

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

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

For the period November to December 2023

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

#### **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 (selected from the scheme developed by Government for this programme):

##### 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 2023/24 is £364,462.75 of which £335,975 of grants have been offered to-date, yielding a total project value of £742,661, with £405,563 of private investment generated in match funding. A strong pipeline of investments has been developed through to the next financial year.

### *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.

There has been a high take up from beneficiaries across the programmes and the budget for this financial year (£310,867) is fully committed.

Progress is also being made towards developing programmes for the next financial year, including:

- A package to support business decarbonisation, through audits, advice and funding;
- A programme to support skills development, and;
- A programme to support energy efficiency retrofit works for households in need in North Norfolk

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

Key updates:

- Safety audit remedial works have been completed in North Walsham Market Place and the street furniture items are finally in their permanent positions.
- With the Market Place and Shambles/Church approach work completed, the main focus is now on the Black Swan Loke area and Bank Loke.
- Led by a local artist and created by the local community, a mosaic has been completed and is ready for installation as part of the Black Swan Loke works.
- Ten Building Improvement Grants have been offered, with the works now largely completed on the majority.
- Signage and interpretation works have commenced with elements in Black Swan Loke, Bank Loke and Church Approach.

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

- Holding a business engagement event in January in order to consult on the proposed budget, publicise the emerging Growth Strategies of NNDC and NCC and elicit responses from local businesses about the how they wish to engage with the Council
- Development and delivery of the UKSPF and REPF funds
- Finalisation and adoption of the first draft of the Economic Strategy
- Working with local stakeholders in Stalham to act on the recommendations of Stalham High Street Task Force team
- Final stages of the North Walsham HSHAZ place making, and settling the final account
- Undertaking the monitoring and evaluation (in accordance with the guidance from Historic England) of the HSHAZ and North Walsham Cultural Programme and closing down the programme of activities.

## **3 Meetings attended**

Relevant meetings include:

Cabinet – including pre-agenda and business planning  
Bacton H<sub>2</sub> project update  
Rocket House technical briefing  
Planning PFH meeting  
HAZ Board  
Council