

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

-21 June 2023-

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

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Finance

- **Final Accounts 2021/22** - the accounting entries have been completed to allow the completion of the Statutory Statement of Accounts, ready for external audit inspection and sign off.
- **Outturn Position 2022/23** - the finance team have been working on the 2022/23 Outturn position (P12 Budget Monitoring) and have prepared a Revenue and Capital Outturn position to present to Cabinet in July.

Estates and Assets

Planning consent has been granted follow Development Committee for a hotel on the enabling land Sheringham.

Vacant property –

- Leases for Seaview and the Former Tennis Courts are progressing and completion is subject to gaining planning consent.
- Collectors Cabin tenancy at will is completed and lease will complete following the Land Registry application.
- Works to The Cedars continues along with marketing/viewings of the remaining vacant office space.
- Tenant has been secured for the unit 6 at Catfield and the lease is being finalised.

Decarbonisation – works are expected to finish shortly at Cornish Way, North Walsham. Quotes are being obtained for improvement works to Catfield units. Site visits continue across the portfolio including the Councils largest industrial unit at Enterprise way, Fakenham to assess it for potential improvements as part of the lease renewal.

Lease renewals and rent reviews continue. Oddfellows Hall, Sheringham lease has completed.

Disposal – of Beeston Putting Green to Sheringham Town Council has completed

Marrams, Cromer – a proposal for improvements to the building has been considered and funding being sought. The proposal would see some demolition to provide space for concession pitches and refurbishment of the building.

Options appraisal report for Rocket House, Cromer has been drafted.

Revenues

Collection as of 31 March 2023.

The final annual Council Tax collection was 98.27% against target of 98.20%.

The final annual NDR collection was 99.25% against target of 99.20%.

Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme.

The total rebate amount awarded to NNDC council tax customers is £6,114,900.

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF)

This scheme is aimed at providing support to households not eligible for the automatic [Energy Bills Support Scheme GB](#) (£400 payment paid by energy suppliers).

All applications for this scheme had to be made through the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) via the above government website however we did add details to help customers at [Home | Energy bills rebate \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) including details of the help line telephone number and email address which are as follows:

Email: alternativefunding@ebss.beis.gov.uk

Telephone: 0808 175 3287

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

The Energy Bills Support Scheme - Alternative Funding closed to new applications on 31 May 2023.

There has been a total of 321 payments made up to and including 1 June 2023 which totals £128,400.

Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP)

This scheme is where payments are made of £200 to support households that use fuels other than gas to heat their homes

The above two schemes are different to others NNDC has managed previously because the government has set up a single application form on gov.uk which will centralise as much of the data gathering and validation as possible. The Government will then share applications with us where we will need to verify applicants' addresses once, they have passed through the application portal and to transfer the relevant support payment to successful applicants.

The Alternative Fuel Payment Scheme closed to new applications on 31 May 2023.

There has been a total of 492 payments made up to and including 1 June 2023 which totals £98,400.

Risk and Performance Audit.

On 17 April we had the final audit report regarding Council Tax and Non-Domestic (Business) Rates with a substantial assurance. The report contains one agreed

recommendation which was of low risk regarding the declaration of interest process which needs to be completed within six months.

Council Tax and Non-Domestic (Business) Rates Annual Billing – all annual bills and benefits have been sent for the 2023/24 year.

NNDR includes new NDR reliefs and the **VOA NDR Revaluation 2023 List** has been released as announced by the chancellor, tested by us and is part of the year-end/annual billing work.

Interest Payments on Non-Domestic (Business) Rates properties where a rateable value is reduced can now be paid in certain circumstances because the interest rate has increased substantially over recent months. NNDR has implemented this and have been giving advice to other neighbouring authorities that are struggling to get to grips with this change.

The 2022/23 roll-over process (which is the year-end reconciliation for Revenues and Benefits including Council Tax, Non-Domestic (Business) Rates, Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit Overpayments) was successfully completed over the 31 March and 1 April 2023.

Government Returns:

NNDR3 & QRC4 for council tax and NNDR have been completed.

Property Services

- Cromer pier substructure works commence on 20/09/2022 and are expected to continue for until September 2023. Additional works have been identified and works have been programmed to include these.
- Cromer Pier bar servery area improvements and WC refurbishment. Works to commenced in January 2023 for 6-week period. These are now complete, with the bar and servery area fully functioning.
- The PC re-provision in Fakenham had been delayed following the unearthing of an undocumented UK Power Networks cable. All rogue buried services have now been identified and site works to recommence before the end of September. Works are now complete.
- Several delays in the supply chain had also delayed the completion of the Stearmans yard PC re-provisioning by approximately 4 weeks. Temporary facilities were placed on site to cover the delay period. The works are now expected to be completed by the end of September. Works completed and the public convenience is back online.
- The refurbishment of the public conveniences in New Road are completed and the toilets have been brought back into service. The Vicarage Street, North Walsham PC replacement is currently out to tender with final returns by 26/09/2022. Demolition works have been completed and rebuild works have commenced and completion is expected by end July.
- Project enabling works are progressing at Albert Street public conveniences however we are waiting for a budget to be confirmed.
- Refurbishment works to the Lees public conveniences at Sheringham are under way and we expect partial completion of both units by end June then the second phase will commence. The car park boundary wall at Morris Street car park Sheringham has been completed.

- Works to support the refurbishment of The Cedars and the wider HAZ project in North Walsham are ongoing. Property Services have been tasked with completing the Cedars project and works are now in progress.
- Works postponed at the Shambles until the spring next year. Alongside these works we are now working with Estates on the Black Swan refurbishment. Works to the Cedars are progressing well with the budget and scope of works clearly defined.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Finance

- **Budget Monitoring P4 2023/24** – meetings are being scheduled with budget managers to discuss current year budget variances. This will be collated into the first reported monitoring report of 2023/24. Presented to Cabinet in early September.
- **Statement of Accounts 2022/23** – Following the completion of the 2021/22 Statutory Statement of accounts, the team can prepare the 2022/23 Statements. It is hoped that after this we will return to the official schedule where draft accounts are produced by the end of May.
- **System Implementation & Phase two**
There are a number of areas where training is required on the new system functionality, including management reporting. The implementation was divided into two phases, Phase two timelines and resourcing are to be confirmed.

Estates and Assets

Lease renewal Beach Hut and Chalet leases which are due to come to the end of their initial 5 year period. Some revisions to the lease clauses will take place.

Revenues

Ongoing internal training of two Level 3 Business Certificated apprentices. Previous one was National Apprentice of the Year that met the DWP Minister on his visit to NNDC.

Online forms - reviewing and improving most commonly 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.

