

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

July 2022

COUNCILLOR A BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT

For the period July 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

General overview.

Previous Portfolio Holder reports have advised as to the guidance received on 16 March from Natural England regarding Nutrient Neutrality for the River Wensum and Broads Catchment Areas. In this regard the Council continues to work positively in partnership with other Norfolk Councils on this matter.

Royal Haskoning (RH) were appointed to deliver consultancy support and are in the process of producing a nutrient calculator and detailed catchment level plans, with engagement with Natural England.

RH continue to provide regular updates with a commitment to complete a short term strategy for Nutrient Neutrality by August, and delivery of the long term strategy no later than February 2023.

Our officers have been reviewing the application types that can be determined where located within the sensitive catchments, Counsel advice has been received in relation to the application types that can be determined, with the majority of applications within the sensitive catchment areas still able to be determined (householder applications account for over 80% of all applications submitted to the Council - and most forms of commercial development can also be determined for local businesses). The situation remains that new housing and tourism development (overnight accommodation) remain restricted until the mitigation detailed above is available to offset nutrient impacts.

A members briefing on Nutrient Neutrality was held on 23 June.

At the time of writing a Written Ministerial Statement has just been released setting out measures for improving water quality and tackling nutrient neutrality. Officers will prepare a Member Briefing Note on this matter.

I will continue to report on the issues surrounding Nutrient Neutrality and implications for development and planning in our district over the coming meetings.

Development Management & Major Projects Performance

Detailed reports are provided to Development Committee on these matters, please refer to these reports for any detailed consideration on matters of speed and quality of decision to the Development Committee. In headline terms, 87% of Major applications and 80% of non-major applications are being determined within statutory timescales.

Our Director continues to work on for the Planning Service Improvement Plan, with all service officer meeting and individual team meetings having being held across the past few weeks. The Customer satisfaction survey, Agent & Developer forum and Parish / Town Council liaison meetings will follow (surveys timings dependent of Nutrient Neutrality outcomes). The draft strategy is to be reported to the September meeting of O&S, with a detailed action plan to follow in December 2022.

Planning Policy & neighbourhood planning

Our team have finalised collating the Regulation 19 consultations received, all those who made comments have been acknowledged and thanked and the responses are now published and available to view on the consultation portal <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/local-plan-consultation/>

The team will be reporting the responses, outcomes and recommendations to coming meetings of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party (PPBH) which will consider the need to request that the Inspector incorporates any further modifications as part of the examination process.

The Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan is nearing its final stages. A six-week consultation on the draft Plan was completed on 9 May, 2022. The plan is now being considered by an independent examiner who has asked both the Council and Blakeney PC to respond to a number of initial questions. If the examiner approves the draft Plan, the next stage is to put the Plan, along with the examiner's recommendations, to a public referendum. If accepted, the Council must make the draft Neighbourhood Plan within eight weeks after the referendum.

Once the Neighbourhood Plan is made, it will form part of the district-wide planning framework. It will become a material consideration (meaning it must be taken into account) for future planning applications in the Blakeney Neighbourhood area.

Details of the plan and schedule for submission are available via this link:

<https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/news/2022/march/draft-neighbourhood-plan-for-blakeney-reaches-final-stages/>

Both Holt and Wells Next the Sea will shortly reach a similar stage with their draft Plans.

Conservation, Design & Landscape

Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) following the recent consultations were reported to the May PPBH Working Party. Brinton with Thornage; Sharrington; Hunworth; Edgefield, Stody were previously reported to this meeting and agreed for adoption. Work on the wider Glaven Valley Conservation Area Appraisal is due to be reported shortly.

Building Control

Workload remains higher than usual for the corresponding time last year. Regularisation works associated with house sales are increasing and can only be undertaken currently by the Local Authority, and not Approved Inspectors.

Building Control applications continue to be determined within the statutory timescales, on site checks and registration remain well within statute time limits. The recruitment campaign is complete we await confirmation of the appointment. Short term locum support is available to ensure performance and delivery of the services are not impacted in the interim.

Our mobile working app has undertaken final field tests with a view to adopting a paperless procedure after the summer holiday season. Such an approach reduces both cost and importantly, our environmental impact. I will ask the team to monitor and report outcomes to this meeting following introduction.

Enforcement

The team have 250 current live cases; 213 have been created this year with 220 cases having been closed so far in 2022. The harm assessment form has enabled officers to make clearer and quicker assessments as to expediency / action and where possible case closure.

Job Evaluation will be taking place for the new roles of Condition Compliance Officer and Trainee Planning Enforcement Officer, and officers will commence recruitment when the process is completed by end of September.

Currently operating with two Enforcement Officers and a single visiting officer, although one officer is still on a phased return due to his injury.

Staffing

It is a pleasure to announce that Maxine Collis has now started in her new role as Planning Support Manager, having previously held a key role in the Corporate Delivery Unit. Maxine will be working closely with the service managers and officers in developing the customer facing elements of the service, including the ICT systems and software development – in alignment with the Planning Service Improvement Plan actions as they are identified.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- Development Committee – 4th August
- Planning Policy & Build Heritage Working Party – 15th August

3 Meetings attended

- Town and Parish Council Forum – 4th July
- Effective Planning in Flood Risk Management with the Town & Country Planning Association – 5th July
- Development Committee - 7th July