

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 June 2023.

COUNCILLOR TIM ADAMS - CABINET MEMBER FOR EXECUTIVE SUPPORT, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Legal

Litigation

eastlaw, in conjunction with Environmental Health, have had a successful outcome following a prosecution under Health and Safety legislation relating to a fall from a ladder. The company in question was fined £18,000 and ordered to pay the Council's legal costs.

eastlaw, in conjunction with Council tax, has also had further success recovering outstanding business rates in excess of £30,000 against a single company.

Planning Contracts and Property

The legal team continues to assist the planning team with advice at Committee and assistance with the new Member training for Development Committee Members. eastlaw is involved in finalising what could be the first nutrient neutrality section 106 agreement, replacing inefficient septic tanks with package treatment plants (PTP) to achieve phosphorus neutrality.

The team has provided legal advice, through the contracts planning and property solicitors relating to planning issues, including agreements relating to affordable homes.

Information Requests

Freedom of Information request figures show that the Council's current performance at responding to requests within the statutory 20 working days is at 93%. The national target is set at 90%. The legal service continues to provide advice and assistance to the wider Council in order to assist in this area, and related information governance such as subject access request, supporting the corporate responsibilities.

Democratic Services

Member Induction 2023

Following the District Council elections on 4th May 2023, 15 new members were elected to the Council. The Democratic Services team had prepared an extensive induction programme in the preceding months and shared it with nominated candidates prior to the election. The initial, intensive programme runs for 6 weeks and to date, attendance at all sessions has been very good and feedback positive. Training sessions have been provided by the Local Government Information Unit, Hoey & Ainscough Associates and NNDC officers.

North Norfolk Youth Council

The Youth Council met in April, ahead of a short break for exam season. They agreed that they wanted to prioritise mental health as their initial campaign, with a focus on engaging with local schools to raise the profile of mental health support and services in education settings. Norfolk & Waveney MIND will be attending their next meeting to talk to them about key local issues affecting young people in the district. On 6th June, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Youth Council visited a MIND rest hub in Aylsham to find out more about the services and support offered, in advance of a new rest hub opening in North Walsham. The Youth Council is hoping to work with MIND on promoting the new hub and its services to young people in the local area.

Town & Parish Council Help Hub

A new 'one-stop' hub has been launched to help town and parish councils find key information quickly and easily: [Home | Town and Parish Councils \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk)

Currently, there are resources and links for the following topics: Planning, Coast & Countryside, better living environment, organising event and key information for clerks. The page is still growing and being developed and all suggestions and are welcomed.

Launch of new digital form

With almost 900 parish councillors across the District, completing the required paperwork following local elections can be time consuming and resource intensive for everyone involved. The Democratic Services Team has been working with the Web Development team to produce an online register of interest form – for both parish and district councillors. The form was promoted to all clerks prior to the elections and launched in early May. To date over 600 forms have been submitted and the team is working hard to check them all and upload them to the website. All Parish councillors now have an individual profile linked to their parish council on the NNDC website and the register of interest form can be viewed when their profile is accessed. It's been a huge piece of work and we are very grateful to the Junior Web Developer for the time he has spent on developing the form.

New Committee Report template

A new template for committee reports was launched on 5th June, with the publication of the Cabinet agenda. The layout has changed to ensure that key information is easy to access and read and training has been provided to report authors on how to write reports and present information effectively. The template will be rolled out across all of the Council's committees over the coming weeks (with the exception of the regulatory committees).

Corporate PA's

The Corporate PA's have been assisting Democratic Services with Member Induction by providing assistance at the New Member "Welcome to the Council by CLT" event, closely followed by the New Member social evening held at The Reef. Both events were well attended, and feedback indicated that these were beneficial.

The PA's have been assisting with the organisation of Directorate Team Away Days, which have been really successful with staff from across teams networking and getting to know each other, which in the future will assist with better collaboration between services.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Legal

Of the three trainees, two have recently qualified as solicitors, one has left the authority to take up a post within private practice and another has continued in the team to carry out the Council's property legal work.

eastlaw is exploring how the new solicitor training process may provide future high quality training opportunities for the team. It is also looking at whether it may be possible to recruit a highly skilled refugee and has recently attended a workshop run by the high skills employment advisor of the East of England Local Government Association, to look at how to overcome barriers in employing professionals who have sought refuge in this country.

Democratic Services

The next meeting of the NNDC Town & Parish Council Engagement Forum will take place on 3rd July. It is the intention to provide some training on planning in this session, as well as updating clerks on other key issues affecting the parishes in the coming months. The Youth Council will meet on 22 June.

Corporate PA's

A vacancy within the team has been advertised externally and it is hoped that this will be filled within the next month. The Business Administration Apprentice continues to progress with the hope that qualification will be achieved by the end of the year. The Team continues to pursue training opportunities with one team member joining the APSE Coaching and

Mentoring course in a couple of weeks' time.

3 Meetings Attended

Meetings:

Anglia Timber Frames Ltd
North Norfolk Railway
Kompan Ltd (Sheringham Leas Play Area)
Superintendent Craig Miller, Norfolk Constabulary
Norfolk Surfers Say Stop Sewage Pollution
Cromer Green Spaces
Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel

Attended:

Active Transport drop in event – Sheringham Oddfellows Hall.

Media Interviews:

BBC Politics East
That's TV
Newsquest