

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

05 October 2022

COUNCILLOR A BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT

For the period July to September 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

General overview.

Nutrient Neutrality continues to be a key work area for this service. Members may recall I updated the last meeting of the work undertaken by our consultant's Royal Haskoning (RH). A final draft nutrient calculator and detailed catchment level plan, have been produced. As I write those matters are under consultation with Natural England. I await final briefing as to the adoption of the calculator and have confidence that catchment level plans will be published shortly.

We remain on target for delivery of the longer term strategy, being no later than February 2023. Regular meetings are in place with NNDC officers and Natural England (NE), enabling detailed discussion on individual cases and also a strategic overview as to delivery of NE mitigation across the Broads and Wensum catchments.

A developer and agents forum was supported by the Norfolk Group of Councils on 12 September. A bespoke mitigation calculator and detailed infrastructure map will be available shortly. These will reduce levels of mitigation required and give a clearer understanding of where the impacts of nutrient discharges are impacting. A business plan and work programme to deliver mitigation are being developed for the Norfolk Councils. I will look to deliver an updating workshop for our members on the measures being undertaken.

The Ministerial Statement of late July is geared towards delivery of nature based mitigation via NE. I am of the view that this approach is unlikely to deliver resolution any earlier than the measures already being developed by the Norfolk Councils.

I confirm that despite these constraints that planning decisions continue to be made. At the time of writing 85 decisions were issued in August. Regrettably the impact on permissions for substantive numbers of new dwellings remains in the affected areas. We are monitoring the impacts on housing land availability and deliverability closely.

I will continue to report on the issues surrounding Nutrient Neutrality and Implication for environment, development and planning in our district over the coming Meetings.

Development Management & Major Projects

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, 87.5% of Major applications and 80.64% of non-major applications are being determined within statutory timescales.

Our Director is reporting the Draft Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP) to the September meeting of Overview & Scrutiny, this will include a Strategy which includes undertaking customer satisfaction surveys, Agent & Developer Forum along with Parish / Town Council liaison meetings. A detailed action plan is to follow in December 2022. As part of the PSIP, a small realignment of teams is also taking place meaning that the Majors Team/DM Team arrangement will cease and be replaced by three equal DM teams, to ensure succession planning and a spread of experience and opportunities across all officers.

An officer "on call" service was launched this month, to support the Customer Services Team on development management queries and provide professional advice where needed.

Planning Policy & neighbourhood planning

Our team have finalised collating of Regulation 19 consultations, 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://northnorfolk-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/36705/peoplesubmissions/section/>

The team will be reporting responses, outcomes and recommendations to coming meetings of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party (PPBH) though the Autumn. Dependent on those outcomes, I will be looking for the plan to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2023.

The Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan is nearing its final stages. The Neighbourhood Plan Inspector has responded to the submitted plan with a series of questions for Blakeney Parish Council to answer. Those questions will need to be satisfied prior to confirmation that the plan meets the basic conditions, needed to move forward with a public referendum. I will report to the next meeting on the outcome of those matters.

Holt have completed Regulation 14 consultation and review of submissions. It is expected this plan will shortly move to submission. Wells Next the Sea will closed their Regulation 14 consultation on 9 September. Stalham is in the

early stages of the neighbourhood plan process.

Conservation, Design & Landscape

I am pleased to report that the Glaven Valley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022) was reported to August meeting of PPBH. At that meeting it was unanimously agreed to recommend the plan favourably to the next available Cabinet meeting for public consultation and that following consultation, the amended appraisal be brought back to Working Party for consideration and subsequent adoption by Cabinet.

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 timescale, on site checks and registration remain well within statute time limits.

Confirmation of the new appointment to Building Surveyor is in place, start date will be Late September. Short term locum support has been available to ensure performance and delivery of the service are not impacted in the interim.

Our mobile working app is now working in the field, and is being received positively by the team. The service delivers paperless on site working for the team. Savings on carbon footprint will be monitored and reported to me. The app enables live updating on site with access to historic records for our surveyors. We are working to improve the app and will take lessons learned from this launch forward to other service areas which can benefit from the efficiencies that the mobile app system can deliver.

Enforcement

The team have 231 current live cases; 240 have been created this year with 275 cases having been closed so far in 2022. The harm assessment form has enabled officers to make informed, clearer and quicker assessments as to expediency / action and where possible case closure.

100% of enforcement cases are acknowledged and input within time, with at least 95% of site inspections being undertaken within 10 days. The team are working through a backlog of 126 cases that have exceeded the (self-imposed) resolution deadline, recruitment to trainee officer, and conditions monitoring officer will enable this backlog to be reduced. I will report on this backlog and measures to reduce that number to our next meeting.

Staffing

Three Senior Planning Officers have left the development management

Service since my July report. The recruitment campaign to replace officers is moving forward, interviews will be completed by the time we meet. I will report in October as to completion of the recruitment process. Our Service Manager and Assistant Director have completed an interim plan to ensure cases are re allocated and service performance will be maintained.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

September 28 Overview & Scrutiny
September 29 Development Committee

October 5 Full Council

3 Meetings attended

August 16 Portfolio Holder Meeting
August 24 Business Planning
August 24 Portfolio Holder Meeting
August 30 Pre Development Committee

September 6 Cabinet