

involve unsocial hours.

- Power BI
- o More members of team to attend Power BI training to meet anticipated organisational demand. Possibly to plug gap from decision not to reprocare performance software.

3 Meetings attended

- Norfolk Waste Partnership
- Serco contract review and development board
- Members Briefing on changes to waste collections
- Regular meetings with officers and members on matters related to the portfolio

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

March 2024

COUNCILLOR SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, ASSETS AND PROPERTY SERVICES

For the period February 2024 to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Finance

- **Budget**
 - A balanced budget for 2024/25 was presented to Full Council in February, however there is still work to be undertaken to identify further savings of £250k.
- **Audits**
 - A number of internal audits are nearing completion including AP (Accounts Payable) and Key Controls.
- **Cash Receipting**
 - The team continue to work with IT and customer services to upgrade the cash receipting system.

Revenues

- **Year-End/Annual Billing**
 - The 2024/25 year-end/annual billing work has been successfully completed.
 - The Non-Domestic (Business) Rates paper annual bills were dispatched on 26 February 2024 with e-bills being sent the previous week.
 - The Council Tax annual bills and the benefit notification letters were dispatched on 4 March 2024 with e-bills being sent the previous week.
 - The bills may take longer to arrive this year as we are taking part in a new Royal Mail testing and innovation scheme that takes between 3 – 5 days to arrive, this is to gain further mailing discounts.
- **Empty Properties**
 - The Council Tax Empty Property Premium that charges empty properties an additional 100% charge after 12 months (rather than two years) starts from 1 April 2024. These customers have been notified ahead of annual billing.
- **Collection as of 31 March 2024.**
 - As we head towards the end of the financial year 31 March 2024, there is lots of activities going on to help us maximise revenues and strive to hit our in-year collection targets of 98.20% for council tax and

99.20% for Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (NDR).

- The Council Tax collection as of 12 March 2024 was £87.279M (97.01%).
- The NDR collection as of 12 March 2024 was £24.297M (98.20%).

Estates

• Vacant properties

- Tenant works to the Seaview building are progressing well and they are currently aiming to open around Easter.
- Concessions - License for 7 concession pitches agreed with a higher total income from previous year. 1 newly created pitch has been licenced. 2 additional pitches being marketed but with minimal interest.
- Cornish way letting – one-unit vacant pending letting once tenants reorganised. Two units soon to be relinquished and marketing commencing imminently.
- The Cedars completion of 3 of the 4 agreed leases is expected on or before the 1st of April and the fourth should follow shortly thereafter. The final room in the main building to be let has two parties showing a strong interest. The outcome of the Listed Building review is still awaited.
- Black Swan Loke development works competed with the official opening taking place on the 14th of March.
- Prospective tenant of the former hard standing in North Lodge Park has withdrawn from the letting prior to remarketing of the opportunity.

• Decarbonisation

- Cromer office insulation panelling completed.
- Phase 2 of Sheringham Little Theatre decarbonisation works are awaiting LEP grant confirmation. Works due to commence within 2 weeks of grant funding approval.

• Leases

- Fakenham large industrial unit lease renewal - Constructive meeting held with the tenant. Revised rental level for a new lease has been put forwards, once agreed in principle a paper will be submitted to cabinet for approval.
- Rent review increase and lease renewals for approx. 300 chalet and beach huts are to be completed for 1st April 2024.
- Negotiations continue regarding a lease renewal to North Walsham Football Club.
- Discussions are ongoing with Marrams Bowls Club, Cromer regarding repair works to the building.
- Mundesley seafront unit rent review increases agreed.
- Cabbell Park, Cromer car park lease terms have been agreed. In addition, new lease for sports club in negotiation, subject to plans.
- Lease renewal negotiations for industrial unit at Catfield, Cornish Way underway.
- Trial letting of visitor centre at Holt County park is agreed and due to commence imminently.
- Identification of possible sites for “click and collect” points has been done. Site surveys to progress imminently to consider viability.
- Consideration and exploration of possible sites for battery boxes on

NNDC land underway.

- Gas Governor lease, Sheringham renewal under negotiation awaiting tenant feedback.
- Donkey shelter – Building redevelopment by community organisation being considered. Currently with organisations architects. Heads of terms for new lease to be agreed, chalet tenants relocated to vacant plots in preparation for project.
- Cromer Council office first floor lease due for renewal. Terms currently being negotiated. Paper to be prepared for Cabinet to consider prior to approval of the lease.

- **Disposal**

- Enabling land at Sheringham, continues to progress through the option agreement process.
- Proposed sale of Station Approach Putting Greens in Sheringham progressing.
- Consideration of disposal of Highfield Road car park to local housing association is underway.
- Potential disposal of small parcel of land in Mundesley following encroachment investigations.
- Mundesley Gun emplacement meeting scheduled towards end of March to consider disposal further.

- **Acquisition**

- One further residential property for the Housing Team is due to complete on the 22nd of March. Funding for 2 additional residential properties has been secured, market currently being reviewed for suitable properties.

Property Services

- **Public Conveniences**

- The public conveniences and bridge at the Leas Sheringham have been closed due to structural failure.
- Budget has been approved and repair works will commence shortly.
- Once these repairs have been completed works will recommence on the refurbishment works to the public conveniences therefore securing the external changing places funding.
- Tender for Albert Street public conveniences has now been awarded with works due to commence shortly therefore securing the external changing places funding.
- Demolition of the existing public convenience at Highfields Road Fakenham is being planned and will commence shortly

- **The Leas**

- Finalising designs with the local member and leader for the play area refurbishment at the Leas Sheringham. We are looking to promote inclusion going forward with NNDC play areas and are supporting the everyone has the right to play initiative, and this refurbishment provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our commitment.
- Working with the local member to develop a programme of works for general improvements to the amenity area to the west of the Leas public conveniences. Initial proposals here would include removal of

the ornamental water features in their entirety and refurbishment of the horse box shelters and the shelter by the yacht pond.

- **Black Swan Loke**
 - Successful completion of works to Black Swan Loke North Walsham. Excellent example of collaborative working with Estates and up to 77% upcycled and surplus construction material used to keep costs inside of the budget.
- **The Reef**
 - Collaborative working with Estates to undertake remedial works at the Reef, Sheringham. Some works complete but works in progress continue.
- **Cromer Offices**
 - Works to upgrade / replace fire doors at Holt Road offices is currently WIP, on target and within budget.
 - Tender for Cromer offices LED programme 2nd / 3rd phase works is now live.
- **The Marrams**
 - Works to reposition the lighting columns at the Marrams footpath Cromer have commenced.
- **Cromer Pier**
 - Cromer Pier substructure works to Cromer Pier WIP. On time and within budget.
 - Budget for next pier sub structure survey has been agreed and the route for procurement of this specialist piece of work is being deliberated.
 - This includes full rope access solutions below the decking and divers in the water to assess the condition of the sacrificial concrete encasements of the pile legs.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Finance

- **Year-end Close down 2023/24,**
 - Guidance has been prepared and circulated to budget managers and key personnel. This is a busy time for the finance section ensuring the correct treatment of expenditure and income relating to 2023/24 and preparing the final budget monitoring/outturn position against Revenue and Capital for 2023/24.
- **Audits**
 - Early external audit work with Ernst and Young (EY) to try and resume a more normal timeline for the audit process.
 - Prior year outstanding audits for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

- **CIVICA**
 - Financial management system software upgrade, timing to be confirmed.

Revenues

- **Training/Development**
 - Ongoing internal training of three Level 3 Business Admin Certificated apprentices and external training for an officer studying towards the Diploma in Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation (IRRV) plus a team leader studying towards the level 5 CMI management qualification.
- **Service Improvements**
 - Online forms - reviewing and improving the most used customer paper forms including the Long-term empty property review forms as part of our Business Process Review of the current process.
 - Reviewing and implementing service improvements suggested by staff including a direct debit online form to save NNDC paying capita for the current form provided on our webpages.

Estates

- **Year End**
 - Year-end service charge reconciliation and reporting of updated service charge budgets for 24/25.
- **Beach Huts**
 - Beach hut and chalet weekly lets for 24/25 to go live from 22nd of March.

Property Services

- **Recruitment**
 - Recruitment for a shared apprentice to cover PS, Housing Options, IHAT has been delayed. It is agreed the Asset and Property Programme Manager will line manage this post.
 - Property Services have been asked to accommodate a work experience member to the team for a short period.
- **Car Parks**
 - Working up tender for car park repairs from current capital fund.
- **FLASH**
 - Project planning has commenced with Fakenham Sports Centre.
- **Capital Works**
 - Busy capital works programme for financial year 20224 - 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR ADAM VARLEY CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND NET ZERO

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Carbon Literacy training update

Cabinet and a large number of operational managers have received their carbon literacy training. A carbon awareness module is now being rolled out to other staff members.

UEA project

Kick off meetings have been held with UEA students carrying out carbon offsetting and habitat-based research projects applicable to our estate.

Solar Reef Carport update

The solar panels at the Reef continue to be monitored. In January 24 the panels produced **98.67%** of the energy expected in a typical January and in February 24 the panels produced **104.48%** of the energy expected in a typical February as stated in the original business case.

Cromer Office insulation works

Insulation of the external walls of the Cromer office has been completed. A consultant is being used to draw up a road map of further works at the Cromer office.

East of England LGA Water Summit

On 8th March 2024 the East of England LGA hosted a Water summit for all relevant stakeholders. This was a high level conference concerning the water challenges faced by the region, with a focus on the role of local authorities. The event featured informative presentations and workshop sessions, aimed at delving deeper into issues such as future water supply to meet demand for growth, managing down demand, biodiversity & river health, and nature-based solutions to flood management.

Norfolk Warm Homes

As part of the Norfolk Warm Homes (consortium of 5 Norfolk Councils) we have been successful in securing £3.9M of funding targeted at off-gas homes with poor EPC (energy efficiency) ratings. The Council's Energy Officer has been successful in promoting this scheme with excellent levels of take up by residents, particularly in the Stalham area, resulting in 40% of the total grant spend being made in North Norfolk

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership has approved 2 projects – a trial of thermal imaging cameras for local community groups to borrow and climate literacy training for communities.

3 Meetings attended

EELGA Water Summit
RSN Seminar: Rural Connectivity
UK100 Countryside Climate Network - Q1
Net Zero meeting
Bacton Energy Hub Research Workshop/Discussion

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND OUTREACH

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Leisure Contract

Everyone Active returned strong participation figures across the 5 leisure facilities in January and February, with 44844 and 45013 visits achieved.

The Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project at Fakenham is moving along quickly with a number of departmental workshops held for areas such as planning, building control, leisure and design, as well as a pre-procurement engagement day to try to understand the best routes to market.

Countryside

A significant amount of tree works has been completed in recent weeks by the team and our contractor. These were a combination of health and safety works and planned management works. The planned management works will now cease as we enter bird nesting season.

Three Easter themed events are planned over the school holidays, one at Sadlers Wood and two at Holt Country Park.

Beaches/RNLI

The RNLI season in North Norfolk has been reduced slightly to reflect the season seen elsewhere in the Country. The number of lifeguarded beaches remains the same, however at Sheringham West, Cromer East, Mundesley and Sea Palling the guards will start on 25th May instead of May 4th. All other beach lifeguard provision remains the same.

Keep Britain Tidy have indicated that Blue Flag results will be announced sometime between 25th April and 20th May.

Markets

All existing long term traders have received their renewal letters for the coming year (starting in April) and the vast majority have now been returned. We have also received a number of new trader requests (8 at time of writing) which are being looked at. Encouragingly a number of these are off the back of the Christmas themed market which we organised in December. The Sheringham Wednesday market returns from April 3rd.

The team are currently exploring options around Cromer market.

A seasonal markets and foreshore inspector has been appointed to help manage the peak period.

Physical Activity Development

Our two entry level super sprint Triathlon events are now registered with British Triathlon, Victory on 30th June and Reef 6th October. A maximum of 125 entries are available in each event.

Year 3 of the Opening Schools Fund has recently been evaluated and we are pleased to say that 6 schools from North Norfolk have been awarded funding. They will share a pot of around £45k.

Big Norfolk Holiday Fund returns at Easter with the usual good number of providers in North Norfolk. Sean will visit five of these over the course of the fortnight to audit their provision and ensure the necessary outcomes are being achieved.

Cromer 3G continues to progress well with the appointed contractor (SIS) now regularly visiting site to fine tune design and carry out extra surveys. We are moving towards the end of stage 4 but this is the longest of the whole process.

Pier Pavilion Theatre

8 concerts were provided in February and 16 in March. Sales remain strong with year on year comparisons for each of the areas as follows:

Tickets sold YTD

- Summer Seaside Spectacular 63% up on 2023 to date
- Concerts 87% up
- Christmas Show up 141%
- Hires down 15%

3 Meetings attended (across all Portfolio Areas)

Carbon Literacy Training
Norfolk Museums Service
Fakenham First
Coastal Health and Wellbeing
Sheringham Little Theatre
The Belfry Arts Centre
Seal Of Approval
Norfolk Arts forum Executive Committee
NN Health and Wellbeing Partnership x3
Integrated Care Partnership
ICB Health and Wellbeing Board
LGA Tourism and Culture conference
Coastal Forum

West Wood Care home
Norfolk and Suffolk culture Board
Sheringham Museum
Age Friendly Community
NNHWP Quarterly Chairs meeting
Social Value Engineering
UKSPF Partnership meeting
Healthy Ageing Alliance
NNHWP Elderly people working group
Experience Sheringham
RNLI 200 years Gala Dinner
SPLENDID Research project
SharePoint Training ICB
Community Connectors
FLASH

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 February 2024

COUNCILLOR LIZ WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, LEISURE & OUTREACH

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Orchestral Activity

A small programme of events has been undertaken to provide access to orchestral activity for residents in the District. This was over a few days on the 26th/27th and 28th Feb 2024 and featured a variety of venues, such as schools, community centres and care homes. Feedback from those attending, many of whom had never seen orchestral music before, was excellent.



Tourism update

Visit North Norfolk (VNN) continues to promote collateral that is available to support its members in the marketing and promotion of North Norfolk more widely.

VNN sent an informative update on the announcements in the recent budget to all its members, which included the headline points for our local Visitor Economy sector.

Initial feedback suggests that the 'Make a Break for North Norfolk' campaign to promote North Norfolk on the London Underground, is reporting positive results. These will be analysed and reported more fully once the campaign has been running for some time.

VNN's latest campaign video and promotion 'Dog Friendly North Norfolk' went live at the end of February. The film promotion will run from until end of May and can be seen on VNN's [home page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

The North Walsham Cultural Programme

The programme of events in the town has now concluded and the unveiling of the community Mosaic at Black Swan Loke on 14th March marked the completion of this. The programme is being evaluated alongside the wider High Street Heritage Action Zone. This project was highlighted at the Norfolk and Suffolk Cultural board at Dance East in Ipswich as an excellent example of partnership working across local authorities and partnership agencies.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 March 2024

COUNCILLOR L WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR OUTREACH

For the period February to March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

With the approaching new financial year our colleagues around the council have been busy sending out notifications letters on the following:

- Annual Benefits award letters
- Annual Non-Domestic (Business) Rates bills
- Annual Council Tax bills
- Annual Trade Waste pricing
- Annual Beach Hut invoices

The above annual notifications result in thousands of letters and emails being sent and therefore we expect to see an increase in customer contact within the Customer Services team.

For the month of February, the average customer wait time when telephoning the Council was 3 minutes 31 seconds, and we're pleased to see that customers are still very happy with the level of service we are providing, achieving a 92% overall customer satisfaction level across all contact channels.

Our new chatbot has also been busy helping customers and we are continuously training it to response to as many questions as possible.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Environmental Services will shortly be sending out direct debit notifications to our Garden Bin customers around the district which undoubtedly will result in an increase in customer contact.

Our colleagues in IT Services have been working to create a new garden bin interface to allow Customer Services Advisors to quickly update customer records which we are hopeful will make this a more efficient service.

Over the coming months we will be also working with Electoral Services to prepare for the coming election in May. This will include training CSAs on new postal voting procedures so we are ready to answer questions from our residents.

Several members of the customer services team will unfortunately now see their fixed term contracts end on 31st March 2024. This will result in less resources within the team to maintain current service standards. However, we will endeavour to work with our colleagues around the council to find ways of continuing to provide great customer service and standards to our residents.

Local Economic Strategy & Action Plan	
Executive Summary	'Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure' is an important strand of NNDC's Corporate Plan. The draft Economic Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2027) sets out the approach and actions the Council will undertake to support delivering against this objective and supporting the growth of the local economy over the next four years.
Options considered	There are no options for consideration. The Strategy is recognised as a Key Action for delivery in 2023/24 within the Corporate Plan.
Consultation(s)	The Strategy has been informed by a range of sources and consultations. This has included engagements with businesses, workshops undertaken with the North Norfolk Local Partnership Group (which discussed local challenges and helped inform the focus of the UK Shared Prosperity & Rural England Prosperity Funds), a workshop in October 2023 with Council Members/Officers to discuss local economic challenges, and a presentation to the Corporate Leadership Team. Moreover, the findings of the Strategy and some of the key delivery actions were further shared and 'tested' at a business engagement event in January, which also served as a workshop to discuss key issues that would inform the forthcoming Norfolk-wide Economic Strategy that is presently being developed by Norfolk County Council. Furthermore, the Strategy was given 'pre-scrutiny' at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14 February 2024 and the advice from this, including a request for a supplementary 'executive summary' version of the Strategy and additional information in relation to the sectorial analysis, has been noted and will be produced in due course.
Recommendations	It is recommended that: Full Council endorse the Economic Strategy & Action Plan and formally adopts it.
Reasons for recommendations	Adoption by the Council will serve to illustrate the importance and value that NNDC places on its role in helping to create a vibrant, healthy and sustainable local economy.
Background papers	2023 – 2027 Corporate Plan Supporting documents available

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth
Contact Officer	Stuart Quick, Economic Growth Manager, stuart.quick@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The contents of this report do not directly impact upon the MTFS. Activities within the Strategy are predominantly funded through external funding, leveraged match funding from partners and normal business.
Council Policies & Strategies	N/A

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	Not an exempt item
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. Delivery of an Economic Strategy & Action Plan is identified as a Key Action for 2023-24 within the Corporate Plan. The draft version that accompanies this paper has been reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2024 and considered by Cabinet on 11 March 2024, where it was resolved that they would endorse the Strategy and recommend to Full Council its formal adoption. Please note that this paper introduces and serves as a background to the Strategy and is not intended to provide a summary of the document itself.

2. Introduction & Background

2.1. A successor to the 2016-20 Economic Growth Strategy had intended to be produced in early 2020. However, in March 2020 the immediate impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the priorities of the Council shifted, with the Economic Growth Team being primarily focused on providing grants, reliefs, and business support. This support continued for over two years. The progressive easing of these restrictions, as we moved into the summer of 2022, reduced the intensity of these efforts, with an increasing focus on recovery, although the monitoring and audit process continued for some time after. This period was immediately followed by national government initiatives to address economic challenges and perceived disparities, manifesting locally by funding bids into Community Renewal Funds, the Levelling Up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund. This enabled the Council to set out its priority programmes for targeting funding and support to local businesses and local communities, however, this took further focus and resource.

2.2. During this time, it was also considered that the greatly unsettled economic climate – inflation at a 40-year high, rising interest rates, high cost of living etc. – meant that the timing was not optimal for producing a new strategy. Within the first 6-12 months of the pandemic, a number of local authorities had in fact produced economic strategies to support recovery from the harsh economic

consequences of Covid-19, only to find their value was significantly diminished when it became apparent that the pandemic was to last significantly longer than anticipated.

2.3. Nevertheless, it was not intended that this position would be sustained beyond the short term, and it was concluded that, post the adoption of the Corporate Plan (19 July 2023), the timing was now right for the production of a new Economic Strategy; aligning with the key objectives established within the Corporate Plan, recognising the prevailing economic climate, and acknowledging the anticipated changes that will now come through the Norfolk County Deal (as approved by Norfolk County Council's Full Council on 12 December 2023).

3. Overview

3.1. The document sets out the strategic framework for economic development delivery within North Norfolk and has been prepared based on a detailed body of evidence, encompassing data analysis (including skills and recruitment surveys), engagement with businesses, external partners and internal stakeholders.

3.2. The report outlines the strategic context in which it has been developed, establishes the local economic challenges, uses infographics to draw attention to some of the relevant economic indicators and key sectors, and identifies a number of activities, both existing and in development, that align with the ambitions of the Council through its Corporate Plan.

3.3. The focus of this delivery is built around supporting the three high level objectives within the Corporate Plan that are centred on supporting the local economy:

- Creating an Environment for Business to thrive in
- Infrastructure to Support Growth
- Skills for Jobs

3.4 The accompanying Action Plan outlines the projects, initiatives and activities that the Council will undertake to support the delivery of these priority areas. It is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of all activities, as, much of the delivery is 'business as usual' for the Council. However, it serves to highlight some of the particularly key items of delivery that the Council will be engaged in, both presently, and over the coming years.

4. Financial and Resource Implications

4.1. There are a number of potential resource needs identified within the Action Plan, and successful delivery of some initiatives are dependent on partners. However, there are no new job posts proposed within the Strategy and external support, where required, can be effectively managed and monitored through the robust use of appropriate contractual arrangements.

4.2. A substantial number of the deliverables are supported through present NNDC/external partner resources and established external funding (such as UKSPF/REPF), hence the financial implications of this Strategy for the Council

have already been accounted for. The evolving challenges in the local economy, and hence the changing response needed through the Council's economic development activity, mean that there will be some areas where the funding pathway will not be established until the route for delivery is better known e.g. infrastructure development, which can take a number of years to be brought forward. Should these have a financial implication then these will be explored and taken through the appropriate decision-making process at that time.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

There are no known financial implications at this time and should there be any need for additional budget in the future, this will have to be considered within the context of our overall financial position as a Council.

5. Legal Implications

5.1. This report and the accompanying Strategy & Action Plan present no immediately known legal implications. Where legal advice is required this will be sought.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

There are no known specific legal implications, but Eastlaw is available for any legal queries.

6. Risks

6.1. This report and the accompanying Strategy & Action Plan present no immediately known risks. As required, specific delivery elements, such as the UKSPF and REPF will have Project Boards and employ project management tools (e.g. risk registers, monitoring reports etc.) to measure, monitor and mitigate risks.

7. Net ZeroTarget

7.1. No issues arising as a direct consequence of this report.

8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

8.1. No issues arising as a direct consequence of this report.

9. Community Safety issues

9.1. No issues arising as a direct consequence of this report.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Economic Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2027) sets out the approach and actions the Council will undertake to supporting the growth of the local economy over the next four years. Its successful delivery is dependent on working with partners, local stakeholders and businesses. It is recommended that Full Council endorses the Economic Strategy & Action Plan and formally adopts it. Adoption by the Council will serve to illustrate the importance and value that NNDC places on its role in helping to create a vibrant, healthy and sustainable local economy.

This page is intentionally left blank



Contents

01

Contents

Foreword - Cllr Tim Adams	
Introduction - Cllr Paul Heinrich	
Naked Kitchens Case Study	

Page 80

Challenges

Communities & Place	28-29
West Runton Surf School Case Study	30
Business Investment & Infrastructure	31-32
Skills & Employment	33-34
Swift TG Case Study	35

08

Strategic Context

Government	3	9-10
UKSPF	4-6	11-12
National	7	13-14
Woodland Holiday Park Case Study		15
County Deal		16-17
Equipmake Case Study		18

36

Delivering Success

Creating an Environment for Business to thrive in	27	37-38
Infrastructure to Support Growth	28-29	39-40
Skills for Jobs	30	41
Alpha Chase Case Study	31-32	42
Next Steps	33-34	43

21

North Norfolk in Numbers

Homes & Households	19	20
Skills & Employment		21
Business		22
Visitor Economy		23
Anglia DNA Case Study		24
Key Sectors & Sites		25-26

44

Action Plan

Creating an Environment for Business to thrive in	36	44	45-52
Infrastructure to Support Growth	37-38		53-54
Skills for Jobs	39-40		55-56
Funded by UKSPF	41		57-58
October Studios Case Study	42		59

Foreword

Welcome to North Norfolk District Council's Economic Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2027), which sets out the approach and actions the Council will undertake to support the growth of the local economy over the next 4 years.

'Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure' is an important strand of the recently adopted Corporate Plan 2023-27 and we remain committed as a Council to helping to create a vibrant and dynamic local economy. It is important to us that we play our role in shaping an environment where there are opportunities for all, innovation and creativity can thrive, and businesses are unhindered in their ability to sustain, grow and prosper. However, it is recognised that we cannot do it alone. We all have a part to play and, in these highly challenging times, we need to be clear in our vision, have clarity as to what we want to achieve, be pragmatic about where we focus our efforts, and seek every opportunity to collaborate and build partnerships.

It starts with our **People**. North Norfolk has an aging population and workforce demographic. These are important concerns for the sustainability of local businesses and in turn, the vitality of our local communities. Whilst age brings with it experience and knowledge, we also recognise that we need to keep 'fresh blood' in the system by creating a skilled workforce, with clear career pathways for young people seeking to live and work locally, and through identifying skill gaps and solutions for aspirant businesses.



We are ambitious in our desire to create a **Place** where start-ups, indigenous businesses and new inward investment can all be supported in their growth aspirations. Our emerging new Local Plan sets out our policies to support the delivery of climate resilient sustainable growth and identifies a number of sites that will facilitate significant housing and employment development. Ensuring that there is sufficient infrastructure in place to facilitate these is absolutely fundamental to the successful delivery of the Plan through to 2036.

Partnership working is the 'golden thread' that you will find intertwined in almost every element of this strategy's Action Plan. I'm keen for the Council to continue to further strengthen its approach to working with partners and to creating a holistic and joined-up approach to nurturing growth opportunities. Sustainable economic development will simply not happen without the strategic co-ordination of partnership actions.

I invite you to not simply just read this strategy, but to identify ways in which you too can also contribute to supporting your local communities and delivering economic prosperity for the District. These are difficult and indeed worrying times for many, but I am as ever confident that North Norfolk has all the right ingredients to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth.

Cllr Tim Adams
Leader of the Council
Portfolio Holder for Executive Support
and Legal Services



Introduction

This document sets out a strategic framework for economic development and has been prepared based on a detailed body of evidence including:

Data Analysis - A local economic profile of the District has been produced, with particular thanks to the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics (NODA). You will find some of this evidence drawn out within the Strategy, and a more comprehensive report can be found in Appendix D. In addition, both a skills and a recruitment survey of businesses was also undertaken by the Council. The full findings can be found in Appendix B

Engagements with Businesses - to which you will also find a number of case studies inserted amongst the pages of this Strategy. Appreciating what businesses are experiencing on the ground is absolutely vital to understanding how we can assist them.

External Partners - In August 2022 we formed the North Norfolk Local Partnership Group to help shape and inform our Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and, in November 2022, our bid to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). Key stakeholders representing businesses, farmers, landowners, community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors operating in North Norfolk met to review the priorities, challenges and opportunities for businesses and communities. The outcome of this was the securing of £2.7m of Government money which will fund a wide range of programmes and initiatives through to March 2025. A number of these partners are all now engaged in the delivery of this work and we continue to work closely with them.

Internal Stakeholders - in October 2023 a workshop, open to all Council Members and relevant Officers, was held to discuss local economic challenges and the work that the Council should prioritise in the Council's Annual Action Plans and, in turn, the Economic Strategy & Action Plan.

From all this information gathered a number of themes emerged, with particular concerns expressed regarding:

- **Inflationary pressures** - both in terms of the cost of living for residents, but also the operational costs of running businesses. The inflation indices have fallen over the last twelve months, but prices generally remain high and are still increasing at a higher rate than that we have experienced over the last fifteen years.

- **Climate change** - and the need for the Council, partners, businesses, and local communities to become more sustainable, save energy and reduce our carbon footprints. North Norfolk was the first district council in Norfolk to declare a climate emergency in early 2019 and we established an Environmental Charter to underpin this. We have also adopted a 'Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Action Plan' and have implemented a number of energy saving measures to our own assets to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is also a potential opportunity for the Council to play a role in promoting the district as a strong location for investment in sustainable tourism. There are already a good number of operators already investing in sustainable practices, which the Council could promote and seek to weave into a strong narrative that promotes North Norfolk as the destination of choice for eco-tourism.

- **Skills and Recruitment** – to which a number of issues were identified, including access to training providers, an aging workforce, ‘brain drain’, low wages and a high dependency on the visitor economy.

- **Lack of ‘grow on’ space for businesses** – There are approximately 20 distinct industrial sites in North Norfolk and the emerging Local Plan identifies a number of employment sites to support growth. However, the commercial premises stock of many of these sites are aging and they are predominantly saturated, with little capacity to facilitate business expansion. Historically, public bodies such as the Rural Development Commission, English Estates and English Partnerships funded the provision of serviced employment land or advance business premises in rural areas where there was a lack of developer/investor confidence to make such investments, and many of our towns had such land and premises provided through these organisations. However, over the past two decades, funding disseminated through the Regional Development Agencies, and more recently the LEP, has tended to be concentrated on urban areas and so public funding hasn’t been available to support the bringing forward of serviced land and premises. As such, it is recognised that some businesses seeking to scale up have felt no choice but to leave the district to an alternative location in Norfolk where they could be accommodated.

- **Market towns** – and the changing way in which people shop and use our towns, particularly given the growth in out-of-town retail areas and online shopping. Initiatives such as Experience Sheringham, Love Holt and the Stalham High Street Taskforce have demonstrated that there is a desire and appetite to support proactive change within our local town centres. Moreover, the Council is presently in the final stages of delivering a £4.47m North Walsham Heritage Action Zone programme which has enhanced the amenity of key areas

of public realm, undertaken substantial highway improvements, repaired, restored or brought back into use a number of buildings, and delivered a very well received cultural programme.

- **Infrastructure investment** – needed to unlock key growth areas and to address critical ‘not spot’ broadband and mobile signal issues. We are also very conscious that there are a number of water abstraction licences that could be varied or revoked, as the Environment Agency seeks to ensure abstraction in certain in more vulnerable catchment areas remains sustainable. Yet there are also opportunities, with the Bacton Terminal (to which a third of UK gas is landed and processed), in particular, offering a strong potential for carbon capture and storage and hydrogen production. Should these progress then they will likely support a substantial number of jobs during the construction phase in the short term and create a number of high skilled jobs in the longer term.

Many of these challenges are, of course, far from unique to North Norfolk, but the Council is committed to doing everything it can to unblock issues where they emerge, collaborate with partners to achieve a shared objective, or lobby to influence others where it is beyond our immediate sphere of influence. The remainder of this document outlines the strategic context in which this report sits, draws attention to some of the local economic evidence (links to which can be found in Appendix A), provides further detail on the challenges and, most importantly, how we will approach overcoming them.



The focus of this delivery is built around three high level objectives within the Corporate Plan that are centred on supporting the local economy:

‘Creating an Environment for Business to thrive in’
‘Infrastructure to Support Growth’
‘Skills for Jobs’



The accompanying Action Plan outlines the projects, initiatives and activities that the Council will undertake to support the delivery of the three priority objectives. It is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of all activities, as much of the delivery is business as usual for the Council. However, it serves to highlight some of the particularly key items of delivery that the Council will be engaged in, both presently and over the coming years.

Cllr Paul Heinrich
Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth
and Chairman of Development Committee



Business Case Study

Naked Kitchens

Make bespoke oak kitchens, which are designed and adapted to customers specific requirements. On site there is a full design, sales and manufacturing team employing over 60 staff.

What does this business do?

Naked Kitchens moved to the former RAF site in West Raynham in 2015. This company use sustainable timber and eco-friendly material in their manufacturing processes. On site, they have replaced all the fossil fuel heating with bio mass boilers and they use an internal circulating heating system using the timber offcuts and sawdust as fuel. They have been awarded a capital grant as part of REPF funding to replace old machinery; improve productivity and grow their workforce.

What are the challenges?

In a tough economic environment Naked Kitchens are finding the market challenging. They are looking to support staff skills with high end sales and to employing advanced SEO techniques to further improve enquiries and sales.

Why North Norfolk?

Naked Kitchens love the space and the location. A large hangar space allows them to change layouts to meet their evolving workflows and will help to facilitate future expansion. Their location feeds the local story of their company.

What next?

More capital investment in production to drive growth. Development of more innovative solutions and new products to increase and diversify their market.



Strategic Context

Policy

Government Context

UKSPF

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Page 86

National

Investing in our local Economy & Infrastructure

County Deal

Norfolk County Deal



Government Policy

In recent years, national policy has shifted towards supporting investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation. This has been precipitated by the UK's departure from the EU, but also by the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous focus was on the Industrial Strategy 2017 which centred around boosting productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and increase the earning power of people throughout the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

However, four years after the strategy was published, it was recognised that the UK's business and economic environment had changed. Creating and supporting jobs remains the Government's economic focus, but helping to drive growth in existing, new and emerging industries was identified as also a priority. Consequently, there was a transition from the Industrial Strategy to the 'Plan for Growth' and its related strategies. More recently the Levelling Up agenda has placed focused on spreading opportunity more equally across the UK.

The 2022 Levelling Up White Paper set out the details of a new devolution framework, the establishment of a new independent data body and a new Levelling Up Advisory Council. It detailed twelve new missions across four broad areas:

- Boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.
- Spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those areas where they are weakest.
- Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- Empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.



Policy

To support these objectives, the Government launched four new investment programmes: the UK Community Renewal Fund, the Community Ownership Fund, the Levelling up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

North Norfolk was identified as a 'Priority 1' area for support from the Levelling Up Fund Round 2. In August 2022, North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) submitted two exciting projects. These included a new swimming pool and multi-sports area in Fakenham and the transformation and enhancement of the clifftop gardens, North Lodge Park and related sites in Cromer, which would better position it as an accessible 'green tourism' destination.

Unfortunately, whilst these projects were well regarded by the fund assessors, they were not successful within that round. However, in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023, it was confirmed that, under Levelling Up Round 3, NNDC had been successful in securing £9.9m to build new sports facilities at Fakenham. This will include a 25 metre public swimming pool and improved outdoor sports facilities. Alongside the new leisure offerings, an allocation of £1m has been made for carbon reduction measures to the existing sports facilities.

Page 88

While talent is spread equally across our country, opportunity is not. Levelling up is a mission to challenge, and change, that unfairness. Levelling up means giving everyone the opportunity to flourish.

from the White Paper "Levelling Up the United Kingdom"





The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and is the successor funding model to the former EU Structural Funds. It will provide £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than via competitive bidding.

Following the submission of an Investment Plan in Summer 2022, NNDC was successful in securing £1.2m from this fund which is to be delivered over three financial years (22/23-24/25). The intention of the fund is to invest in local priorities, targeted towards a number of areas: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances.

There are three UKSPF investment priorities:

- Communities & Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People & Skills

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) is a top-up to the UKSPF and is available to eligible local authorities in England where communities and businesses face specific rural challenges. It succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England. Nationally, a total of up to £110 million is available for financial years 2023/24 to 2024/25. An addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan was submitted to DEFRA in November 2022 and in January 2023 it was confirmed that NNDC had successfully secured an allocation of £1.46m. As the Local Authority, NNDC has responsibility for determining the distribution of the funding and its delivery within North Norfolk. In order to help shape and determine the priorities for this funding a Local Partnership Group was formed, composed of a variety of key local stakeholders and representatives within the community, business and rural groups. Support was also provided by the two local MPs and their offices.

The interventions identified within the approved UKSPF Investment Plan are:

Communities and Place

1. Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects.
2. Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area
3. Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change
4. Funding to support relevant feasibility studies



Supporting Local Business

5. Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
6. Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy.

People and Skills

7. Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.

The REPF will provide capital grant funding for local businesses and communities. The interventions identified within the addendum plan are:

Rural businesses

The funding is focused on supporting SMEs. Projects that this will support includes: capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.

Community Businesses

The grant funding for community groups is for:

- Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups
- Funding existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer
- Supporting impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places

NNDC has seen a high take up of grants and a strong level of engagement in the programmes being delivered. At the point of writing, this contrasts with the national picture where it is understood that there are significant underspends.



Investing in Our Local Economy & Infrastructure

NNDC's Corporate Plan sets out the priorities and ambitions of what we want to achieve for the residents, communities and businesses of North Norfolk between 2023 to 2027. The predominant focus of the Economic Strategy & Action Plan is to support the delivery of the 'Investing in our Local Economy & Infrastructure' theme. This sets out how we will work towards creating an environment where businesses can thrive and prosper, supporting jobs and economic opportunity for all.

There are three priority strands within this theme:

An Environment for Business to thrive in

- Working with our Market and Resort Towns to reinforce their roles as local service centres, centres of employment, financial services and business activity, served by public transport.
- Providing support to allow rural businesses to thrive, recognising that many of our larger employers operate outside of our main towns.

Looking to maximise the benefits to our business community of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds.

Continuing to promote North Norfolk's diverse tourism and visitor offer.

- Working with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.

Infrastructure to Support Growth

- Exploring opportunities for securing development of our few brownfield sites.
- Seeking to maximise the potential from the local implications of the transition towards hydrogen and carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) at the Bacton Gas site.
- Acting as a digital champion to promote investment to address our competitive disadvantage through broadband and mobile connectivity challenges.
- Influencing issues of water scarcity and constraints in the local electricity distribution network.
- Ensuring an adequate supply of serviced employment land and premises to support local business growth and inward investment.



Skills for Jobs

- Promoting innovation and workforce development throughout the district.
- Promoting improved access to post 16 vocational education.
- Continuing to provide apprenticeships opportunities, directly as a large local employer and promoting uptake in the wider business economy.

Through supporting these ambitions, the Economic Strategy & Action Plan will also support the delivery of other elements of the Corporate Plan, including:

- Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all.
- Engaged & Supported individuals and communities.

Page 92 Increase accessibility and inclusion for all.

Promote culture, leisure and sport activities.

Continue our journey to Net Zero.

- Address housing need.
- Promote best use of housing stock and good housing standards.

It also aligns with a number of other NNDC strategies including the:

- Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Action Plan.
- Environmental Charter.
- Quality of Life Strategy 2022-24.
- North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036.



Business Case Study

Woodland Holiday Park

Woodland Holiday Park is a Visitor Economy business supporting tourists, visitors and local residents. It provides holidays as well as a range of leisure and hospitality services and amenities.

What does this business do?

Woodland Holiday Park is a luxury holiday home complex set in 80 acres of beautiful rural surroundings. Woodland has been operating since 1972, when local farmers bought the woods adjacent to their land and decided to set up a basic touring park. This family business is still operating today and now boasts an impressive restaurant and bar, as well as an indoor swimming pool and leisure complex. The park employs over 30 staff.

What are the challenges?

Woodlands are keen to continue to invest in the site, including potentially converting a former chicken shed into a luxury hotel, with accommodation for visitors and staff as well as storage and possible expansion space for the leisure element of the business.

Why North Norfolk?

The Harrison family have owned and farmed this space for the past 50 years and continue to be wedded to the fabulous rural location.

What next?

Key to the growth of this business is the need to offer more services and amenities to tourists and day visitors. This means the development of unused buildings to allow the leisure side of the business to expand and diversify.





Norfolk County Deal

Norfolk County Council and the Government have agreed, in principle, to a new County Deal for Norfolk. This will transfer funding and powers to Norfolk – a process known as devolution. County Deals are part of the Government’s levelling up agenda, which are intended ‘to spread opportunity equally across the UK’. Should this proceed, NNDC and the neighbouring Norfolk authorities will play a significant role in helping to determine how this funding is disseminated in an equitable fashion, although the detail is still emerging.

The devolution agreement includes:

- Control of a £20million per year allocation of investment funding over 30 years, 40% capital and 60% revenue, to be invested by Norfolk County Council to drive growth and take forward its priorities over the long term.
- Almost £7m for the building of new homes on brownfield land in 2024/25, subject to sufficient eligible projects for funding being identified.
- £5.9 million of capital funding in this Spending Review period to support the delivery of housing, regeneration and development priorities Norfolk.
- New powers to drive the regeneration of the area and to build more affordable homes including compulsory purchase powers and the ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations.
- An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25. Government will work with Norfolk to agree an integrated multi-year transport settlement at the next Spending Review, at which point opportunities for expanding the integrated transport settlement offer will also be explored.
- New powers to shape local skills provision to better meet the needs of the local economy and local people, including devolution of the core Adult Education Budget, as well as input into the new Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- A commitment to explore a local partnership with Great British Railways so that the Norfolk County Council directly elected leader can help to shape and improve local rail services.
- Norfolk County Council will continue to engage district authorities on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Norfolk Investment Framework Steering Group.
- Norfolk County Council will plan and deliver the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from 2025/26.

- A County Council resolution to change executive governance to the model described in statute as the directly elected 'mayor and cabinet executive' governance model. The elected leader will provide overall leadership of Norfolk County Council and will be vested with all its executive powers.
- The future integration of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning.

On 12 December 2023, County Councillors voted to accept a County Deal devolution agreement with the Government. Government funding will start transferring to Norfolk next summer, if Councillors vote in July 2024 to stage the first election for a leader in May 2025.

In Spring 2024 , Parliament will decide whether to approve the 'statutory instrument' required to let the Deal proceed.

A more detailed summary of local, regional and national policy can be found in Appendix C.

Page 95 Devolution creates many potential benefits for Norfolk. The in-principle level three County Deal, agreed last year, gives Norfolk more control of adult education, brownfield site regeneration and transport.

Update from County Council Leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig



Business Case Study Equipmake Ltd

More than 20 years' experience developing and integrating industry-leading innovative electric powertrain solutions for global automotive, aerospace, marine, construction and bus markets.

What does this business do?

Equipmake retrofit buses with an in-house designed electric motor and battery pack. Diesel buses are retrofitted with their own bespoke electric parts. This way the bus can have a longer range and more electric miles than new buses on the market. Equipmake are working on a fleet from York and buses from Wales, and they have secured a contract with First Bus Co. in Norwich. They design, manufacture and install the machinery and provide a repair service.

What are the challenges?

Forecasted growth will require additional space. Buses are big! They will also need to recruit people with the correct skills in order to fulfill their growth aspirations

Why North Norfolk?

Their main manufacturing business is based at Hethel, but this offers limited capacity for expansion. Their new site at Scottow Enterprise Park means that they can test buses on the runway and, as a large hangar, this provides optimal space for their operational needs.

What next?

Last year (May'22-June'23) Equipmake retrofitted 20 buses. This year (May'23-June'24) the plan is to double capacity to 50, and next year (May'24-June'25) there are plans to be retrofitting up to 100 buses on site in North Norfolk.



North Norfolk in Numbers

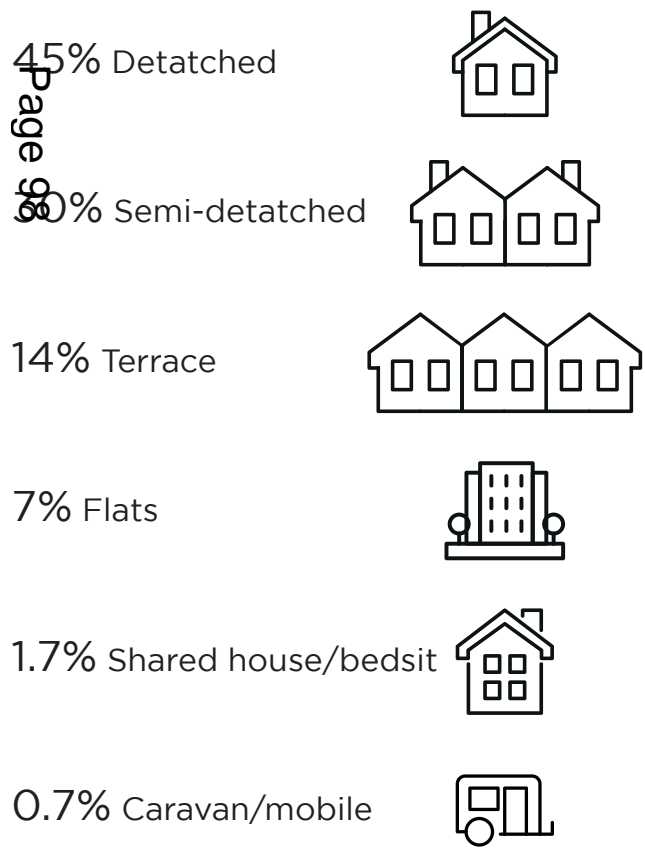


1. Homes & Households

Nearly half of all North Norfolk households are in the bottom 4 of The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Journey times to key services are close to double that of Norwich and over a 6th are living in fuel poverty.

Types of households



102,979 residents

52,681 Female

50,298 Males

Minimum Journey Time
to 8 of key services

18 mins vs Norwich 9 mins

35 mins vs Norwich 16 mins



2. Skills & Employment



North Norfolk's working population are generally less well formally educated, and nearly half of females work part-time. Many people travel to work in the car, and often longer distances, over 10km or more. A large proportion work in the hospitality, retail and health & social care, which account for the top 3 employment types. A lower percentage are employed in professional and technical roles. A low proportion of the working population have qualifications above NVQ3.





Employment*

36,800 Employed
 600 Self Employed



Working part-time

 44% Female
 19% Males

Working full-time

 56% Female
 81% Males

Travel to work

 57%
 30% Travel over 10km

Qualifications % of 16-64yrs

93% NVQ1+ min 1-3 GCSE's
 76% NVQ2+ min 4-5 GCSE's
 54% NVQ3+ min 2 A levels
 33% NVQ4+ min High Ed Cert/BTEC

Type of work

19% Wholesale/Retail Trade
 16% Accommodation and food service
 13% Human health and social work
 9% Education
 9% Manufacturing
 6% Construction
 6% Admin and support
 5% Professional, scientific and technical

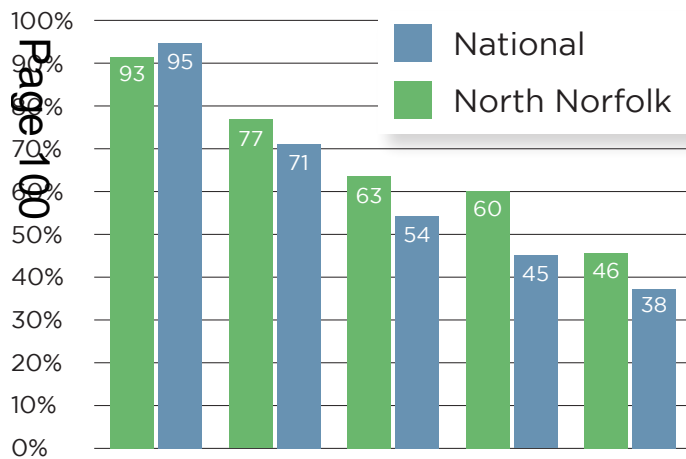
*(April 2022 - March 2023)

3. Business

In North Norfolk's business are predominantly micro, mostly employing less than 9 people. Agriculture, forestry & fishing, accommodation & food services, construction, retail and manufacturing account for the majority of local businesses by volume of enterprises.

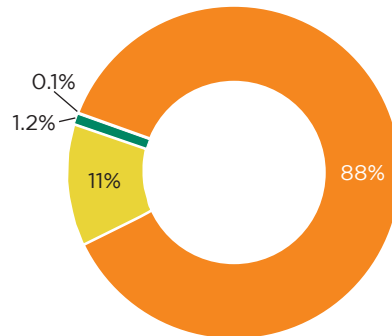


Business survival rate

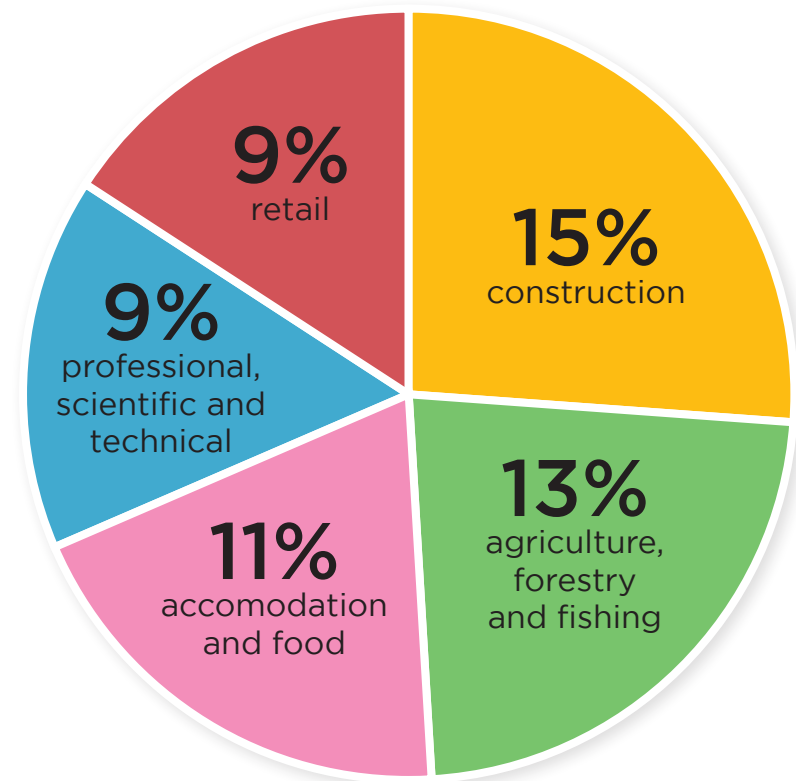


By employment size

- 88% micro (0-9 employees)
- 11% small (10-49 employees)
- 1.2% medium (50-249 employees)
- 0.1% large (250+ employees)



By industry



4. Visitor Economy in Focus

Economic Impact 2022 vs 2019 (Pre-pandemic levels)

Day trips 2022

548,400
worth
£136,658,000

2022 vs 2019
-3%
2021 vs 2019
-34%

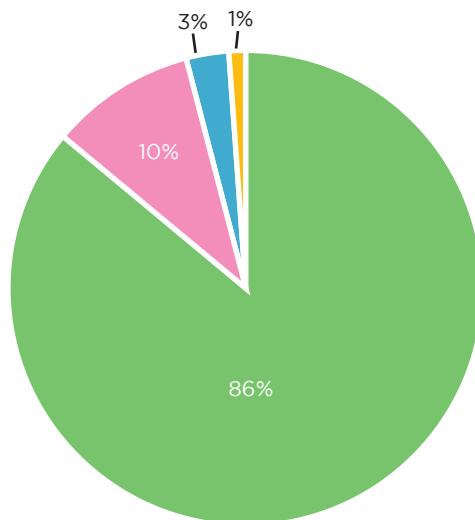
Overnight trips 2022

9,014,000
worth
£287,813,000

2022 vs 2019
-9%
2021 vs 2019
-30%

Trips by purpose

- 86% Holiday
- 10% Friends/Family
- 3% Business
- 1% Other



Value of Tourism

2022	£512,370,262
2021	£365,221,323
2019	£528,931,378

Breakdown of expenditure (Total staying)

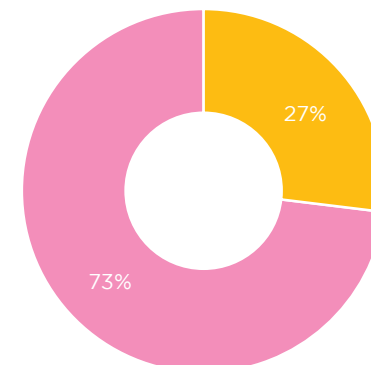
- 32% Accomodation
- 29% Food & Drink
- 12% Shopping
- 10% Attractions
- 17% Travel

Breakdown of expenditure (Total day visitors)

- 43% Food & Drink
- 26% Shopping
- 18% Travel
- 13% Attractions

Tourism jobs as a % of total employment

- 73% Total jobs
- 27% Tourism



Business Case Study

Anglia DNA

Anglia DNA is an independent UK laboratory offering a range of scientific services, specialising in DNA, drug and alcohol testing and leading the way in genetic analytical laboratory services and research.

What does this business do?

Anglia DNA is an independent UK Lab offering bespoke DNA testing and extraction. They are also involved in workplace testing, toxicology reporting and genotype sequencing for drug specific reporting. This work will dramatically change the way in which drug prescribing will work in the future. It can potentially offer huge NHS cost savings and deliver massive benefits for patient care.

What are the challenges?

As ever, there are challenges recruiting specialist staff and expanding the businesses. Currently Anglia DNA occupy four different buildings which in itself can create working practice constraints.

Why North Norfolk?

Anglia DNA were previously based at Norwich Research Park, but space was limited and expensive. North Norfolk site provides more space at lower rents and the opportunity to expand. This site also has free parking and ease of access for staff and clients.

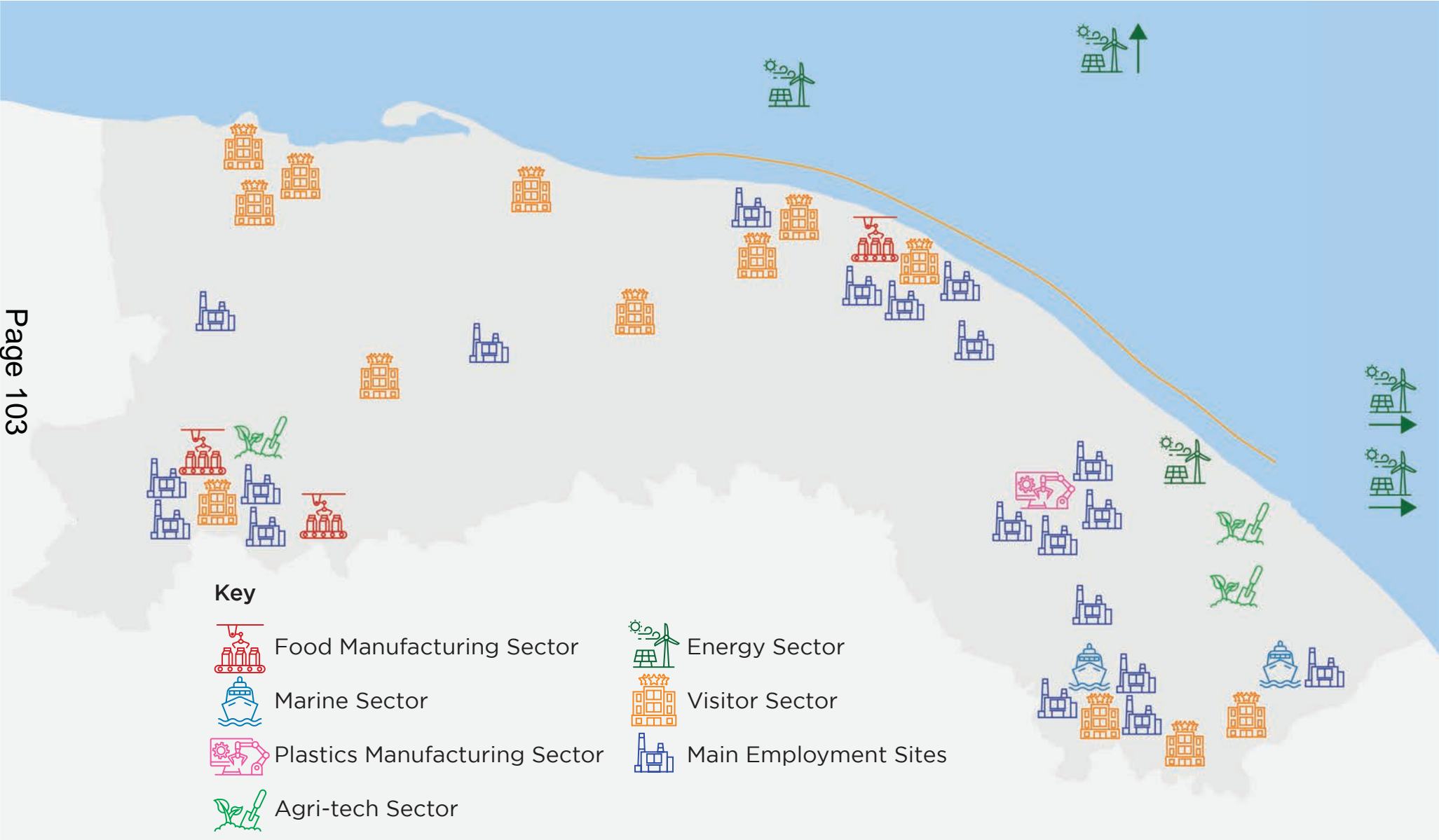
What next?

Genotype sequencing for drug and lifestyle specific reporting is about to come to fruition and that will be a game changer for Anglia DNA and for the industry.



Key Sectors & Sites

A full list of locations is shown on the next page.



Page 103

Key Sectors & Sites

Note: this list is illustrative of businesses within some of North Norfolk's key sectors, but it is not exhaustive.



Food Manufacturing Sector

Hain Celestial, Fakenham
Kinnerton, Fakenham
Crisp Maltings, Great Ryburgh
Jonas Seafood, Cromer



Marine Sector

Oyster Yachts, Hoveton
Landamores, Hoveton
Haine Marine, Catfield
Jeckells, Hoveton
Benthic Solutions, Hoveton
Trendmarine, Catfield



Plastics Manufacturing Sector

East Coast Plastics, North Walsham
Coda Plastics, North Walsham
Weener Plastics, North Walsham



Agri-tech Sector

Ploeger UK, Fakenham
Ernest Doe, Fakenham
Sands Agricultural Machinery, Brumstead
Crop Systems, Happisburgh



Energy Sector

Bacton Gas Terminal
Sheringham Shoal
Hornsea 3 (Pending delivery)
Vanguard (Pending delivery)
Boreas (Pending delivery)



Visitor Sector

Cromer Pier
Holkham Hall
Wells Maltings & Sackhouse
Wells Harbour
Sheringham Little Theatre
The Broads
Bewilderwood
Wroxham Barns



Main Employment Sites

Catfield Industrial Estate
Crossways Business Centre
Fakenham Industrial Estate
Scottow Enterprise Park
Laundry Loke Industrial Estate
Lingate Industrial Estate
Stonehill Way Industrial Estate
North Norfolk Business Centre
North Norfolk Retail Park
Rose Centre Retail Park
Stalham Road Industrial Estate

Fakenham Racecourse
Deep History Coast
Thursford Steam Engine Museum
and Christmas Spectacular
Cley Marshes Visitor Centre
Holt Country Park
Sheringham & Pretty Corner Country Parks

Tattersett Business Park
The Folly Industrial Estate
Tilia Business Park
Weybourne Road Industrial Estate
Clipbush Park Estate
Melton Constable Industrial Estate
George Edwards Road Industrial Estate
North Creak Airfield Business Park
Middlebrook Way Industrial Estate
Scottow Enterprise Park

Challenges

North Norfolk is faced with a number of challenges that belie a perception that the casual observer or visitor to the district may have. Whilst it is undoubtedly blessed with an array of unique environmental and built assets - with 45 miles of attractive coast, a plethora of charming villages, bustling coastal resorts and an abundance of places of cultural and historical interest - these mask a number of significant and emerging issues.

Indeed, some of its strengths are also the source of some of its weaknesses. For example, local people are challenged by its rurality; with no motorways or trunk roads and limited public transport outside of the towns, this can make it difficult to access employment, training, education and essential services. Moreover, its popularity as a place to retire has exacerbated an aging demographic which potentially will place long-term strains on social care and future labour supply.



Though some may have a perception that **North Norfolk** is a wealthy district, **43.5% of the population** are in fact within the four most deprived deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Whilst they make a valuable contribution in terms of local spend, the greater wealth tends to be concentrated amongst those who have retired and relocated to the district, often from areas of higher income and with accumulated wealth. **Over one third of the population are over 65** and this is predicted to increase. An aging population tends to place greater strain on social care and access to healthcare. This can also have an impact on those of working age who may need to provide care for family members.

A large proportion of **those of working age are in fact on lower incomes** by national standards. The median salary for full time workers in North Norfolk is 9% less than the rest of Great Britain and full and part time pay for locally employed females remains both less than locally employed males and less than the national average. Consequently, the recent high levels of inflation have had a proportionately greater impact on many residents within North Norfolk. Much of the inflationary pressure has come from rising energy prices, which is further exacerbating a trend of increasing fuel poverty within the district, with 16.3% of the local population living in fuel poverty.

The concentration of growth in the Greater Norwich area and A11 corridors, is placing some of our communities, particularly traditional market towns such as Fakenham and North Walsham, at a disadvantage economically as they become increasingly 'dormitory' in their role and make-up. There is a concern that encouraging people to travel out of their home towns for employment on a large scale also has wider implications for the well-being of the home communities as the local retail and service base is undermined; people who commute to work often do their shopping and other business whilst at or travelling to/from work and this is creating a challenge for the district in sustaining some of our local town centre economies.

Housing affordability is a significant issue within North Norfolk as significant numbers of residential properties within certain parts of the district are being bought by older people retiring here or for second homes and holiday lets. It has been observed that high price housing locations are often occurring where median salaries are lowest. This is having a significant impact on the sustainability and viability of some of our communities, particularly in the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the availability of small and affordable properties is extremely limited and is impacting upon the provision of basic community and public services, as well as the supply of labour for tourism businesses. **Local people are effectively 'priced out' of the area** and are therefore moving inland to market towns such as Fakenham and North Walsham where they then access more 'local' jobs (or more easily commute to Norwich) and thus support local services in these locations.



It is recognised that **community and voluntary organisations play a vital role** in the provision of a wide range of activities (both essential and additional) and local facilities that deliver a number of health and well-being benefits that would otherwise not be met. These are needed and highly valued by local people, but are often highly dependent on grants or fund-raising in order to sustain themselves. In North Norfolk such facilities are commonly found in locations that have limited (or no) public transport and, as such, local communities, and particularly those which are vulnerable or on lower incomes, have limited ability to access services that are more readily available in more urbanised areas. Moreover, many facilities have experienced a lack of investment stretching back decades, and rising costs have placed substantial strain on their viability. The loss of such facilities, and the organisations that they support, could cause further degradation to the vitality of many of North Norfolk's rural hamlets and villages.

The anticipated impact of climate change creates uncertainty in the seasons, an expectation of further rises in sea levels and a higher frequency of storms. This will bring challenges in relation to water resource, flooding, coastal erosion and impacts on the natural environment.

In many parts of **North Norfolk, businesses**, communities and future housing provisions **are facing a number of threats** in terms of water security, nutrient neutrality and coastal erosion. The Council is working with partners to develop programmes that will help to partially mitigate or build a greater degree of local resilience to these challenges.

“

In our skills surveys - over a third (38%) found it difficult to meet training needs. Identifying cost, location and lack of suitable courses as the top reasons.

”



Business Case Study

West Runton Surf School

Surf Shed West Runton's team are passionate about sharing their love of surfing. They offer a package of lessons, equipment hire and/or experienced instructors to offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy and learn water activities safely.

What does this business do?

This business is currently located in two venues along our coast and have a different offer at each location - Surfing hire and lessons and SUP hire and lessons. The business owner is looking to consolidate his business at one location and expand to have all the boards and accessories available and stored in one place. WRSS is also looking to become the base for the East for adaptive surfing and SUP for visitors and with support from a local SEND school.

What are the challenges?

The main challenges are identifying the right building and space in which to expand into, and securing sufficient funding to support this. There will be a challenges around making sure that there is good access onto the beach for adults and kids with additional needs.

Why North Norfolk?

North Norfolk is fast becoming recognised as a great surfing destination and adds to the varied mix of activities that visitors can do.

What next?

Help and support by New Anglia LEP and NNDC to locate suitable premises and identify grant funding opportunities.



SMEs account for 99.9% of North Norfolk businesses, with 88.2% of them being at the micro level (employing less than 10). Businesses of this scale generally tend to be less well informed about opportunities (business support, grants etc.), are less able to obtain commercial lending (particularly new and fledgling enterprises) or access trading markets.

North Norfolk has a very narrow sectorial make up, with a **third of employment being accounted for within just 3 sectors** - agriculture (inc. forestry & fishing), accommodation & food services and retail. These sectors tend to pay lower wages than most other sectors.

Business in North Norfolk can be very insular and interdependent, with some businesses having limited ability or awareness of how to trade at a national or international scale. **The district has no major road nor high-speed train infrastructure** and the geography is such that it is not en route to anywhere. You have to come here for a reason, but also its catchment is only 180 degrees - being on the North Sea coast.

Historically, North Norfolk has struggled to compete with other areas in securing European and Government infrastructure funding. Eligibility for such investment has typically been assessed in terms of their ability to deliver thousands of jobs, which is something that, as a rural district, could not be demonstrated locally. However, arguably a number of locations in North Norfolk could in fact deliver a number of relatively smaller projects that could support local growth (possibly involving hundreds of jobs) that collectively would be of significant value to the sustainability and future prosperity of the district. With a changing funding landscape and the emerging Levelling-up agenda, it is hoped that this will provide the opportunity for North Norfolk to secure higher levels of investment to help overcome some of the endemic local issues and foster growth opportunities, commensurate at least to the anticipated housing growth within the emerging Local Plan.

The high level of commercial development sites that have arisen over the last two decades within the key growth locations in the region (eg Greater Norwich, A11/A47/A14 corridors) has meant that some indigenous businesses looking for grow on space that can't be found locally have relocated. 'Development-ready' serviced sites are attractive to businesses seeking turnkey premises with limited further investment required. **North Norfolk has over 20 well established industrial sites**, but more recent commercial growth opportunities within the extant Local Plan have come through mixed allocations where the developers have placed greater focus on bringing forward the residential land and have marketed the commercial elements without established site servicing infrastructure. This has dissuaded local businesses and some inward investment who are seeking a more ready-made offering that gives greater certainty of capacity for further growth.

Moreover, the concentration of **new jobs in more urbanised areas has had increasingly negative impacts on market towns** which historically had a good level of self-containment, with local manufacturing jobs on the outskirts in turn supporting retail and professional services jobs in town centres through locally retained footfall. High numbers of jobs from now long forgotten industries have effectively been redirected to the Greater Norwich and consequently market towns, in both North Norfolk and the rest of the county, have become increasingly dormitory and less sustainable locations, resulting in greater commuting distances and higher levels of congestion within the Norwich area. Whilst many **local businesses demonstrated a high degree of resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic**, this was largely met through a combination of Government support and the use of business or family resources. Consequently, a high number of businesses are now sitting on lower cash reserves or in higher leveraged positions than before the pandemic, reducing their ability to invest in their business and inhibiting their capacity for growth.

However, many businesses - partly driven by necessity and in part through delayed investment plans - have recognised a number of opportunities to diversify, innovate and build resilience into their business. The pandemic has also highlighted that some businesses are not embracing new ways of working and risk returning to previous outmoded models of conducting business and people management. In general, engagement with our businesses has identified that the pandemic had exposed a number of fundamental structural issues in businesses, including insufficient cash positions, lack of contingency preparation, business planning and management training.

It is recognised that a number of our cultural, historic and heritage institutions - struggling with rising costs and many successive years of under-investment - are also feeling the strains. Such businesses and organisations, which all play an integral role in the make-up of the local cultural heritage and visitor offer, are keen to explore ways to invest in their facilities so that they can sustain themselves and improve the visitor experience.

The relatively **poor performance of businesses in North Norfolk**, in terms of real GVA growth and productivity in recent times, has been **compounded by poor utility infrastructure**, including broadband and mobile coverage. Improved communication infrastructure across the whole county, including rural areas, would help to ensure greater equality in growth across the region and deliver wider benefits through local economic regeneration and reduced congestion.

UK Power Network's local distribution network serving the east of the North Norfolk District are at capacity. This is a critical local issue, desirably requiring distribution infrastructure to be upgraded from the Norwich main sub-station up to North Walsham. **The pressure on this network exists** not only in terms of supply to **support new**

business and housing growth, but also the ability of new sources of embedded generation through solar, onshore wind and anaerobic digestion facilities being able to connect into the 'grid'. There is a risk that, if the local electricity distribution network serving the east of North Norfolk is not addressed, the district faces being in the same position as with gas landed at Bacton Gas Terminal - with supplies coming into the UK effectively **'bypassing' the district**, with the area experiencing all of the inconvenience of accommodating these major schemes, but seeing little of the benefits. It is appreciated that this can be a difficult pill for local people to swallow when they similarly observe and suffer the inconvenience and disruption of cable corridors proposals for major offshore wind developments crossing the district, however well the construction of these schemes are managed.

As with many other areas of the country, particularly within the south and the east, **water security remains a critical issue for North Norfolk**. The combined pressures of climate change and increasing demand, along with the need to tackle environmental issues and ensure resilience to drought, have resulted in a sizeable inter-regional water resources challenge. Ensuring that there is an adequate water supply is essential to supporting future housing and business growth and sustaining businesses who abstract water.



North Norfolk has an aging population and workforce. Many businesses are struggling to address the matter of succession planning, which threatens their future existence and places financial and wellbeing strain on business owners. This is often compounded by the rurality of their premises, which typically means that public transport is limited (or non-existent) and therefore **many local businesses struggle to recruit and retain staff**, particularly when higher wages and better access to training, education or other opportunities can be found outside of the district.

As in common with many other rural areas, **'Brain Drain' is a significant issue for North Norfolk** which has very limited access to further education, higher education and training. There is also a 'perceived' lack of opportunity by some, which conflicts with the fact that a number of businesses have struggled to fill vacancies for highly skilled and well paid roles, such as engineers. It has been observed that young people leaving the area for education, training or work opportunities elsewhere are not returning, possibly only intending to retire here later in life. The income-to-house-price ratio serves to further exacerbate this issue with **North Norfolk having a lower median salary** than both Norfolk and the East of England region. The issue is particularly stark within our most rural villages and hamlets, which are commonly seeing an aging and diminishing population with consequent impacts on local services that are becoming increasingly unviable.

Some businesses are failing to engage young people and to raise the profile of their business and demonstrate career pathways. Many businesses seek to fill only immediate vacancies and do not necessarily have the knowledge or foresight to recognise the value of sowing seeds with those of pre-work age e.g. work experience, internships, career days etc. In addition, **employment retention in some sectors locally is very poor**, particularly in care and hospitality. This has had a significant impact on service delivery.

Much of the jobs growth in Greater Norwich has been to the south-west of the city – Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Norwich Research Park, Longwater and the A11 corridor – all of which are relatively inaccessible for many North Norfolk residents without significant effort. The concentration and clustering of new business growth and employment in such areas potentially creates long-term problems for North Norfolk. A high commuter outflow of working-age people has in part fuelled the narrowing employment choice within the district and exacerbated 'brain drainage', **with young people choosing to locate to locations where there is greater opportunity**. Others are left to travel some distance to access jobs, with significant cost in terms of commuting either by personal or public transport.



Access to post-16 education and training facilities in North Norfolk is difficult as many courses and providers are typically found in areas of greater population density. Apprenticeship numbers have been falling nationally for some time and the issue is further challenged locally by the fact that there are no training providers headquartered within North Norfolk. Furthermore, many local businesses willing to invest in training or apprenticeships have frequently advised that they are having to send staff significant distances for accredited training, often outside of the East of England, resulting in additional costs for both the business and the employee.

A contributing factor to the lower median wages in North Norfolk is that approximately **a quarter of the population are employed within some aspect of the visitor economy**, which in the main tends to pay lower wages than other sectors. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on local tourism. The Economic Impact of Tourism Report for North Norfolk in 2022 indicated some degree of recovery but that the volume and value of tourism still have not returned to the pre-pandemic levels.

Whilst the 2022 report did demonstrate a recovery, **North Norfolk's high dependence on the visitor economy**, and the recently exposed fragility of it, means it is essential to find ways to ensure it remains vibrant, resilient and moves more towards a year-round offering. Shifting from the traditional seasonal tourism patterns, which tends to create short-term, lower-paid employment and less animated places for local people in the low seasons, will be essential to fostering greater wealth creation and economic resilience.

“ In our recruitment survey, 81% of respondents had difficulty in obtaining new staff. ”



Business Case Study

Swift Technology Group

Swift Technology Group, a driven organisation providing complete end-to-end product development. With industry leading expertise in design, manufacture and support in Aeronautical, Marine, Automotive, Oil & Gas or Renewable Energy.

What does this business do?

Swift Technology Group incorporates eight active companies under one trading umbrella. For example, Swift Air are working on the development of a new small sustainable aircraft. In another part of the business is the design and production of composites for marine companies – specifically yacht hulls. Other composite work also includes the production of components for the automotive industry.

What are the challenges?

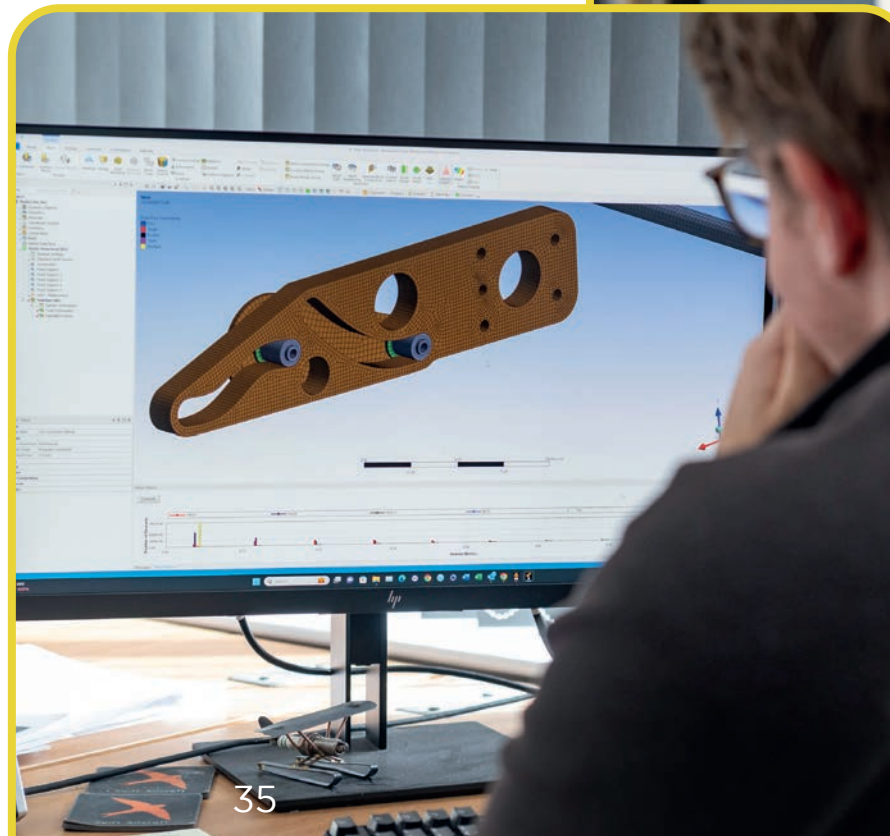
SPACE! Swift have recently submitted a planning application for additional hangar space which will be critical for growth. Other challenges include recruitment and investment, where up front investment in new machinery is needed to support new contract bids.

Why North Norfolk?

Space is critical and the affordability of large production areas is essential and their site at Scottow Enterprise Park provides ample opportunity for them to grow into.

What next?

Swift Technology Group are working on a number of key projects, any of which will deliver huge growth potential. These include the new Swift aircraft as well as Instron testing contracts and new commissions for carbon fibre composite work.



Delivering Success

The Economic Strategy & Action Plan is focused on supporting and delivering against 3 priority objectives:

Creating an Environment for Business to thrive in

Helping to create a place where local businesses can grow and prosper, new enterprises can flourish, inward investment is nurtured, and innovation, fresh thinking and creativity is welcomed.

Infrastructure to Support Growth

Working together to deliver the fundamental elements needed to support the objectives of increased housing provision, economic growth, mitigating climate change and creating thriving and sustainable communities.

Skills for Jobs

Creating a skilled, robust and sustainable workforce to support local businesses in their ambition to fulfil their growth aspirations.



What we will do:

- Work with our market and resort towns to reinforce their roles as local service centres, centres of employment, financial services and business activity, served by public transport
 - Provide support to allow rural businesses to thrive, recognising that many of our larger employers operate outside of our main towns.
 - Look to maximise the benefits to our business community of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds.
 - Continue to promote North Norfolk's diverse tourism and visitor offer.
- Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.

How we will do it:

We will undertake the following projects and activities:

- Rural Business & Communities Grant** – design and deliver a grant scheme to increase business investment and diversification, and to help community organisations with projects that support social action, volunteering and culture.
- Business Support Programme** – providing 1-2-1 support, advice and guidance and assisting with access to funding and resources.
- Business Digitalisation Programme** – supporting businesses through undertaking a digital audit and providing funding to assist with implementing recommended measures that deliver efficiency gains or improve their digital presence.
- Tourism marketing and business support** – working with Visit North Norfolk to deliver marketing campaigns (including the promotion of the Deep History Coast), and work with tourism businesses to support North Norfolk's diverse tourism and visitor offer.



North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone – deliver the final year of this programme. This will improve pedestrian flow and enhance the public realm; bring back to life under-utilised spaces; and, improve the structure, character and viability of a number of important buildings within the town.

Stalham High Street Task Force - take forward the recommendations of the Stalham High Street Task Force Action Plan through the facilitation of a Town Team, or Place Partnership.

Facilitate a Banking Hub - work with partners in Fakenham to retain banking and post office services in the town centre, through establishing a banking hub facility.

Business Partnership/forum - we will explore the development of a business forum for businesses to engage with the Council, share information and provide a sounding board for new initiatives.

Business Decarbonisation Programme – deliver a programme to support businesses on their sustainability journey by helping them to develop a decarbonisation strategy and through grant support.

Business Sustainability Toolkit - develop a package of resources to support local businesses to become more sustainable and reduce their energy costs.

Invest North Norfolk – building on the virtual business hub to further develop the brand and act as an umbrella for the promotion of NNDC’s business support offer in terms of location, skills, supply chain support etc. Continue to develop an effective regular communication channel to help businesses to keep up-to-date with information on council services, events and other sources of support.

Improve Business Intelligence – through the acquisition of business, labour market and movement data intelligence. This will improve our knowledge and understanding of businesses and labour market supply/demand, and enhance our evidence base to support the development of funding bids.

Project Pipeline Management – maintain a database of identified business and community projects and investments, including establishing their needs (funding, resource, advice etc), timescales to deliver and, where required, the support needed from the Council and/or partners to realise them.

Key Account Management – deliver a rolling programme of one-to-one engagements with our larger employers. This helps to instil the Council’s role as a key point of contact to support new investment, help overcome any barriers to growth or support with any appropriate early interventions if a business is experiencing financial difficulty.

Business Survey – undertake a business survey to help the Council to better understand the prevailing economic and business conditions facing local businesses. This will help to inform and shape future business support.

What we will do:

- Explore opportunities for securing development of our few brownfield sites.
- Seek to maximise the potential from the local implications of the transition towards hydrogen and carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) at the Bacton Gas site.
- Act as a digital champion to promote investment to address our competitive disadvantage through broadband and mobile connectivity challenges.
- Influence issues of water scarcity and constraints in the local electricity distribution network.

Ensure an adequate supply of serviced employment and premises to support local business.

How we will do it:

Key Infrastructure delivery - actively work with developers, Norfolk County Council and other partners to support the delivery of important infrastructure projects, such as the Fakenham A148 roundabout enhancement and the North Walsham western link road.

Bacton Energy Hub - be a lead advocate and facilitator in establishing the Bacton Energy Hub site as one of the UK’s principal locations for carbon capture and storage and hydrogen production. This will serve to support the UK’s energy transition to Net Zero, realising the employment, supply chain and wider economic benefits for North Norfolk, Norfolk and the wider East of England region.

Develop Energy Infrastructure and Water Resources Plans - working collaboratively with partners, we will seek to develop and lobby for solutions to resolve key infrastructure constraints in the district that need to be addressed by statutory undertakers so that businesses and developers are not disadvantaged in taking forward investment plans in the district.



Mobile and digital infrastructure - through developing a deeper understanding of the constraints of existing mobile and digital infrastructure in North Norfolk, lobby key operators and providers so as to reduce the “digital divide” which exists in the district.

Serviced land business case/pipeline development - based on previously commissioned surveys, develop a pipeline project proposal which seeks to increase the supply of serviced land or advance factory premises at Fakenham, Holt or North Walsham and can be delivered at pace if external funding can be secured for such an investment.

Establish and maintain a regular dialogue with **private sector developers** and commercial property agents, to inform decision making and assist the delivery of employment sites.

Market Town Network Improvement Strategies - Norfolk County Council have previously produced reports for North Walsham, Fakenham and Hoveton and Wroxham. We will encourage and support reports in the other towns.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) - support the development and delivery of LCWIPS in Sheringham, Cromer, Holt, and Fakenham.

Commercial opportunities marketing - Monitor and map data relating to employment sites and premises and promote development/investment opportunities where they exist.

Establish new facilities at Fakenham Sports Centre - including a 25m swimming pool, a full size 3G all-weather artificial grass pitch and implement carbon reduction measures to the existing Trap Lane facility.



What we will do:

- Promote innovation and workforce development throughout the district.
- Promote improved access to post 16 vocational education.
- Continue to provide apprenticeships opportunities, directly as a large local employer and promoting uptake in the wider business economy.

How we will do it:

We will undertake the following projects and activities:

Establish and support a North Norfolk Skills Assembly - to help embed a joined up and collaborative approach to supporting skills and recruitment and overcome critical issues.

Support the delivery of the **Local Skills Improvement Plan** through collaborating with the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and local partners - helping employers to access to funding and workforce/employee skills support.

Delivery of the Future Skills Now project (2024/25) - empowering employers to develop upskilling opportunities and the provision of UKSPF funding for training aligned to specific employer needs.

Collaborating with Further education, independent providers, Norfolk Country Council and VCSE organisations - to help promote and increase post-16 opportunities across the district.

Raise and support the access to careers (IAG) advice

across the district - working with the Careers hub, Enterprise network and our education establishments to promote career opportunities across North Norfolk.

Support and contribute to the **New Anglia Learning Providers Forum** (NALPF) - sharing best practice in this theme and leveraging further opportunities for the region.

Work collaboratively with **Apprenticeship Norfolk** - to promote and introduce employers to the benefits for Apprenticeships.

Act as ambassador for apprenticeships - through the Council leading by example by taking on apprenticeships as a means to grow our own talent.



Business Case Study

Alpha Case

Alpha Chase formed in 2004 has developed a reputation for providing innovative solutions for the most challenging product handling problems, with an attention to detail, quality and performance.

What does this business do?

Alpha Chase, trading for over 20 years, are involved in the design and manufacture production and assembly lines, predominately for the food, drink, personal care products and packaging. An inward investment from west Norfolk, clients include blue chip companies such as Unilever and Coca Cola AC have a satellite office in Burton Upon Trent, where they support the relocated Colman's production line. Parts of this building will be let to a number of other users who need office space, meeting rooms and other functional spaces.

What are the challenges?

Key to growth is attracting skilled people, as well as keeping talented staff. Roles required are likely to include fabricators, welders and designers and engineers.

Why North Norfolk?

Alpha Chase's MD is Norfolk born and bred. He lives locally and loves the space and the surrounding landscape. The building (formally owned by Equinor) is fabulous, well specified and offers space and growth potential.

What next?

After dividing up office space and making the building's IT work for separate company uses, the plan is to rent parts of the building to other businesses looking for office and meeting space. AC are also looking to recruit apprenticeships to shadow and learn from existing skilled workers.



Next Steps

This document is presently at draft stage. Through engagement with businesses, partners, representative organisations and NNDC's Committee process, the document will be further developed as necessary. It is appreciated that the economic climate is continually evolving and therefore the Strategy, and in particular the Action Plan, will need to be responsive to change. As such, it should be considered a 'living' document.

The next steps of this strategy are:

- Review and seek input from NNDC's Corporate Leadership Team and informally from NNDC's Cabinet.
- Submission to NNDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 14 February 2024.
- Hold a Business Engagement event - to include a summary of report/actions and test some of the challenges - 30 January 2024.
- Submission to NNDC's Cabinet, and subject to their recommendation.
- Submission to Full Council, with a recommendation for the formal adoption of the Strategy.
- Incorporate the Strategy into Invest North Norfolk.

Post Adoption

- Continued planning and development of identified activities.
- Install appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for key delivery items as part of the Council's Performance Management.
- Maintain the Economic Strategy and Action Plan as a 'living document'.

Economic Strategic Action Plan 2023 - 2027

The following Action Plan outlines the projects and activities the Council will undertake to support the delivery of the three priority objectives. It is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of all activities, as much of the delivery is business as usual for the Council. However, it serves to highlight some of the particularly key items of delivery that the Council will be engaged in, both presently and over the coming years.



Action	Rural Business and Communities Grant - delivery of £1.4m of grant support to develop, diversify and create jobs.
Output	Grant programme developed and delivered
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all; Engaged & Supported individuals and communities; Increase accessibility and inclusion for all; Promote culture, leisure and sport activities. Local Plan Regional - Norfolk Rural Economic Strategy 2021-2024; Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Building Back Better (2021) Levelling Up White Paper
Delivery	2023/24 and 2024/25
By Whom	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) & NNDC
Indicative Funding	Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)
Desired Outcomes	Business - Increased business capital investment, including diversification, investing in innovation and adopting productivity enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques. Community - Increased investment in: capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups; existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer; impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

Action	Business Support Programme - work with New Anglia LEP to provide a cohesive package of support for North Norfolk businesses, including 1-2-1 support, advice and guidance.
Output	Business Support Programme delivered (New Anglia Growth Hub), businesses supported
Strategic Alignment	Local - Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for jobs. Local Plan - Regional Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Norfolk Rural Strategy 2021-2024. National - Skill English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021s for Jobs White Paper
Delivery	2023/24 and 2024/25
By Whom	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) & NNDC
Indicative Funding	NALEP & UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
Desired Outcomes	Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to sustain, grow and innovate.

Action	Business Digitalisation Programme (Go Digital) - supporting business resilience, efficiency and growth through digital advice and funding.
Output	Mentor programme and grant scheme
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy National - UK Digital Strategy 2022
Delivery	2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25
By Whom	Norfolk County Council (NCC) and NNDC
Indicative Funding	NCC and UKSPF
Desired Outcomes	Improve digital skills and presence of SMEs
<hr/>	
Action	Tourism marketing and business support - Working with Visit North Norfolk and partners to deliver marketing campaigns, influence national tourism policy and support local businesses.
Output	Marketing Campaign and increased web searches for North Norfolk
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Promote culture, leisure and sport activities. Regional - Visit East Of England Destination Development Plan; Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy National - Industrial Strategy: Tourism Sector Deal; Local Visitor Economy Partnership Programme – Visit Britain
Delivery	Ongoing, with UKSPF funding in 22/23 and 23/24
By Whom	Visit North Norfolk & NNDC
Indicative Funding	UKSPF & NNDC
Desired Outcomes	To support North Norfolk’s diverse tourism and visitor offer

Action	North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone - delivery of a four year programme (ending March 2024) to invest in the built assets of the town centre and its key buildings, and to celebrate its history and heritage.
Output	Place making and building improvements and a Cultural Programme
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Promote culture, leisure and sport activities; Infrastructure to support growth; Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Building Back Better (2021)
Delivery	2024
By Whom	NNDC, Historic England, NCC, appointed lead architects, local stakeholders
Indicative Funding	Historic England, Getting Building Fund, NCC and NNDC
Desired Outcomes	Improved pedestrian flow, reduced high street emissions, improved spaces for activities/dwell. Use of historic and heritage assets to tell the story of the town.

Action	Stalham High Street Task Force - facilitate the development of a town team to drive High Street improvements
Output	Report and establishment of town team
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy National - Building Back Better (2021)
Delivery	December 2023
By Whom	HSTF, NNDC and local stakeholders
Indicative Funding	HSTF and NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	HSTF's are intended to provide guidance, tools and skills to help communities, partnerships and local government transform their high streets.

Page 125

Action	Facilitate a Banking Hub - work with local partners in Fakenham to retain banking facilities in the town centre through establishing a banking hub facility
Output	Establishment of a Banking Hub
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Engaged and supported individuals and communities; Increase accessibility and inclusion for all
Delivery	September 2024
By Whom	NNDC, local stakeholders and relevant partners
Indicative Funding	
Desired Outcomes	To help retain local access to cash and financial services.
Action	Business Forum/Network - establish mechanisms for the Council to engage with businesses to help inform them of key information and influence future support.
Output	Events held
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy Local Skills Improvement Plan, Norfolk Rural Strategy 2021-2024
Delivery	Autumn/Winter 2024
By Whom	NNDC, local/regional business representatives, local businesses
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	To engage with the Council, share information and provide a sounding board for new initiatives.

Action	Business Decarbonisation programme - ‘support business growth and sustainability through information, advice and funding
Output	Advice and Grants
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - Continue our journey to Net Zero; An environment for business to thrive in; Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Action Plan; Reducing emissions from running a business in North Norfolk. Environmental Charter Addressing the climate emergency and help to promote environmental excellence. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy
Delivery	2024/2025
By Whom	NNDC and Groundworks East
Indicative Funding	UKSPF
Desired Outcomes	Supporting business decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. buildings, transport and beyond.
Action	Business Sustainability Toolkit - develop a package of resources to support and promote sustainable business practices.
Output	Development of web resources and support
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - Continue our journey to Net Zero; An environment for business to thrive in. Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Action Plan; Reducing emissions from running a business in North Norfolk. Environmental Charter; Addressing the climate emergency and help to promote environmental excellence. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Net Zero Strategy; Build Back Greener; Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy
Delivery	2024/2025
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	Improved knowledge and understanding for businesses seeking to make their business more sustainable, energy efficient and reduce operational costs.

Action	Invest North Norfolk - Further develop the brand for the promotion of NNDC's business support activities.
Output	Development of web resources, business support activities and e-communications
Strategic Alignment	Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for Jobs Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy; Build Back Better; Skills for Jobs White Paper; Local Skills Improvement Plan
Delivery	Ongoing
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	Improved communication and information sharing with our business community, resulting in higher levels of engagement and facilitating take up of support.

Action	Improved Business Intelligence - Procure business, labour market and movement data intelligence.
Output	Procurement of data/software
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for Jobs Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan National - Build Back Better; Skills for Jobs White Paper; English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021
Delivery	December 2023
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	UKSPF (capacity building element)
Desired Outcomes	Better knowledge and understanding of businesses and labour market supply/demand. This will support the development of a stronger evidence base for the targeting, monitoring and evaluating of existing activities, and the development of future projects/funding bids.

Action	Project Pipeline Management - developing and maintaining a pipeline of project ideas and local investments; from concept through to delivery
Output	Database created and maintained
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all; Engaged & Supported individuals and communities; Increase accessibility and inclusion for all; Promote culture, leisure and sport activities. Regional - Norfolk Rural Economic Strategy 2021-2024; Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Building Back Better (2021); Levelling Up White Paper
Delivery	Ongoing
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	Maintain an understanding local investments and projects (1-2, 1-3years, 3years+ etc. These may be supported through immediate advice and guidance or shape and inform future funding bids.
Action	Key Account Management - Maintain a database of and an active dialogue with key businesses within the district.
Output	Database maintained and businesses engaged via rolling programme
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for jobs. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Norfolk Rural Strategy 2021-2024 National - Skill English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021s for Jobs White Paper
Delivery	Ongoing
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	This helps to instil the Council's role as a key point of contact to support new investment, help overcome any barriers to growth or support with any appropriate early interventions if a business is experiencing financial difficulty.

Action	Business Survey - undertake a business survey to help better understand the prevailing economic business conditions facing local businesses.
Output	Survey delivered. Results analysed interrogated and used to evidence future work programmes/funding bids
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for jobs. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Norfolk Rural Strategy 2021-2024
Delivery	Spring 2024
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	NNDC staff time
Desired Outcomes	To improve our knowledge of the critical issues impacting businesses. To provide an evidence base to shape and inform future programmes and fund bids.



Action	Key Infrastructure Delivery
Output	Identify routes to delivery that unlock barriers to/and facilitate growth. Particular focus on items including the Fakenham A148 roundabout enhancement and the North Walsham western link road. Development of Energy Infrastructure and Water Resources Plans. Regular meetings with NCC and relevant partners to collaborate and work through delivery programmes.
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Water Resources East - Water Resources Plan for Eastern England (draft) National - Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future.
Delivery	Ongoing with key dates specific to individual workflows
By Whom	NNDC, NCC, Central Government local stakeholders, developers
Indicative Funding	S106, developers, regional/national funding
Desired Outcomes	Supporting the delivery of growth areas identified within the Local Plan. Working collaboratively with partners, we will seek to develop and lobby for solutions to resolve key infrastructure constraints. Influencing issues of water scarcity and constraints in the local electricity distribution network. Acting as a digital champion to promote investment to address our competitive disadvantage through broadband and mobile connectivity challenges.

Action	Bacton Energy Hub
Output	Working closely with the terminal operators, national and regional partners and local stakeholder to understand the opportunities and support the future development of the Bacton Terminal.
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Skills for Jobs Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Building Back Better (2021) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener; Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021
Delivery	Ongoing
By Whom	Bacton Terminal operators, national/regional partners, NCC, NNDC
Indicative Funding	TBC
Desired Outcomes	Seeking to maximise the potential from the local implications of the transition towards hydrogen and carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) at the Bacton Gas site.

Action	Serviced land business case/pipeline development - Develop a pipeline of project proposals which seeks to increase the supply of serviced land or advance factory premises at Fakenham, Holt or North Walsham.
Output	Pipeline/business cases prepared
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Infrastructure to support growth; Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. National - Building Back Better (2021)
Delivery	December 2024
By Whom	NNDC and relevant partners eg developers, NCC, funding providers
Indicative Funding	TBC
Desired Outcomes	To be better positioned to capitalise on future funding opportunities that may bring forward employment site delivery.
Action	Establish new facilities at Fakenham Sports Centre , including a 25-metre public swimming pool and improved outdoor sports facilities.
Output	Improved facilities, including a 25m swimming pool, a full size 3G all-weather artificial grass pitch and implement carbon reduction measures to the existing Trap Lane facility.
Strategic Alignment	Corporate Plan - Infrastructure to support growth; Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all; Increase accessibility and inclusion for all; Promote culture, leisure and sports activities; Continue our journey to net zero; Maximising opportunity
Delivery	Delivery TBC
By Whom	Details TBC
Indicative Funding	Levelling Up Fund
Desired Outcomes	Greater health and well-being for local residents

Action	Promote Apprenticeship take up - connecting and facilitating to deliver increased uptake of opportunities and aspirations.
Output	Promotion of local apprenticeship opportunities, including supporting the North Norfolk Apprenticeships 100 campaign. Promote apprenticeship opportunities within NNDC.
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Skills for Jobs. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan. National - Skills for Jobs White Paper; English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021
Delivery	Ongoing
By Whom	NCC, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, DWP, NNDC, Apprenticeships Norfolk
Indicative Funding	NNDC Officer time
Desired Outcomes	Increased apprenticeship take up which provides a route into employment or reskilling/upskilling existing staff. Supports businesses and organisations (inc NNDC) to grow and retain local talent.
Action	North Norfolk Skills Assembly/Forum - establish a forum to help facilitate a joined up and collaborative approach to overcoming skills and recruitment issues
Output	Establishment of forum; Agreed Terms of Reference; Identified strategy/critical issues
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Skills for Jobs. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan. National - Skills for Jobs White Paper; English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021
Delivery	Summer 2024
By Whom	NCC, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, DWP, NNDC, Skills/recruitment representatives from public/private sector
Indicative Funding	NCC, NNDC Officer time
Desired Outcomes	To embed a joined up and collaborative approach to supporting skills and recruitment and to support the local delivery of the Norfolk Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Action	Future Skills NOW - Employment Skills Programme - mapping and audit exercise to support the skills challenges and to be in a position to shape and partner wider skills and training programmes.
Output	Programme delivery
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - An environment for business to thrive in; Skills for Jobs. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan National - Skills for Jobs White Paper; English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021
Delivery	2024/2025
By Whom	NCC & NNDC
Indicative Funding	NCC, UKSPF, NNDC
Desired Outcomes	Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.



Action	Additional grant funding for energy efficiency retrofit improvements for local homes in North Norfolk - linking with our Net Zero ambitions and our desire to support more vulnerable households.
Output	Grant delivery and advice
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - Continue our journey to Net Zero; Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all; Address housing need; Promote best use of housing stock and good housing standards; Net Zero 2030 Strategy and Action Plan. Improving the energy efficiency of your home; Environmental Charter. Addressing the climate emergency and help to promote environmental excellence. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy National - Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener
Delivery	2024/2025
By Whom	Norfolk Warm Homes (NWH) & NNDC
Indicative Funding	DESNZ, UKSPF & NNDC
Desired Outcomes	To improve the energy efficiency of local homes and reduce the cost of living for those particularly on low income.

Action	Additional funding for the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund - helping communities to develop new and innovative projects which will improve their environment as well as their health and social wellbeing.
Output	Grant delivery
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - Promote health, wellbeing and independence for all; Engaged & Supported individuals and communities; Increase accessibility and inclusion for all; Promote culture, leisure and sport activities. Quality of Life Strategy 2022-24
Delivery	2022/23 & 2023/24
By Whom	NNDC
Indicative Funding	UKSPF
Desired Outcomes	To help build strong and sustainable communities and ensure the long-term future and wellbeing of our communities.

Action	Develop a Cultural & Creative Sector Strategy - identification of existing cultural programmes and joining up to promote cultural opportunities for our residents.
Output	Strategy report and action plan
Strategic Alignment	Local Corporate Plan - Promote culture, leisure and sport activities; An environment for business to thrive in; Quality of Life Strategy 2022-24. Regional - Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy; Visit East Of England Destination Development Plan. National - Creative industries sector vision: a joint plan to drive growth, build talent and develop skills (2023) Industrial Strategy:Tourism Sector Deal March 2024
Delivery	March 2024
By Whom	NNDC and professional consultants
Indicative Funding	UKSPF
Desired Outcomes	Identification of local activity and provision of a cohesive and joined up approach to Cultural delivery.



Business Case Study

October Studios

October Studios are a production company, based in rural north Norfolk, who build spaces and create additional services to support TV and film making.

What does this business do?

October Studios employ 20 permanent people and also use local supply chains to fulfil the design of sets and the supply of costumes, props and make-up services. They house the only free standing permanent 'Oval Office' set in Europe. With their advanced use of AI screen technology they can support film and television production. Alongside the tech they have a large prop and costume department including furniture, small props and set design furnishings. A separate department create bespoke costume racks for film shoots and amongst other production companies including Netflix.

What are the challenges?

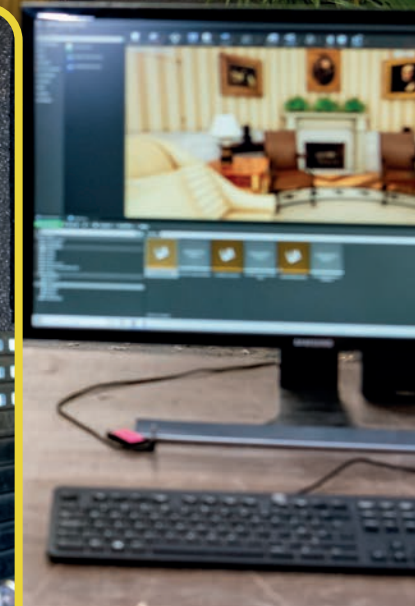
Space is critical and affordability of large production areas can create a financial advantage. For this industry access, parking, local crew availability and low cost rents are essential. The Runway, alleyways and old industrial setting is also very useful for set development.

Why North Norfolk?

October Studios is located on Scottow Enterprise Zone which provides space, accessibility and reduced overheads. October Studios are able to produce their work here at a fraction of what it would cost in London.

What next?

October Studios are constantly looking for more space and there is a desire to expand premises for set production and for storage.





NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub	
Executive Summary	This report provides an update on the progress to date on the delivery of Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project and also sets out the procurement options for delivering the project.
Options considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure delivery of the project through a traditional procurement process – not recommended due to the time taken not delivering the project to required timescales. • Procure delivery of the project through a single stage design and build process – not recommended due to likely impact on interest of suitable regional suppliers with strong local supply chains not bidding. • Procure delivery of the project through a two stage design and build procurement process - recommended as meets both timescales and strong supply chain/quality requirements. • Not to continue with the project - this would not meet the aspirations set out on the Corporate Plan objectives and Annual Action Plan.
Consultation(s)	
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub Project to date is noted. • Members note the predicted inflationary costs of £450,000 since the bid was submitted and agree to make budgetary provision to meet these additional costs not covered by the Levelling-up Funding. • That Members note that no formal confirmation of funding has been received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. • Members agree to the use of a Two Stage Design and Build procurement process for the delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project via a direct award to Contractor A through a Framework. • Members agree to make additional budgetary provision in respect of the Framework fees to a maximum of £330,000 • Members delegate to the to the Director of Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Finance, to

	make the award through the framework which it is felt delivers the best cost benefit, considering the cost of access and additional services provided.
Reasons for recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep members apprised of progress to date and to ensure that the project is delivered to meet the required Levelling-up Fund deadlines and meets the councils aspirations on cost certainty and quality.
Background papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Full Council – 27th July 2022 • Report to Full Council – 20th December 2023

Wards affected	Fakenham wards (Lancaster North and South); and wards in the west of the district including Briston, Priory, Stibbard, Stody, The Raynhams, Walsingham; Wells with Holkham.
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Tim Adams, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer	Steve Hems, Director for Communities Email:- steve.hems@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516182

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The 2023-2027 Corporate Plan themes - Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council.

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	NO
Has the public interest test been applied	Yes – there is private or confidential information to be considered by this report
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	See meeting minutes for Full Council on the 21 st December 2023

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise Council of progress to date on delivering the project, the next steps and to gain agreement on the proposed route to procurement of the construction phase of the contract.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 In response to a call for applications under Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund programme in March 2022, North Norfolk District Council developed a proposal for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility in partnership with Fakenham Town Council and the District Council's leisure contractor, Everyone Active. This proposal envisaged an £11million project to extend the existing Fakenham Sports Centre facility at Trap Lane in the town to include a 25-metre four-lane swimming pool with moveable floor, extended gym and fitness studio facilities, 3G all-weather pitch and environmental improvements to the existing sports hall building.
- 2.2 Details of the project to be the subject of the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 application were approved by Full Council at its meeting of the 27th July 2022 and the project was submitted to Government on 2nd August 2022. Round 2 of the Levelling Up fund programme was four times overbid and in January 2023 the District Council was advised that the Fakenham project had not been successful in being awarded Levelling Up Fund monies. As the project proposal was heavily reliant on Government support, the District Council has not committed further resources to developing the project in the period since January 2023.
- 2.3 The Government subsequently announced that a number of projects would be supported through a Levelling Up Round 3 announcement on 20th November 2023 and that five further projects, including the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project, would receive funding support in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22nd November 2023. The funding support offered reflects the application for Levelling Up Fund Round 2 funding made by the District Council ie with Government funding of £9,856,277 towards total project costs of £10,951,419, meaning that the project can now be taken forward.
- 2.4 At the Full Council meeting on the 20th December 2023 it was resolved that:
1. **Full Council welcomed the Government funding of £9.856million awarded towards the cost of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project. The Council further recognised that confirmation of the Government funding would allow plans for the new facility to be taken forward in the coming months.**
 2. **Council approved the establishment of a Capital Budget of £11million for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project within the Capital Programme.**
 3. **Council approved the funding of this project made up of £9.856million of Levelling Up Fund (central government) monies, £0.408million Section 106 monies, £0.575million from the Football Foundation and the value of the land contributed by Fakenham Town Council. Any shortfall in this funding would need to be funded by the Council, for which borrowing will be taken.**
 4. **Council approved the project management and governance arrangements for the project as outlined in Section 3 of the report.**
 5. **A traditional procurement process would disadvantage the Council due to the timescales involved and supports an exemption under the**

Contract Procedure rules to appoint the consultants, FMG Consulting, who have previously worked on this project, as principal advisors to the Council in the development and delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal.

6. Subject to recommendation 3 above, delegated authority is given to the Director of Communities to appoint FMG Consulting to advise the Council on the detailed design, construction and tender processes for the project including the submission of a planning application for the development.

7. Tender prices received to be reported to Council for approval before any construction contract is awarded as a key “gate” point in the delivery of the project.

2.5 The funding requirement for the project to be completed by the end of March 2026 is a significant pressure and key driver in some of the decision making for the project.

3. Progress update

3.1 In early January 2024 work began to progress the project. It became apparent that the original recommendation to suspend standing orders and make a direct award to FMG Consulting (FMG) was not possible due to the likely value of that award. It was therefore necessary to find a route to award which did not involve a lengthy procurement process.

3.2 In consultation with the Procurement Officer and Monitoring Officer, the award to FMG was made through a framework agreement, allowing the direct award but remaining compliant with procurement rules. Prior to this award FMG and their team worked “at risk” in order to keep the project on time.

3.3 The requirement to submit the second stage validation to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to a relatively short deadline would not have been deliverable without this “at risk” work by FMG. The validation submission required updating of the original costing figures submitted with the bid in August 2022 and confirmation that the project timeline was capable of being delivered by deadline date of March 2026.

3.4 The validation was submitted by the deadline of the 2nd February 2024. The figures submitted allowed for the inflationary costs due to the time which has passed since the original scheme had been submitted. These inflationary costs amounted to £450,000.

3.5 Confirmation was provided to the Validation Team that the project could be completed by the end of March 2026.

3.6 Despite chasing repeatedly for updates, at the time of drafting this report, there has not been any further clarification questions from the Validation Team or confirmation that the funding is confirmed for the project. Whilst the Council has received the grant offer letter in the absence of formal confirmation that the funding has passed the second stage validation, any further work completed on the project is at the Council’s financial risk. An update will be provided once information is provided back from the Validation Team.

- 3.7 The Governance arrangements set out in Section 3 of the Full Council report of the 20th December 2023 have been established with the internal Project Team and external Steering Group having been formed. A Project Team meeting was held on the 29 January 2024 as a kick-off meeting for the project. The first meeting of the steering group took place on the 5 February 2024.
- 3.8 To enable the project team to develop the design brief, beyond the initial work completed to support the bid submission, for the Stage 2 design a number of surveys have been undertaken and briefing workshops held including:
- Project Steering Group meeting
 - Measured Building Survey
 - Topographical Survey
 - Design Briefing Session – Building Control
 - Design Briefing Session – Planning
 - Design Briefing Session – Sustainability
 - Site Inspection Meeting
 - Design Briefing Session – Leisure
 - Design Briefing Session – 3G Pitch (FA & Football Foundation)
- 3.9 In addition to the briefing sessions an initial procurement options appraisal workshop was undertaken to establish the possible procurement routes available to deliver the project. Considerations which were taken into account during this workshop included:
- the length of time each would take and the impact this would have on the deliverability of the project.
 - How the market was likely to view each procurement option and therefore the likelihood of limiting the pool of potential bidders.
- 3.10 It was clear from the discussions during the briefing session that some procurement routes were not feasible either due to the length of time that they would take or the likely lack of appetite from contractors rendering the project undeliverable.
- 3.11 In order to test the position further a Pre-Market Engagement Workshop was arranged to which three regional contractors with swimming pool and leisure experience were invited. Additionally, a provider of an alternative framework option was invited to present their model for further consideration. The workshop was held in accordance with the planning and conduct of procurement procedures in relation to ‘preliminary market consultation’ under regulation 40. Each presenting contractor was informed of this and that their attendance did not pre-qualify them for any further involvement.
- 3.12 Further detail and consideration of this workshop is set out in section 5 of this report.
- 3.13 Procurement processes through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) tender and evaluation has recently been undertaken for the following key specialist design consultants:
- Building Services Engineer
 - Pool Filtration Engineer

- Civil & Structural Engineer

3.14 Further design briefing sessions have taken place since the drafting of this report including return visits with Building Control as the design develops and updates with the Football Association and Football Foundation.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Further investigation surveys will be procured with specification and briefing provided through the consultant team including those for:

- Geotechnical Survey
- Ecology Surveys
- Arboricultural Surveys
- Flood Risk Assessments
- Highways, Transport, Travel Assessments
- Utilities Survey

4.2 These will need to be tendered, scored, evaluated with recommendations issued in March 2024 for Council consideration and instruction.

4.3 The most significant next step to be taken is to decide on the preferred procurement route. This report sets out the options available, a brief appraisal of each option against the project requirements informed by the procurement appraisal workshop and pre-market engagement workshop which have been undertaken by some of the project team.

- Commence Stage 1 tender process March 2024
- Award preferred Principal Contractor under PCSA April 2024
- Stage 3 design development April to June 2024
- Stage 2 negotiation period June to August 2024
- Agree Contract sum & award of Contract August 2024

5.0 Procurement Options

5.1 There are three main procurement routes to deliver the Fakenham Sports and Leisure Hub project. A summary of these routes is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

5.2 In considering the most appropriate route to market for the procurement several key considerations have been taken into account:

- The ability of the chosen route to meet the project delivery timelines that also achieves early cost certainty and maintains the Council's quality aspirations.
- Lessons learnt from the Reef project in Sheringham, in particular in relation to attracting regional contractors with relevant swimming pool experience and strong local supply chains.

5.3 In summary the following points were reviewed in conjunction with the above project specifics;

- Design & Build is a quicker procurement method than Traditional (no requirement for fully detailed design and a bill of quantities) which supports the key driver i.e. LUF funding timescales.

- Contractors and consultants are familiar with Design & Build (especially in the local market). Contractors can assist in the final design ensuring 'buildability' and co-ordination.
- There should be greater cost certainty as the contractor takes the risk for developing the construction design and overall build (and with appropriate contract amendments, the majority of design/construction risk is passed to the contractor).
- In addition to the above point, there is a single point of responsibility for delivering the project. With traditional procurement, the client's consultant team are responsible for delivering detailed construction details which can lead to change, increased costs and programme delays.

5.4 Of the options available the following conclusions were reached:

5.4.1 **Traditional:** The traditional procurement route would not allow for the project to complete by the required deadline due to the length of time the process would take. On this basis it was discounted.

5.4.2 **Single Stage Design and Build:** This route is quicker than a traditional procurement and would enable the timetable to be met. A single stage design and build was used for the procurement of the Reef construction. Whilst the Reef has been a hugely successful project for the Council it is appropriate that relevant lessons learnt are reflected in this project.

5.4.3 The key learning from the Reef was that a single stage design and build was not attractive to key regional contractors and attracted contractors from across the UK who lacked swimming pool experience, a regional presence and or suitably experienced subcontractors in North Norfolk. Management and quality of workmanship suffered when traveling from further afield with Quality Assurance and Supervision procedures falling short of expectation.

5.4.4 During the Pre-Market Engagement Workshop, each of the attending contractors was asked to comment on their appetite for the project. All indicated their appetite for the project, but two of the three regional contractors indicated they would not bid if the procurement route was a single stage design and build. On this basis the Single Stage Design and Build procurement route was not considered to be the most appropriate for this project.

5.4.5 **Two Stage Design & Build:** Two-stage tendering is a procedure typically used to achieve an early appointment of a contractor to a lump-sum contract. For the first stage, the objective is to competitively appoint, on the basis of limited information, a preferred contractor for further negotiation.

5.4.6 The first-stage competition is typically based on deliverables including a construction programme and method statement, detailed preliminaries pricing, and overheads and profit. The first stage may also include the competitive tendering of some work packages, together with lump sums for pre-construction services, design fees, risk margins for work that will not be tendered in the second stage. The first stage concludes with the appointment of a preferred contractor on a separate pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) prior to the completion of a contract at the end of stage two i.e. JCT contract.

- 5.4.7 The second stage, which is typically managed as a negotiation between the employer and the preferred contractor relies upon competition between the preferred contractors supply chain for work packages under an agreed open book tender with three subcontractor returns. The second stage is concluded with the agreement of a lump-sum contract sum, based upon the competitive tender of circa 80% of the value of work packages.
- 5.4.8 This process is undertaken via cooperation in terms of the negotiation elements during the second stage.
- 5.4.9 The two-stage tender option is typically adopted for a number of reasons, including:
- Achieving early appointment of the main contractor ahead of the completion of design, and a quicker start on site.
 - Securing the involvement of a contractor for pre-contract services on a competitive basis, to obtain input on buildability, sequencing and subcontractor selection.
 - Retaining greater client involvement in the pre-selection and appointment of subcontractors.
 - Motivating the design and construction team to drive out cost and to drive in value.
 - Transferring a greater degree of design and other construction risk to the principal contractor.
- 5.4.10 The two-stage process meets the project timescale requirements and would ensure that key regional contractors would have an appetite to deliver the project. For these reasons the Two Stage Design & Build route procurement is recommended for the delivery of this project.
- 5.5 During the Procurement workshop it was established that there were further options to deliver the Two Stage Design & Build procurement route.
- 5.6 The first would be a direct award through an existing framework. The second would be to run a two stage design and build procurement exercise. Whilst the use of a framework provides the quickest route to market there are additional costs associated with accessing the framework. Running the two stage design and build would save these costs but is likely to take longer, need additional input from the internal project team and additional services delivered through FMG Consulting, with resultant additional costs.
- 5.7 Due to the key driver of the LUF completion deadlines and in order to streamline the process as much as possible it is recommended that a framework solution is the preferred route.
- 5.8 Frameworks provide quick route to procurement as the framework providers have already undertaken a compliant procurement process to obtain competitive prices. The use of a framework provides the quickest route to market for the project. There is a cost to use the framework and this varies from framework to framework but typically is a percentage of the overall cost of the project.
- 5.9 In respect of the frameworks considered for the Fakenham Sports and Leisure Hub project it is anticipated that the additional cost of using the framework will be in the range of £230,000 – £330,000, although negotiations are still

continuing at the time of the drafting of this report. This cost was not included in the bid submitted as part of the bid process and so would have to be funded by North Norfolk District Council.

- 5.10 Pre-Market Engagement workshop:
- FMG Consulting identified a number of key national contractors with regional bases who have experience of delivering projects in the leisure area. These three contractors were approached to attend a workshop to explore a number of issues around the project, to gauge their approach and preferences around procurement.
 - The aim of these discussions was to provide greater understanding to the Project Team as to what route would to procurement would meet the aspirations of the project around timescales, cost certainty and quality aspirations.
 - A provider of an alternative procurement model was also invited to attend.
- 5.11 Details of the workshop outcomes are considered commercially sensitive and therefore included in the confidential Appendix to this report.

6.0 Corporate Priorities

- 6.1 Delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project supports the Council's Corporate Plan themes – Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council.
- 6.2 The Annual Action Plan was update following the announcement of the funding from a proposed action to re-submit the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project in any Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund programme, to state "Development and Delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal".

7.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Development of this new facility - swimming pool and 3G pitch - will have an impact on local rates of participation in sport and wellbeing activities in the Fakenham area, based on the experience of participation rates at The Reef, Sheringham. Additional users of the new facilities at Fakenham would be expected to have a positive impact on the contract arrangements between the Council and its leisure contract partner, Everyone Active and work will be undertaken to assess such returns as the project is developed up until the tender approval stage of the project and reported to members at that time.
- 7.2 The Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) has provided the following comments in advising on the preparation of this report:-
- 7.3 The original bid to Government was for a project value of £11million which has increased to £11.780 million due to inflationary costs and additional budgetary provision in respect of the Framework fees. Government funds have recently been awarded to the project totalling £9.856 million. This requires the Council to match-fund the project potentially up to £1.560 million, which could reduce by £575,000 following receipt of funding from the football Foundation subject to meeting specific requirements. This would have to be funded through borrowing.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer has provided the following comments in advising on the preparation of this report:-
- 8.2 The Project Lead Officer will be required, within the Council's project governance framework, to comply with the Contract Procedure Rules and continue to liaise with the Council's Procurement Officer with reference to the two-stage process.

9.0 Risks

- 9.1 There are a number of potentially significant risks associated with this project, which are being managed via a Project Risk Register.
- 9.2 The most significant risk is the lack of formal confirmation of funding, following submission of the second stage validation on the 2nd February 2024. This means that the Council is working at risk in respect of the expenditure on the project until formal confirmation is received.

10.0 Net Zero Target

- 10.1 A significant element of the £11million project budget (£1million) was for the incorporation of environmental / Net Zero features within the design and operation of the new facility, including retro-fitting measures to the existing Sports Centre through additional thermal efficiency measures, incorporation of solar photovoltaic roof panels etc. These measures will be given detailed consideration in the development of the detailed project design.
- 10.2 Potential contractors were asked to present their approach to decarbonising the development in relation to both the new build and retrofitting measures to the existing building. There was a consistency of approach to the measures proposed and these were in line with some work undertaken by the Greater South East Net Zero Hub.
- 10.3 Further work will be completed as part of the design brief work to consider further the potential decarbonising measures which will be included in the design. The proposed project design will be taken through the Council's new De-carbonisation Strategic Group such that due consideration can be given to the Council's stated Net Zero objectives alongside issues of value for money, carbon-pricing and offsetting etc.

11.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 11.1 The new Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility will be developed with detailed consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues, building on the learning gained through the delivery and operation of The Reef leisure centre at Sheringham and the sharing of plans with our leisure contract operator, Everyone Active and the proposed Engagement Group.

12.0 Community Safety issues

- 12.1 The detailed plans for the new facility will be designed to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, including engagement with the Norfolk Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer as appropriate.

13.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 13.1 Progress on the project has been good and is on track for delivery in accordance with the timescales required to meet the Levelling up Fund deadlines.

- 13.2 The decision on the procurement route will allow the project to continue to be delivered at the required pace. A further report will be provided to Full Council when the construction tender prices are received in late August 2024.

- 13.3 It is recommended that:-

- 13.3.1 Progress on the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub Project to date is noted.

- 13.3.2 Members note the predicted inflationary costs of £450,000 since the bid was submitted and agree to make budgetary provision to meet these additional costs not covered by the Levelling-up Funding.

- 13.3.3 That Members note that no formal confirmation of funding has been received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

- 13.3.4 Members agree to the use of a Two Stage Design and Build procurement process for the delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project via a direct award to Contractor A through a Framework.

- 13.3.5 Members agree to make additional budgetary provision in respect of the Framework fees to a maximum of £330,000

- 13.3.6 Members delegate to the to the Director of Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Finance, to make the award through the framework which it is felt delivers the best cost benefit, considering the cost of access and additional services provided.

Appendix 1

Procurement Options

Traditional

- Design / Consultant Team appointed fully by the client through the life of the project
- Full set of tender design information and a Bill of Quantities prepared by the consultant team
- Open tender process, usually based on lowest price selection
- Risk profile; all risks sit with the client
- Timescales; longer design process and notorious slow process tender / negotiation process
- Consultant costs higher due to the level of detail required, at this stage and cost of preparing Bill of Quantities

Single Stage Design & Build

- Design / consultant team appointed from RIBA 1 to 4a
- Full set of Design & Build tender design information prepared by the consultant team
- Open tender with a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire/Invitation to Tender stage pre-stage to select a shortlist of contractors
- Tender to 3/4 contractors, usually based on lowest price wins
- Fixed price at tender stage
- Risk profile; Design & Build risk transfer to contractor
- Timescales; faster than traditional but slower than two stage
- Client also appoints a monitoring team to review Contractor design proposals and provide ongoing advice to Client

Two Stage Design & Build

- Design / Consultant Team design the project from Inception to planning (RIBA 1 to 3)
- Design / Consultant Team develop the 'Employers Requirements'
- Simultaneously a procurement process begins to identify 'Preferred Contractor'
- Either through an Open process or through a recognized framework
- Ideally the preferred contractor shadows the scheme through RIBA 3 or as early as possible
- From RIBA 3 onwards the Contractor and Designers work on a PCSA (Pre Contract Services Agreement) to contract
- Second stage commercially takes longer, than a straight bid, and costs not known until final package of work procured
- Construction contract is signed with designers appointed by the Design & Build contractor deliver the scheme
- Risk profile; Design & Build risk transfer to contractor
- Timescales; faster than single stage because the preferred contractor is appointed earlier, shadows the project and prices it in tandem with the design as it develops (no tender period in the programme)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank