

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 September 2023

### **COUNCILLOR PAUL HEINRICH - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

For the period July to September 2023

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

##### **Business Support**

###### *Invest North Norfolk*

The Council has recently launched a business portal called 'Invest North Norfolk'. This dedicated hub is intended to support businesses at all stages of their life cycle and provides advice, information and signposting around five main areas:

- Business planning, business support and access to funding
- Skills, employment and training;
- Land, premises and planning;
- Green 4 Business - supporting businesses on their journey to Net Zero; and
- Key sectors - support for specific sectors that are important to the District

Businesses will be encouraged to sign up so that they can receive regular business support information.

##### **Funding and Programmes**

###### *Rural England Prosperity Fund*

On 3 July NNDC launched the Rural Business and Communities Grant. This capital-only grant, funded by the Rural England Prosperity Fund, is intended to support the following activities:

###### Businesses

- Small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including 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 of these

businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.

#### Community groups

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

The allocation for 23/24 is £364,462.75 and £1,093,388.25 in 24/25. The scheme is open for applications now and a strong pipeline of investments have been developed, with the first two grants now awarded.

#### *UK Shared Prosperity Fund*

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.

The following activities have now commenced

- Support funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects through the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund;
- Work with Visit North Norfolk to develop a programme of support for local visitor economy businesses, including an additional staff resource to support this;
- Deliver the Go Digital programme to support business digitalisation (working with Norfolk County Council), and;
- Work with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver a business support and advice programme.

Progress is also being made towards developing programmes for the next financial year, including a package to support business decarbonisation and support for skills development.

#### *North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ)*

The HSHAZ programme is being delivered as expected, with 22/23 end of year funding deadlines having been met and satisfied by the key funders. A number of shopfront and other building improvements, funded by the Building Improvement Grant, are underway and there is a good pipeline of proposals for the remainder of the year. With the Market Place improvements now been completed, the focus is on implementing the improvements to Black Swan Loke and Bank Loke.

The renovation work to the Cedars building has now been completed and the

building was officially opened on 7 September.

The HSHAZ Cultural Programme is detailed in the update provided by Cllr Withington, whose portfolio includes culture.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

- Continued delivery of the UKSPF and REPF funds
- Supporting the Stalham High Street Task Force team
- Implementing the final stages of the North Walsham HAZ place making (Lokes) and wayfinding and interpretation scheme.

## **3 Meetings attended**

TBC